

# **KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES**

*"Teaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God..."*

**FROM THE CANDLESTICK**

**TO THE THRONE**

**Book Eleven**

**The Marriage of the Lamb**

**Spiritual Warfare**

**By J. Preston Eby**

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**FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE Book 11**

**The Marriage of the Lamb Spiritual Warfare** by J. Preston Eby

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# Chapter 204

## The Marriage Of The Lamb

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:1-6).

The vision of this chapter is introduced, not by an angel, but by the loud voices of a combined choir in heaven saying or singing a four-fold "Hallelujah Chorus," sung in response to the dramatic events of chapter eighteen — the just overthrow and destruction of Babylon the great. The first seven verses are the "Te Deum of Heaven." In meditation upon these things a strange and wonderful unfolding pervaded my spirit and the great truth that in this blessed vision of John we meet once more one of those remarkable contrasts, which are numerous throughout scripture, became exceedingly clear. **The same event arouses radically different responses in different people!**

When Christ was born and there was joy in heaven and the celestial hosts swept down to shout of the glad tidings for the earth and for all peoples, the shepherds of Bethlehem in joyful expectation made their way to the manger in the city of David; but, on the other hand, you find that King Herod, when he received the same news, was deeply chagrined about the event and made the treacherous attempt to snuff out the life of the little Babe before it could rise to glory. At the cross, which for a moment appeared to be the final and complete defeat of the Man of Galilee, we find Mary and John and the women who used to follow Jesus weeping in astonishment and sorrow because of this seemingly tragic turn of events; but at the same time there was a determined satisfaction and indeed an exultant joy in the hearts of the leaders of the scribes and the Pharisees — a joy aroused by the same event which evoked the grief of the Lord's disciples. In like manner, at the resurrection morning the disciples joyfully and triumphantly greeted one another with the jubilant declaration, "The Lord is risen indeed!" And their hearts were filled with new-born wonder and hope. But the same fact of the resurrection caused the Roman guards to flee in terror and flooded the hearts of the Jewish leaders with dismay and devilish apprehension. The illustration could be multiplied literally by the hundreds! The same events, connected somehow with the formation and triumph of the kingdom of God on earth, are the cause of sorrow, fear, consternation, or mocking to some, and ecstatic joy and overflowing gladness and praise to God to others!

Thus it is with Babylon, the great city. For long centuries it has been the cause of dismay and fear and even terror to God's faithful remnant. Babylon embodies all the principles which are an abhorrence to all the Lord's called and separated elect who have been given eyes to see and hearts to discern, and therefore through the ages became the cause of their persecution and

tribulation. The great of the earth committed fornication with her, and the masses in general wondered at her glory and rejoiced because of the greatness of her power. But now Babylon lies in ruins, its burning has reduced it to heaps of ashes, and it has fallen to rise never again. And while the kings of the earth, and the merchants of the earth, and the ship-masters and sailors bewail and lament for her when they see her burning, and stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and cast dung on their heads, crying, Alas, alas, that great city — for in one hour is she made desolate! At the same time John hears a great voice of a vast multitude of people in the heavenly realms of God's Spirit, boldly proclaiming, "**Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And the smoke of her torment rose up for ever and ever...**"

In commentary on this passage Ray Prinzing once wrote:

"How clear are the statements of Jesus:

'*For judgment I am come into this world*' (John 9:39).

'*I am come that they might have life...*' (John 10:10).

"These are not contradictory statements, nor mutually exclusive of each other, but vitally connected in the outworking of the process. The ultimate is to bring us INTO LIFE, and as a means to that end we have the various judgments of God — those correctional processes which bring us into His righteousness. Another point of clarification needs to be made: when judgment is upon people, it is to CORRECT THEM, but when judgment is upon the systems of the world, it is usually TO END THEM. Babylon is not to be healed, but annihilated, wiped out completely. For it is written, '*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof*' (I John 2:17). But, '*He is the Saviour of ALL MEN, especially of those that believe*' (I Timothy 4:10). When the nations of the world are judged, it means the end of that governmental order, and then the process of cleansing and saving the people of that nation, though the severity of it be 'by fire.'

"So, much people in heaven are saying, '**Alleluia!**' Why? Because of His judgments! And specifically '**because He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications.**' Oh, the worship that shall arise when God brings to an end all of the religions of man, consuming every idol, dissipating the cover of darkness upon men, eradicating every error and false doctrine, that the glorious light of the Gospel might fill the whole earth, as it is written: '*The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up*' (Matthew 4:16).

"*The Lord will be terrible (to be feared, reverenced) unto them: for He will famish all the gods of the earth: and every man shall worship Him, every one from His place, even all the isles of the heathen (nations)*' (Zephaniah 2:11). The judgment is against all the false gods which religious systems have promoted. And when men are loosed from all their superstitious fear and subservience to these falsities, and the glorious light of truth shines upon them, they will '*worship Him, every one from his place.*' Every creature shall become a true worshipper. No wonder they cry out, '**Alleluia!**' The very spirit of false religion that deceives and enslaves men shall be judged and dealt with, and therefore we also say, '**Alleluia!**' '**And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.**' Wave after wave of praise and worship ascend to our God. Because of His judgments, **Alleluia!** And because He hath judged the great whore, **Alleluia!** And now, because the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, say it again, **Alleluia!"** — end quote.

"For He hath judged the great whore...and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand" (Rev. 19:2).

Avenged — Vindicated. He has vindicated the blood (life) of His servants, that is, He vindicates the spiritual life of the people while He judges the system. It is not His people, not His very own people whom He has purchased with His own blood, that God is out to "get," but it is the system of Babylon which uses and abuses them! The system is judged, but the people are vindicated. The Lord's precious people are delivered from the captivity of Babylon and brought forth to know Him in new and fresh dimensions of revelation, experience, and glory. Isn't it wonderful! These are the ones mentioned in verses five through six, commanded to praise the Lord, every one of them from the least to the greatest, and they are a great multitude, as the sound of many waters, shouting and singing "*Alleluia — for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*" These also begin to be glad and rejoice because the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has *made herself ready!* Before, under the bondage of Babylon, these did not really comprehend what brideship is; but now that they see it they commence to rejoice and be glad within themselves, and prepare themselves to attend the marriage.

Let us notice concerning these singers, in the first place, they are **in heaven** — they are heaven-dwellers, those who have been raised up and made to sit together in the heavenly places **in Christ Jesus**. The very same event which causes such sorrow, agony, and despair in the earth-dwellers, fills the heaven-dwellers with joy unspeakable and full of glory and causes them to rebound with a four-fold ***Alleluia***, to the glory of Him who sits upon the throne! The earthrealm, the carnal-minded world, is filled with anguish — the joy is in heaven! Only those in whose hearts the stronghold of Babylon has been reduced to ashes by the consuming Holy Ghost fire of God can comprehend and appreciate this joy! They naturally are filled with joy because their souls have escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; they have escaped and the destruction of this city is their liberty, their victory, and their glory!

Yet a further cause of their joy is set forth in the following sentence of the song of the multitude: "Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power belong unto our God." It is because the salvation and glory and honor and power belong to God that the people are moved to sing these anthems of praise. All these four attributes of God, all these four ascriptions of praise, must be taken in their most comprehensive sense. First, salvation belongs unto our God — that is, salvation to the **fullest extent** — a FULL AND COMPLETE SALVATION IN SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY! At this point in the Revelation all things are ready for the unveiling of the *full salvation*, with the beautiful marriage of the Lamb, the revelation of the glory of the holy city, New Jerusalem, the enthronement of the sons of God within the city, and the complete salvation, and the light of the city illuminating the earth unto the restoration, and glorification of the nations and of all creation.

As we enter chapter nineteen in the Revelation we are fastly approaching the climatic, concluding scenes of God's great redemptive drama. The multitude of heaven-dwellers naturally looks on salvation from this lofty, comprehensive point of view, the salvation of the whole man and the salvation of all creation, which have been redeemed by the Lamb. It is salvation *unto the uttermost*. THIS SALVATION IS OF OUR GOD! Only HE can accomplish it! And He shall! He is the originator, the planner, the author of this complete salvation. He is the finisher of this full salvation. Therefore, He it is who receives all the glory and praise! Truly, He who has begun a good work in us, in all of us, will perfect and complete it unto the day of God. And now, from the depths of their hearts, all of God's glorified firstfruits, and all of His redeemed people shout and sing, "Salvation is of our God! Hence to Him belongs the glory! To Him belongs the honor! Of Him is the power that accomplishes it!" It is then, not in the abstract that they sing God's

glory, but because great Babylon is fallen and God's FULL SALVATION is now ready to be revealed before the face of all nations and shed forth upon all peoples. That is the mystery!

This scene calls to mind the experience of Handel when he composed his unexcelled masterpiece *The Messiah*. This oratorio tells the Bible story of prophecy, the birth of Christ, His life, death, and resurrection, and is climaxed with the Hallelujah Chorus of heaven. It was composed in three weeks and two days, from August 22 to September 14, 1741. Handel later said that he had a great overflowing surplus of energy during that period; he ate and slept very little, because he was caught up in an ecstasy of insight that made earth's cares insignificant. I can relate to that especially, since through the years of writing these studies in the book of Revelation, no matter the difficulties of life, or the pressures of the time, the moment I sit down to take up my pen I am able to sense the great overwhelming presence of the Lord, indeed an almost uncanny power of inspiration, and a special flow of anointing that abides all the hours that I write. There is such an alertness and awareness in the spirit until I am reluctant to lay down my pen and go home. Many times I have wished I could just continue writing through the night and through the days and never stop to eat or sleep or do anything else of this life except to share the living word that is flowing into me until every chapter, every verse, and every word of the vision has been fully elucidated. When Handel was asked about his emotions as he composed *The Messiah*, he replied, "I did think I did see all heaven before me and the great God Himself." In similar fashion, this scene from the pen of the seer on Patmos fills the soul with worshipful wonder as we behold the great God Himself upon the throne and the throngs of redeemed ones penetrating the vastnesses of space and vibrating the extremities of the universe with their celestial songs of deliverance and praise!

Here we have the great "Handel's Messiah" of God's elect! In recent years the word Hallelujah, or Alleluia, has disappeared from the Psalms in the King James Bible, and the phrase "Praise ye the Lord" has taken its place. However, it is still retained in the Revelation. Breaking down the word into its component parts, it becomes "Praise Yah," or better yet, "Hail Yah," and expresses a great sense of glorified reverence and gratitude. The first time the word is found in the Bible is in connection with the installation of the ark of God in the midst of Zion. David had ended his warfare, all his enemies had been defeated, the stronghold of Zion had been wrested from the Jebusites, and now the ark would rest in Zion and Yahweh would be exalted in their midst. David decided to have a choir in the midst of the worship of God and we read that "he appointed certain of the Levites to minister (in song) before the ark of the Lord, and to celebrate and to thank and *hallelujah* the God of Israel" (I Chron. 16:4, Literal). The ark of God was the symbol of Yahweh's presence, power, victory, and glory among His people. Christ, of course, is the true ark, and as great Babylon is overthrown within and without, and Christ comes forth to take His rightful place in His people, all of God's called and separated elect who dwell in the heavenlies, in the high places of the Spirit of the Lord, break forth in glad Hallelujahs. HAIL YAH! ALL HAIL TO THE CHIEF! That is the message! Oh, yes! Thus in this majestic chorus great joy is expressed for the overthrow of the carnal mind and all it has spawned in the earth. Hail Yah! For HE has done this by His mighty love, power, and purpose! To Him be the glory!

This joy culminates in the powerful and well known phrase, "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" These words reach far beyond the multitudes of saints who proclaim them, for they embrace all of creation, all of time, and all purpose. If the Lord God is OMNIPOTENT, and if the Lord God REIGNS, then nothing anywhere can ever resist him, He is Lord over all, reigns over all, and that eternally! This declaration teaches us two things. First, that creation has a Lord and Governor who is in absolute control of the creation which He has made. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! The all-powerful, all-mighty, all-wise Creator and Lord is over what He has created. And contrary to what nearly all church creeds say and most preachers proclaim, such

sovereign power *cannot be usurped by anyone*— not by man, not by the devil, and certainly not by religion! The second division of our text teaches another sublime and glorious truth — that the outcome of God's control and government over His creation will be unqualified and universal glory and praise. For the text says, "**Hallelujah:** for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

How infinitely wonderful is the truth that God reigns over all His creation! How it floods our hearts with joy and shall intimately fill all creation with glory, delight, and praise! For this is the last shout and the ultimate triumph of creation! The purpose of creation must and will be fulfilled to the everlasting praise and glory of God. In short, the end of creation will be as the text suggests, all glorious. Creation has an origin and a purpose, and this origin and purpose of creation were determined by the wisdom, the pleasure, and the purpose of the omnipotent Creator. The world around us has a meaning. It is not meaningless. It is not a world that is adrift from its moorings, or a world such as modern, materialistic pseudo-science supposes, which came from nowhere in particular, has no particular aim and nobody knows where it is going, nor what the end shall be. Against that is set heaven's thrilling declaration, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" It came from God. It goes back to God. He reigns over it, therefore the outcome is secure, which is altogether and absolutely a glorious outcome. By redemption it will bring to God a revenue of praise and glory and adoration as no other device could do. Therefore it has a meaning. It is the field of the development and display of God's love, wisdom, and power, a means by which He makes Himself to be known and understood, a means by which too, not only is God known, but a supreme joy and glory and eternal blessedness shall be achieved.

The greatest of all ends is in view, and that end is Christ! The fixing of ends in creation ought to be the most reassuring of all truths in a world like ours. It all depends of course on who fixes the end, and to what purpose and by what means. If the character of the Creator is one of goodness, righteousness, truth, and love, we can rely upon Him to use His omnipotence for the highest purpose conceivable and this we will be assured is the case, and we will applaud it when we see it to be the case, when in the heavens of the spirit, having eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to understand beyond the finite, we shall cry, "**Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!**" If He were less than omnipotent, or if He allowed evil to develop and multiply itself in His own domain of creation, without His prior decree, permission, or purpose, then He is not God, and cannot be God. If evil there must be, let us be in the hands of God, and not of chance, and not of our own strength and devices, for if evil comes from outside the divine decree, otherwise than by the will and purpose of God, then there must be another god beside God. And that other god is greater than our God, because God the Creator has become the victim or the prisoner of His own creation. And He is then the most pitiful object of all.

And yet — is that not exactly what the Babylon religious systems teach! So-called "orthodoxy" has long taught that Satan was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. The theologians and preachers recite over and over how Satan was originally "the anointed cherub that covereth...the most beautiful and wise of all God's creation!" This being was, so they say, the ruler and leader of the angelic hosts and apparently led them in their praise of God and shouts of joy..the greatest being God ever created, one who had unequaled strength, wisdom, beauty, privilege, and authority, and was next to God Himself. This blameless, perfect one, named Lucifer, was created without any form of evil and with the greatest intelligence of any created being. Then, we are told, unbeknown by God, this Lucifer, suddenly realizing how beautiful and intelligent he was, became inflated by power and pride, and his heart was lifted up in rebellion against God. According to this story, Lucifer gathered one-third of the heavenly angels to his cause, mustering an army with which he planned to knock God off His throne and supplant Himself as king and god of the universe — and there was war in heaven! Luckily, God

won — well, He wasn't able actually to get rid of Lucifer and his army altogether, but He was able to cast them out of heaven into the earth where he became, instead of an holy angel, the devil that he is today.

When they are asked whether the good God created a bad devil, they reply, "No, He did not create the devil; He created a beautiful and powerful angel who later *became* the devil!" Essentially, they say, the devil *created himself*. This may sound good *on the surface*, but when the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God shines brightly within our hearts, this line of reasoning is seen to be but shallow deductions of the carnal mind. Giving Satan the power to become within himself something other than what God Himself decreed, to transform himself into that which God never planned or purposed, to surprise the almighty with his rebellion, and then to enter into Eden, again to slip up on God's blind side, and cunningly and quickly steal away the hearts and loyalty of the very first man and woman God created in His own image and likeness and placed on earth, and then, in spite of God's great plan, power, love, and work of redemption, to continue to deceive, enslave, and carry captive the vast majority of the human race, taking them ultimately as his trophies into everlasting damnation, while God the omnipotent is able to rescue and save only a "little flock" to spend eternity with Him in His great kingdom — if that myth, that legend, that folklore, that fairy tale be the truth — then the song of the saints in heaven is a monstrous *lie*: "**Hallelujah — for the LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!**"

When God created the world and its inhabitants He did so with the ultimate intention of dying for it; the death of Christ did not, in the intention and wisdom of God, follow the unforeseen and unfortunate sin and disobedience of man, but in His foreknowledge and by His predestination preceded it, for Christ was indeed "the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world...who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*" (Rev. 13:8; I Pet. 1:20). The remedy was in advance of the disease. Isn't it wonderful! The fall was the occasion of redemption, but redemption was always and first of all the preordained and ultimate intention of God, that thereby He might accomplish that which could not otherwise be achieved, namely, the display of His nature in all its manifold beauty of wisdom, holiness, goodness, love, patience, longsuffering, mercy, kindness, faithfulness, and power. By this means He achieves a creation which will not only be filled with an intelligent admiration of His almighty, but with a rapture of praise, an ecstasy as upon an eternal marriage day, when long delays are consummated in the fulfillment of love and desire, when mourning is turned into joy, an innumerable company of blessed beings — *all* of mankind — wear the garment of praise in exchange for the spirit of heaviness, where they obtain beauty for ashes, when they come to the heavenly Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, where they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away. Then, precious friend of mine, shall a new creation burst in universal song, the meaning of all things be unfolded, all mysteries unveiled, all truth known, all evil forever put down, all creatures redeemed, restored, and transformed, and that one great cry will fill all things, "**Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!**" Amen.

I still vividly remember the day, when I was but a child, and the Second World War ended. The war tension was high and a heavy load hung dark upon many a weary heart. But one day the word flashed out, "The war is over!" What a time of rejoicing as factory whistles blew, church bells rang, and people shouted and danced about in boundless joy. And so again millions gather upon the plains of battle, and as great Babylon sinks and seethes in her own destruction, the hosts of heaven — saints both small and great — join in the grand Hallelujah Chorus. Back and forth they vibrate and reverberate, "Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God...for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication...and again they said, **Alleluia**, and the smoke of her torment rises up for the ages of the ages." And this vast company of "much people" is answered by the twenty-four elders round

about the throne who shout back the same glorious word, ***Alleluia!*** And before the echoes die away the mighty living creatures in the midst of the throne thunder out their praise in an “***Amen, Alleluia!***”

Before we received the call to sonship we were great *praisers*. And truly He is worthy of *all our praise!* We praise Him still! Not, however, as many who simply love the “atmosphere” of praise and get a “high” from entering into a realm of praise that makes them feel emotionally whole. If we are praising for what “we” get out of it, then we have missed the whole point of praise! Many people so esteem that wonderful “atmosphere” or “feeling” derived in the realms of praise that they truly *worship praise* more than they worship the Lord! Some do the service of praise because they believe that praise brings the presence of the Lord. The truth is, however, that it is the *presence of the Lord that brings praise!* In the days of the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit the people were caught up in realms of the “high praises” of God, and it was glorious far beyond the ability of my poor tongue or pen to describe! Yet — many lost sight of the fact that it was not praise that brought the Rain — it was the Rain that evoked the praise! Never in the scriptures were men moved to praise God in order to bring a revelation of His glory. Instead, it was when the Lord came to them, and appeared to them in His glory, and glorified Himself on their behalf, that men were moved to praise and exalt His greatness!

In the book of Revelation we have the same picture; it is only when the Lamb is revealed standing in the midst of the throne that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing their hymn of praise, followed by the voice of many angels, and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, crying out, and saying, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!” It was not the praise that brought the revelation of the Lamb! Rather, it was the revelation of the Lamb enthroned in His glory and majesty that evoked this universal paean of praise! And now the Lamb has overcome and the whore has been judged. All of God’s people have been set free from the delusion and tyranny of *religion*. And these are the very same heavenly praisers John beholds in our text, saying, “Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore...”

Only those who dwell in His presence and sit together with Him in the heavenly realms of His Spirit share in the rapture of this greatest of all songs, this mightiest of all shouts of triumph. John reports a voice whose speaker is not named, but it is a voice of much *people in heaven*. Then a voice comes out of the throne, and could therefore be thought of as emanating from God Himself. But it is not the voice of God inasmuch as the voice uses the words “Praise our God,” thus associating himself with those addressed. The voice calls on *all God’s people* to join him or them in the chorus of praise — “Praise **our God**, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.” Will you not agree with me that “ALL ye His servants, both small and great,” can only signify that innumerable multitude of all the Lord’s people who have just ESCAPED OUT OF BABYLON AT ITS DESTRUCTION? For the song is a song of praise over Babylon’s destruction! As we read these words of truth surely we must realize that the “voice out of the throne” can be none other than those whom the Lord has raised up to sit with Him in His throne — His kings and priests! “To him that overcometh **will I grant to sit with me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne...and they sung a new song, saying, Thou...hast redeemed us by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God **kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth**” (Rev. 3:21; 5:9-10).

Let us now earnestly consider this ministry of “kings and priests” and the hidden secrets concerning them that lie just beneath the surface in this wondrous drama we are now called to view. In the opening verses of the Revelation John addresses the saints, saying, “John to the seven churches...and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath **made us kings and priests unto God and His Father**; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1:4-6).

With these wonderful words John introduces the New Testament church to Old Testament understanding. For the first time in the book of Revelation, here at the very beginning, he is bringing the Old Testament literal types and shadows over into the New Testament fulfillment. The Old Testament was all about natural, physical, earthly types and shadows of kingship and priesthood. Their kings and priests sat on physical thrones and offered animal sacrifices upon brazen altars in temples made with hands. But now John is raising this kingship and priesthood into a higher, spiritual dimension and announces to the saints that Christ now “hath made **us** kings and priests unto God and His Father.” With this simple beginning John does what we have seen him do constantly throughout the book of Revelation — refer to Old Testament *terminology* within the context of New Testament *spiritual reality!* And then, shortly, we are shown another scene.

“And *round about* the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And *out of* the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning *before* the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. And *before* the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and *in the midst* of the throne, and *round about* the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind” (Rev. 4:4-6).

Let us get a firm mental picture of this scene which John saw in heaven, in the realm of the Spirit. He saw the throne of God and God sitting on the throne. And in the middle of the throne, and also encircling the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes in front and behind. Then in a circle around the throne were twenty-four other thrones (called *seats* in the King James Bible), and on these thrones were twenty-four elders clothed in white robes and with crowns of gold on their heads. In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain. Before the throne, evidently between the elders and the throne, stood seven lamps of fire burning. Outside the circle of the elders stood a great multitude of the redeemed from every nation and tribe on earth; they were clothed in white robes and had palm branches in their hands. Around all this were the angels of heaven, an innumerable host — myriads upon myriads, thousands upon thousands. What a scene!

The word “beasts” is an unfortunate translation, being necessarily associated in our minds with the brute creation and that which is typified thereby. It is not the Greek word *therion* which in thirty-five instances in the book of Revelation is translated beast, meaning “a wild and ravenous beast,” thus denoting an animal of ferocious disposition. It is, rather, the Greek word *zoon* which signifies simply a “living creature” and is so translated in nearly all modern translations of the Bible. In the Revelation the word *therion* is used as a type of the base corruptible and fleshly nature of the natural man and of the brutish and tyrannical kingdoms of *this world*, ruled by the carnal, depraved, and vicious nature of unregenerated men. The word *zoon*, however, means *living creature*, or a *creature expressing life*. It comes from the root *zao* from which also is derived the word *zoe* which is used exclusively in the New Testament in reference to *divine life* or the *life of the ages*. All of these words denote that which is alive or is lively! How significant, then, that these four *creatures expressing divine life* are found “in the midst of the throne” and

“round about the throne,” occupying the central position in the throne while emanating as an essence, glory, and power out from the throne!

In the midst of the throne! The four “Living Creatures” are four manifestations of LIFE — THE LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are four representations of NATURE — THE NATURE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! The four Living Creatures are four expressions of the POWER AND DOMINION OF THE THRONE! If you want to know what the God of the throne is like, then take a look at the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne. In them (in their symbology) is manifest the attributes of the life of the God of the throne. If you wish to know the nature of the authority, rule, and dominion of the throne, then understand the nature of the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne, for these embody within themselves the character of the dominion of the God of the throne. Not only do they represent the life and nature of the God of the throne, not only do they express within themselves the character of the dominion of the throne — they likewise reveal the very life, nature, character, and dominion of A-L-L WHO SHARE THE THRONE!

This is the *life of the throne!* The throne means ***kingship!*** The One on the throne ***REIGNS!*** This is the glory of the *sons of God* who reign with Christ! This is the four-fold character of God revealed through the dominion of God from the throne. This is God’s identity through His kingdom administration in and through those elect saints who share ***His kingship,*** to reconcile and restore all things into God again. The four Living Creatures are the four faces of God revealed in His POWER (the *lion*), GRACE (the *calf or ox*), WISDOM (the *face as a man*), and EXALTATION (the *flying eagle*)! The four Living Creatures are the four-fold nature of God revealed in dominion. When the power, grace, wisdom, and exaltation of God have been raised up in that earth which *you are*, as it is in heaven, you will behold the four Living Creatures within yourself! Ah, my beloved, if you have received the call of the overcomer to “sit with HIM in His throne,” then all that the four Living Creatures represent is even now being wrought out in your life, their nature becoming your nature, for naught but the nature of the Lamb which is the nature of the four Living Creatures can stand ***“in the midst of the throne.”*** That is the mystery!

My spirit thrills with the harmonies of heaven as I contemplate these things and the supernal glories typified by the four Living Creatures unfold within my spiritual understanding, for truly they reveal the nature of throneship, the realm of God’s omnipotent power and sovereign dominion. They bespeak the position and ministry of KINGSHIP. God REIGNS! The Lamb REIGNS! The four Living Creatures REIGN! The overcomers REIGN! The manchild REIGNS! All are therefore IN THE THRONE! What else would you do in the throne? And if you would share that throne as a king in God’s great universal and eternal kingdom, then the nature of God, which is the nature of the Lamb, which is the nature of the four Living Creatures, is now becoming ***your nature,*** too! And that four-fold nature embodies the characteristics of OMNIPOTENT POWER, SOVEREIGN AND UNCONDITIONAL GRACE, DIVINE WISDOM, and the EXALTATION OF A SUPERIOR HEAVENLY LIFE. “And...the four Living Creatures and the four and twenty Elders...sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us** to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast **made us** unto our God **KINGS AND PRIESTS:** and **we shall reign on the earth**” (Rev. 5:8-10). There we have the clearest possible identification of the four Living Creatures. They are God’s kings! They represent His kingship! They are they that reign! Not in some far-off heaven somewhere — but *on the earth!* They are God’s government on earth! What a marvelous thing!

Let us consider now the twenty-four Elders “round about the throne” who are also seated upon thrones and have golden crowns upon their heads. “And *round about the throne* were four and

twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw *four and twenty elders sitting*, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads *crowns of gold*" (Rev. 4:4). The Amplified Bible gives us a better rendering. "Twenty-four other thrones *surrounded the throne* and seated upon these thrones were *twenty-four Elders*, arrayed in white clothing, with Crowns of Gold upon their heads."

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

What do we see then? In the second chapter of Numbers we find the order given for the encampment of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness on their way to the promised land. The camp of Israel as it was established at the Sinai (where God made them His nation) formed a hollow square. In the center of the hollow was the tabernacle of Moses. Around the tabernacle Israel was divided into four camps: one camp of three tribes on the east side, another camp of three tribes on the south side, another camp of three tribes on the west side, and the last camp of three tribes on the north side.

The tabernacle with its courts set "in the midst" of so many thousands of delivered and happy Israel, must have been an imposing sight — an all-absorbing scene of wonder to the whole nation, as well as to each individual of the mighty host. In this arrangement we see the same typical picture, under different symbols, as that presented to us in chapters four and five of the Revelation. The Most Holy Place of the tabernacle was the abode of the God of Israel among His people. When the tabernacle was set up as described in Exodus chapter forty, then the Shekinah, the Cloud of God's glorious presence, covered the whole tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. It is interesting to observe that while the Cloud of God's Glory rested upon the entire tabernacle complex, the glory of the Lord also "filled the tabernacle," thus designating the Most Holy Place as the dwelling place or the tabernacle of God.

Later God said to Moses, "Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the Most Holy Place within the veil before the mercy seat...that he die not: for I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD UPON THE MERCY SEAT" (Lev. 16:2). Isaiah testified, "O, Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that DWELLEST BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM, Thou art God" (Isa. 37:16). From various other scripture passages we learn that God was *in* the cloud, He *appeared* in the cloud, He *spoke* out of the cloud, He *led* Israel by the cloud, and in the cloud He ***dwelt in the Most Holy Place, over the ark with its mercy-seat or throne of grace.*** The tabernacle, and especially the throne upon the ark, between the cherubim, was in very fact **GOD'S THRONE** among Israel from which, by His word and His power, He ruled over them!

Armed with the understanding that the tabernacle constituted God's "throne" among His people, let us note that just as John beheld in vision a "great multitude" standing "before" the throne in the heavens of God's Spirit, so was there in the Old Testament type a "great multitude" of the camps of Israel positioned "before" the throne of God in the tabernacle. These thousands of Israel were receiving the blessings and benefits of His kingdom ministered through the typical sacrifices and ministrations of the tabernacle service and the priesthood. Thus we see that the tabernacle was the dwelling place of God — His throne, His sphere of activity, the center of His power, glory, and goodness. The camp of Israel, the great multitude "before" the throne, represents the whole world of mankind outside of God, estranged in their experience from His

life, yet redeemed, blessed, and brought nigh by the blood of the Lamb. But there is a THIRD COMPANY — the CAMP OF THE PRIESTS — situated, as it were, “round about the throne,” directly *between* the “throne” and the “great multitude”! The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “The Israelites shall encamp each by his own tribal standard or banner, with the ensign of their fathers’ houses, opposite the tent of meeting (tabernacle) and facing it on every side. Then the tent of meeting (tabernacle) shall set out, with the **CAMP OF THE LEVITES IN THE MIDST OF THE CAMPS**” (Num. 2:2,17). The priestly tribe of Levi was not counted among the tribes of Israel, for they belonged uniquely to the Lord Himself; therefore they were not camped with the four camps of Israelites before the tabernacle. They were the Lord’s priests, and were instructed to camp just outside the tabernacle, around the tabernacle, *between* the tabernacle and all the other tribes of Israel in their camps. Thus in type they answer to the twenty-four Elders in the Revelation who are located “round about the throne” — *between* the throne and the great multitude!

Divine infinite purpose lies behind this entire arrangement and the moment the wonderful significance of this dawns upon our spiritual understanding, we see that God has placed a PRIESTHOOD COMPANY ***between Himself and the whole world of mankind!*** Webster’s dictionary defines priest as: A mediatory agent *between* God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word *cohen*, the root meaning of which is “one who stands up and draws nigh for another.” The Greek word, in its root, means “to minister.” Thus, a priest is one who draws nigh and ministers in *two directions* — drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people, and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God! The priest ***stands between.*** The ministry of the priest is an intermediary or go-between ministry. He reaches forth with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; he then brings the two together by the power of his priestly ministration. Can we not see that this is the very reason God placed the priesthood of Israel in an encampment directly *between* the tabernacle throne and the great multitude of the people. That is the picture! Most people miss this great truth, and I don’t remember ever seeing a drawing of the tabernacle and the camp of Israel in the wilderness with the tribe of Levi correctly positioned in the open area of the hollow square *between* the tabernacle and the camps of the tribes. IT IS FURTHERMORE ABUNDANTLY EVIDENT THAT THEY CORRESPOND PRECISELY TO THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS JOHN BEHELD “ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE.” Isn’t it wonderful!

Hear now the declaration of inspiration as the spirit of wisdom and revelation unfolds to us the mystery of God’s great purpose. The four Living Creatures “in the midst” of the throne speak to us of KINGSHIP. The twenty-four Elders “round about the throne” speak to us of PRIESTHOOD. Though not portrayed as being “in” the throne, yet they are seated “upon thrones” and wear golden “crowns” upon their heads! These all signify God’s KINGS and PRIESTS, truly His KING-PRIEST COMPANY! Know then, my beloved, that these are not two separate groups of people, but they do represent two aspects of ministry — kingship and priesthood — combined in one overcoming company of God’s called and chosen elect. “Thou hast made **us** unto our God **Kings and priests:** and we shall **reign on the earth.**” Oh, the wonder of it!

With these truths firmly in mind we will now return to our text for this message. Here a voice “comes out of the throne,” saying, “praise **our God, all ye His servants!**” It is my deep conviction that this voice can be none other than the voice of God’s KINGS AND PRIESTS — the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders! The message is clear — there is here a **change of ministry.** The great multitude has just been delivered from the captivity of great Babylon. No longer will the ministers of Babylon control and command the Lord’s people, for now the heavenly, enthroned kings and priests of the kingdom have become ***the voice*** heard by **ALL!**

"And **a voice** (word, message, command) came **out of the throne**, saying, Praise **our God** (because of Babylon's destruction and the Lord's full salvation), **ALL** ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both **small** and **great**. And I heard as it were the voice of a **great multitude**, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, ALLELUIA: FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH!"

The voice is charged with the authority of the throne. Now — the Lord God omnipotent REIGNETH! God has now taken His great power and is reigning over His people! God is now establishing HIS KINGDOM in the hearts and lives of every saint of God everywhere! Babylon is over, finished, gone, vanished, a new Day has dawned! Oh, how wonderful are these things! And now notice, dear ones, this is the *last*, the *final* mention of both the four beasts and the twenty-four elders. They are mentioned altogether in the Revelation nine times. Here, and in chapter five, verse eight, both fall down and worship HIM who sits upon the throne. In chapter five, verse fourteen, the beasts say "Amen" and the elders fall down and worship. Here in our text both groups appear and worship God and say *Amen* and *Alleluia*. Can we not see by this that they are not only worshippers, but are now set to lead ALL of the untold millions of saints gathered out of the ages in that greatest chorus of praise — of salvation and deliverance — ever to echo and re-echo among the battlements of heaven. The celestial wonder of this universal chorus is like the sound of "many waters" and like the voice of "mighty thunderings." God's people have been delivered and now *His great salvation* shall be revealed! **Amen!** **Alleluia!**

# Chapter 205

## The Marriage Of The Lamb (continued)

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. **Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:6-8).

The vision is introduced by "the voice as it were of a great multitude." The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders had issued the command from the throne for ALL of God's people everywhere — including the millions upon millions just escaped from the ruins of Babylon — to give praise unto our God. What a command! What a change of ministry! What a power and paradigm shift as the new regime of God's kings and priests take charge over the masses of God's people who hitherto have known only the word and control of the ministers of religious Babylon. Suddenly — wondrously — gloriously John hears a great and mighty voice, as of a great multitude, and as of many waters, and as of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent *reigneth*," — acknowledging in adoring praise the new administration of HIS LORDSHIP! Oh, the wonder of it!

Now we come to an even greater wonder. Not only does the vast multitude express their praise to God, but now they speak as to one another, proclaiming with joy and gladness, "**Let us** be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him..." But WHY? Is it because the Jews have all returned to Palestine? Is it because we see a revived Roman Empire in Europe and thereby know that the end of the age is at hand? Is it because the great increase of earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, wars, immorality, terrorism, and evils and catastrophes of all kinds point unerringly to the soon return of our Lord? Is it because the "rapture" has just taken place and we will escape the seven years of the reign of Antichrist and the indescribable hell of the Great Tribulation? NO — not at all! It is just because THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, **AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY!** What a theme for the song of a multitude! And John hears them exclaiming their praises. It is truly an anthem of triumph! The great system of evil and deception is overthrown. The swaggering harlot, the great boastful Babylon is now a desolation and ALL of God's people, both *small* and *great*, are now freed to truly KNOW THE LORD! They give honor unto HIM and they now see *His wife made ready in all her beauty* and their hearts swell with gladness and they break forth into rejoicing. The marriage of the Lamb is come! What a glorious Day!

Can you not discern the sequence? As soon as Babylon falls — His wife makes herself ready for the marriage! Individually and personally this happens within the experience of every member of the BRIDE COMPANY. Corporately and dispensationally it takes place as the Lord truly brings an end to religious Babylon and moves to deliver all His people everywhere. The "little flock," the true church, the little virgin bride is now presented in all her beauty and splendor for all the Lord's people, and indeed for all creation, to behold! Ah, my beloved, it is a question of *readiness, fitness* for the wedding, for the marriage. "**The marriage...is come**, and His wife hath made herself *ready*." In what does this readiness, this fitness, consist? "And to her was granted that she should be *arrayed in fine linen, clean and white*: for the fine linen is the

*righteousness of saints.*" The preparedness relates to a garment. I will quote it as it is given in the Greek and rendered in the Revised Version. "And it was given unto her to **array herself** in fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the **righteous acts of the saints.**" In this text it says, "It was **granted to her**" — a privilege — "to **array herself**" — it was something SHE could DO! There is one time in the life of a woman when she is extravagant in her dress; one time when she diligently and at great cost and with much patience and care arrays herself in garments of particular elaborateness and intricate beauty — and that time is on her wedding day! So here the bride arrays herself in a garment of her own making. She obtains the material from beyond herself, but she by her own effort fashions it, forms it, and clothes herself with it!

There is an interesting passage in Isaiah 61:10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride **adorneth herself** with her jewels." This verse teaches us two things: (1) that God has *clothed* us with the GARTMENTS OF SALVATION and (2) He has *covered* us with the ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Spirit here points out to us that not only is there a garment of salvation, but there is in addition a robe of righteousness. Jesus Christ is our salvation! We are saved by grace through faith, Paul tells us, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9). We are clothed with the garment of salvation as a free gift. God clothed each and every child of God with the garment of salvation in that blessed moment when we believed on Christ Jesus as Saviour and Redeemer. We are to greatly rejoice in the Lord that He has clothed us with the garment of salvation!

As soon as man sinned, *God made them garments*, the Bible declares. That means that God accepts men just as they are in their consciousness of their humanity and their fleshly condition. He affirms them as carnal, sinful, as sheep gone astray, each turned to his own way. But, blessed be God! He does not permit them to stand before Him in the consciousness of their nakedness, of their exposed flesh — nor does He expose their flesh to one another in their nakedness. Oh, no! HE HIMSELF COVERS THEM. By making garments for men God shows that He first of all accepts them as they are, in all their fleshiness. In this way He *covers their flesh* but does not destroy it. God's first action towards man is that He preserves him in his sinful state of being, with the physical body, the carnal mind, and the fleshly inclinations, giving him an "atonement," that is, a "covering" to hide or take the attention away from his flesh, making him "accepted in the Beloved" — *until* he can be changed! With the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden, having disobeyed the command of God, and partaking of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were opened, and they saw their flesh exposed, they *knew* that they were naked, and went and "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8). How descriptive that is of the experience of every man! To this day Adam's race senses their shame, perceives the exposure of their fleshliness, and cannot stand in the presence of God without fear, UNLESS CLOTHED UPON WITH THE GARTMENTS OF THE SALVATION OF OUR GOD! Gladly, therefore, do we freely acknowledge that "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation." Aren't you glad!

May I share with you now a revelation that has been a great blessing and encouragement to me in my walk in God. First, let me say that the *garment of salvation* is the righteousness of Christ **imputed to us by faith**. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was *counted unto him for righteousness*. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that *justifieth the ungodly*, His faith is *counted for righteousness*. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God *imputeth righteousness without works*, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose **sins are covered**. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will

not *impute sin*" (Rom. 4:3-8). "Abraham believed God, and it was *counted* unto him for righteousness." This word "counted" translates the Greek word *logizomai* which means to reckon, number, account, impute, all of which mean to **credit** to one's account. Because Abraham believed God, it was imputed or credited unto his account that he was righteous. The Amplified Bible says, "Abraham believed (trusted in) God, and it was credited to his account **as righteousness** — right living and right standing with God...thus David congratulates the man and pronounces a blessing on him to whom God credits righteousness **apart from the works he does.**" Paul continues, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for *us also*, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered up for *our offences*, and was raised again for *our justification*" (Rom. 4:23-25).

This is the sphere with which most Christians are acquainted, and we bless God for this beautiful and precious truth, for it is the solid foundation upon which we can build as we experience God in His great dealings and plan and purpose in our lives. Our practical, daily experience has revealed the undeniable fact that just because the righteousness of Christ has been "imputed" to us, "charged to our account," doesn't mean that there has been even one iota of change in our STATE OF BEING. It doesn't mean that we are any less carnal, any less sinful, any less bound by weaknesses, habits, and addictions, any less likely to fear, be upset and angry, gossip, smoke, drink, lust, or be any more godly in thoughts, desires, and actions. It means that we now possess by faith, and as a free gift, the GARMENT OF SALVATION, and clothed in this garment we are legally saved from (the guilt of, or punishment for) our sins, being forgiven, acquitted, and all our past, present, and future has been *covered* by God's matchless grace! This garment of salvation was wrought out (or woven) on the loom of Calvary by Christ our Lord. HE worked out this great salvation for us! HE made the garment of salvation. We never could. We had absolutely nothing to do with it — it was His work, gracious, noble, profound, and eternal! Ah, yes, my beloved, you have received all this as a gift, but you yourself have not yet been fully changed, transformed from the earthly into the heavenly, having experientially put on ALL HE IS!

So, while *imputed righteousness* gives us a clean slate before God, we soon discover by experience that this leaves us far short in our *state of being* of the image and glory of God, far short of either maturity or perfection. We still find in our nature the law, the very working of "sin and death," and all the old emotions and cravings of "the flesh" are continually surging, seething, bubbling up just beneath the surface. In our salvation experience we have found mercy, goodness, graciousness from God, a covering, an atonement, and yet, is it not true, dear child of God, that our hearts are not satisfied? Why? Is it not because we know in our deepest heart that the garment of salvation has covered over all our sins, but beneath that garment still lies our flesh — our INNER STATE OF BEING STILL REMAINS PITIFULLY UNCHANGED!

God dearly loves all His little children unto whom He has imputed the righteousness of Christ by faith. And they are His no matter how they are living today! But He doesn't want to leave us in this unrighteous state! His plan and purpose is to change us, transform us into His very image and likeness, to actually **make us pure as He is pure, righteous as He is righteous!** He wants to **impart** His righteousness to us, not just **impute** it. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM" (II Cor. 5:21). Can you not see that there is a world of difference between being **counted righteous** and being **made righteousness!** Every son of God is ordained and predestined to possess and become the righteousness of God, be **righteous as He is righteous**, to be holy as He is holy. Who wouldn't want to become this righteousness? Who would not desire to always be right in all we think, in all we desire, in all we say and do — to never again think anything

wrong or have any wrong ideas, desires, or motives; but to always be pure, correct, and divine in everything. What a blessed state! Impossible? Not at all! It is what God has planned for us and is working on in us. Of this very truth the Psalmist wrote when he said, "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's (nature's) sake." He leads me in paths that will bring me to this glorious state where my *inward nature* is righteous as He is righteous. Blessed be the Lord!

I thank God today that there is a righteousness, a divine righteousness that God can impart and inwork into men, and which can exalt a man to the image and likeness of God. In no other way can men ever be exalted or lifted up out of the power of sin, self, limitation, sorrow, and death. So I gladly and thankfully this day record this truth that the righteousness of which I speak is the righteousness of God, which by faith we may possess; not merely a righteousness imputed, in which we can trust for our salvation, but a righteousness IMPARTED, INWORKED INTO THE NATURE. All very good is this talk about imputed righteousness, but I cannot — will not — settle for a righteousness that is only imputed. If it is not **imparted**, it is not a **power within us** at all. I thank God for the word of the Master Himself who told us that this kingdom of God would be within us, and defined it. He said that we are to SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. He said that we are to HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. And Paul excellently words it when he says, "The kingdom of God **is** righteousness...in the Holy Ghost."

We want more than just to pile "coverings" over our flesh nature, we want our inherent nature changed into HIS, so that all that is contrary to Him shall be completely done away. Multitudes have received the glad news of how the righteousness of God is imputed to us by faith, and have believed, but still in their daily life they know that within themselves there remains the rudiments of carnal mindedness and sin. And with repeated failure and guilt-consciousness they keep on praying day after day, "Lord, forgive us our short-comings! Forgive us our trespasses! Forgive us our many sins!" And year after year they never cease praying that way. Why? Because imputed righteousness is our possession as we believe on Him, but we must go on in to the second provision of His redemption, to not only be clothed with the garments of salvation, but to lay hold upon and appropriate HIS INWORKED RIGHTEOUSNESS, becoming covered with the ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which results in an entirely new **state of being**, making us **like Him**, transformed and transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor...from one degree of glory to another (II Cor. 3:18).

To be covered with the robe of righteousness means that when men look at us they SEE NOTHING BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS! Ah, it is easy to find people wearing the garments of salvation, for we see His salvation upon them, we can tell they have met the Lord, they know they are His children, they rejoice in sins forgiven, and they trust Him to help them and bless them in various ways. They have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, but few have gone on to the second step of His redemption of which Paul spoke when he wrote: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled, we shall be saved (from all sin, carnality, limitation, and death) **BY HIS LIFE**" (Rom. 5:10). It means a laying down of our lives, for when we are manifesting our life men are not seeing His life. When we lay down our life, to manifest His life, then it becomes His life that is seen. Now, if they see **us** they see a robe, but it is not a robe of righteousness, but a covering of flesh which is a garment of death. After Isaiah speaks of our putting on the robe of righteousness, in the very next verse he declares, "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God WILL CAUSE RIGHTEOUSNESS TO SPRING FORTH BEFORE ALL THE NATIONS" (Isa. 61:11).

God is going to spring forth righteousness until all the nations SEE IT! Hallelujah! This, beloved, can only be wrought by the power of the indwelling Christ. Oh, yes, Christ Himself IS the righteousness of God! And Christ dwells within our regenerated spirit. So where do you suppose the robe of righteousness comes from? Not from God up in His heaven, but right out from the Christ within you! Oh, how near the robe of righteousness is! Therefore are we admonished, "***Put ye on*** the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). Yes, my beloved, the almighty Father Himself gave us this robe of righteousness right within our spirit and WE MUST PUT IT ON — ARRAY OURSELVES in it so that what is true in our spirit appears outwardly, super-imposing our fleshly mind, will, and ways. That is the mystery! How wonderful are the words John heard concerning the bride of the Lamb: "And it was given to her to ***array herself*** in fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is ***the righteous acts of the saints.***"

"Thy people also shall be ***all righteous***: the branch of ***my planting***, the work of ***my hands***, that ***I may be glorified***" (Isa. 60:21). To God be the glory, HE is bringing forth a firstfruit company, the work of His hands, the branch of His planting, to BECOME ONE IN CHRIST, and of this very Christ, Head and body, the Son and the sons, the Lamb and His bride, we read, "this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6). No more of our own self-righteousness, no more stumbling and blundering and falling, but so ***fully clothed with Him***, that our very state of being testifies "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Certainly HE shall be glorified, because HE alone shall be exalted, magnified through the revelation of His grace and glory through the completed work of His hands. This desire has been implanted by God, and HE shall certainly bring about its fulfillment! We have tried to do it ourselves, but praise the Lord, He is now stripping us of all our self effort and fig-leaf works, while the great ***hand of God Himself*** begins to work, raising up within us a righteousness that is neither self-appropriated nor self-proclaimed, but the finished work of ***His hands***, and how it shall redound to His praise! Yes, as His life alone becomes our life, all that we do shall be righteous. There is no grand leap from the simple ***garments of salvation*** to the exquisite ***robe of righteousness***, but there must be that active and experiential inworking of Himself.

When people see a life that is beyond and contrary to any life they have ever witnessed, then the righteousness of Christ is revealed. When people behold us in our problems, under the pressures of job, family, and bills; in the perplexities of trouble and the horrible disappointment of tragedy and loss — when they see us facing these things and never see a reaction from us of our flesh, but only the peace, joy, confidence, and stability of the Christ within — then men see righteousness springing forth from us and they perceive that we are decked with the robe of righteousness for HE IS SEEN. When nothing but HIM is revealed men will declare, "I never saw people act like these act, I never heard people speak like these speak; how can a person stand so calm, cool, and collected in the face of such difficulties, pressures, and testings — something supernatural is here!"

Put ye on Christ! To this you are called. Seek to walk worthy of this calling. Yield yourself to the mighty Christ within you to reveal the wonderful grace and the omnipotent power of His life that enables you to be clothed in a divine righteousness. Take time to realize that it is the King's own robe that you are invited to wear! It is the token that you are the ***chosen one*** whom the King delights to honor and to raise up to His side to sit with Him in His throne. The Psalmist revealed the great truth that "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne" (Ps. 97:2). His ***throne*** means HIS RULERSHIP in and through our lives, as His will replaces our will, His thoughts replace our thoughts, and HIS LIFE becomes the sphere of our daily activity. The fruit of righteousness is the fulfilling of His will in us, and the filling up of our life with His rulership, His throne fixed in us, where He rules and reigns supreme. Take time to remember that as much as

you need it in the palace, in the King's presence, and in the midst of His "many brethren," no less do you require it when He sends you forth into the world, where you are the King's representative. Live your life daily in the full consciousness of being covered with the robe of righteousness, an object of honor, dignity, power, glory, and delight in the kingdom of God!

Let all who read this message know that Jesus Christ is our garment of salvation and He is our robe of righteousness. He is also the fine linen, bright and pure, with which the beautiful bride of the Lamb arrays herself! Just as Eve was taken out of Adam, so our robe of righteousness is derived out of Christ within our spirit. As the soul puts on more and more this robe, the bride is adorned for her marriage. Put on Christ! This work must be done each day in the inner chamber of our communion and identification with Him. No person changes clothes in public view! And how better can we put Him on than by our constant living and abiding in fellowship and union with Him in the secret place of the most High? Oh soul, take time to meditate upon this wonderful truth. It takes great patience, diligence, and much time for a bride to array herself for her wedding. This cannot be done hastily or superficially. It takes great patience, diligence, and much time, my beloved, to put on Christ! It takes time, quiet time in living in fellowship with Jesus, to realize that you have put Him on. Take the time and the trouble. Your reward will be great! As our garments cover us and protect us from the wind and sun and cold, so Christ will be our beauty, our defense, our joy, and our victory as we draw nigh to Him in every experience and circumstance of life!

Now, lest our investigation of truth should seem to miss the reality itself, I must point out clearly that although all who witness the marriage of the Lamb also behold the beauty of the bride arrayed in her shimmering robe of fine, bright, pure linen — yet, it is not truly for *their* eyes that she is adorned. The bridegroom has won the heart of His bride, and in royal glory He will own and display her. But she is first of all *for Himself*. It is the "marriage of the Lamb" and "*His wife* has made herself ready." Hear further the blessed words of John the beloved as he describes the glory of the bride under a different figure, that of the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, "prepared," says he, "as a bride **adorned for her husband**" (Rev. 21:2). The bride is not seen here as made ready for display, but made ready *for Him*, even as Paul affirms, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might **present it TO HIMSELF a glorious church**, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish...for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church*" (Eph. 5:25-27,31,32). Can we not see by this that in her adornment the bride's one and only thought is to be agreeable, pleasing, attractive, and desirable to HIM, to suffice for HIS HEART!

The passage above (Rev. 21:2), in my opinion, is one of the most profound and awe-inspiring statements of all scripture, and yet very few Christians grasp the true significance of the scene. John sees the bride-city *coming down from God out of heaven adorned as a bride for her husband*. If we are to understand from this scene what John is describing for us, then what he sees is that the bride "adorned herself" IN HEAVEN. She did not adorn herself and make herself ready on earth in preparation for being raptured away to a marriage in some far-off heaven somewhere; rather, she adorns herself in the heavens of the spirit of the Lord and subsequently descends from that high and holy sphere to be glorified before men in the earthlies! Strange, isn't it, how the "traditions of the elders" usually get the truth of God turned around backwards!

For many years I have loved the beautiful portraits of the bride and the bridegroom in the chapters of the Song of Solomon. There are many facets and characteristics in the story, but in

all the portrayals of the drama which is Solomon's Song, the Lord is looking for the Shulamite, for that loveliest girl who ravishes His heart and who is going to share His love and reproduce His life in the earth. She reaches for Him, is always and in every way seeking after Him, responding to His overtures, His advances, His wooing, as He seeks to express Himself in her. In her search for her Beloved the lovely Shulamite maiden exclaims, "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away" (S. of S. 2:8-10).

There is precious meaning here for the upbuilding of our souls. Before the eighth verse the bridegroom has withdrawn. There are times when He withdraws or hides Himself that He may prod us into deeper depths of earnestness in seeking after Him. And there are times when we do not keep in touch with Him, as we are caught up in the cares of life and the clamoring of the world, and the calls and demands of our own flesh, and are not quiet enough before Him, so that we can discern Him and experience His work in us unhindered and undisturbed. Christ the Bridegroom is in our spirit, He is not afar off, for He is nigh unto us. Yet how terrible is the vast chasm between flesh and spirit! Still, from within our spirit, across the great gulf, the voice of our beloved comes to us in terms of love and endearment, in words of wooing, as well as in experience and dealings. Now the bride hears the sound of His presence — she has not seen Him, but she hears His sound, she has not experienced Him, but she hears His voice and knows that He is drawing nigh. Suddenly she sees Him — leaping upon the mountains; those impassable obstacles, which would prove insurmountable to anyone else, are stepping-stones for His feet. He has, within Himself, overcome all things as the Son of man, from the manger of Bethlehem to Jerusalem's tomb, and now He leaps from one craggy peak of victory to the other with the sure, swift feet of the roe or young hart. He leaps over every obstacle of self, of flesh, of sin, of sorrow, of fear, of limitation, and death. He leaps upon the mountains and skips upon the hills in the triumph of the spirit! The Shulamite is unable yet to identify with all those high realms of victory, therefore to her He appears and disappears, now in sight and then not seen, but ever drawing nearer and nearer.

Sometimes as we face the difficulties in our lives and the challenges that seem impossible, we wonder if we can surmount them, and sometimes we are sure that we cannot. We seem so attached, so bogged down and held in captivity by the fleshly and the earthly. But He who could surmount the mountains of man's deception, sin, and limitation, of the cunning of the carnal mind, and the powers of death and the grave, can surmount every mountain and hill that is in your life and mine. And now, from these lofty peaks of His triumph she hears His voice! "My beloved spake, and said unto me..." Can you not hear His voice? He is speaking, He is calling, and He says, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." He does not at this time call the bride to "come away *with* Him," but to come away and *meet* Him. "Rise up...come away!" Leave everything, especially your own reasonings behind, and come away into communion with Him. In that quiet communion of love He will lead you, lift you up, and guide your feet in higher places. It is when we first hear His voice, that we must rise up and come away to meet Him. It is when His presence steals in upon us, and His whisper falls softly upon our ear, that we must turn aside from all else to spend time sitting at His feet. God does not stand still, He is ever moving on; and if we delay His voice will grow fainter and fainter, so that when we do arise to go to Him, we may not find Him in that place which He had prepared for us.

Do you understand that every spiritual drawing you sense in your heart, is the voice of your Beloved calling you to "rise up and come away"? Every moving and yearning from the depths of your spirit within you, is the voice of your Bridegroom urging you to hasten. It is easier to settle

down and rest upon the experiences we have had, than to run harder that we may attain to a higher height in Him. Later the Shulamite hears His voice calling her to a specific place — not to *meet* Him now, but to be *with* Him where He is, to experience what He has experienced in union with Him. “Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Herman, from the lion’s dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart...” (S. of S. 4:8-9).

“Look from the top...” He challenges her. In other words, now that you are in this place of experience come away and look even higher, and higher, for the things that I will do in you. And He is just experiencing His divine joy through union with His love. “Thou hast ravished my heart...how fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!” (S. of S. 4:9-10). He is commenting on her reality, not as she sees herself, but as HE sees her. Her reality is pleasing to Him as much as His reality is pleasing to us. “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of (the cedars of) Lebanon” (vs. 11). Previously it was His lips that she saw. But now He says, “Thy lips...” And He continues, “A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard...and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon” (vs. 12-15).

When giving instructions for the blending of the holy anointing oil Moses instructed, “Take all the principle spices...” (Ex. 30:22-25). This addresses the ancient art of the apothecary. The Bridegroom is whispering to the bride that *she* is God’s apothecary, the mixing and mingling of all His divine virtues, excellences, fragrances, and energies! She is leaning upon her beloved, taking all of this in, He is loving her, making love to her, and she’s receiving it from Him. She knows that Christ is in her, that within her spirit lies all the reality of all the glorious things He is speaking to her, but still she finds herself just as He described her earlier, “A garden *enclosed* is my sister, my spouse; a spring *shut up*, a fountain *sealed*.” Have you not felt that way, dear one? Finally, with great earnestness and with fierce intensity she prays, “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, **that the spices thereof may flow out.** Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits” (vs. 16). In other words, mix your apothecary, Lord; blow the winds of your dealings, move your spirit through me, come into your garden and let the spices flow out!

Can you not see what’s happened? She is absolutely in love, so she has yielded herself in totality. This is the place God is bringing us to, where we say, “Lord, you can have my life. You can do what you want to do with me. I am yours and *yours alone*. I forsake every other love, I denounce every vestige of Babylon, I keep myself unto you, and to you alone. I am yours completely. Take my life right now, today, in any way you please. Do what you must do to release the spices of my life and make my garden the fruitful garden where you can dine with me and I with you, and all creation can come to our feast!” Oh, yes! Do you doubt that that is her intent, her prayer? Then consider the very next verse: “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: **eat, O FRIENDS; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!**” (S. of S. 5:1). “I am here,” He says, “I am in your garden which is my garden. I’ve already mixed these spices, I have already tasted and eaten the sweetness of your life, I have drunk the wine and the milk of your joy and victory!” All this represents Christ being raised up within us in higher and purer levels of understanding, experience, and manifestation! Oh, the wonder of it!

People say, "Where is your God?" We respond, "Oh, He's in heaven, or He's here, or He's there." Do you know where He is? He's right here within us — ***in His garden!*** Your Beloved is in your garden, He's in your body, He's in your soul, He's in your spirit, in the fruitful places of your life which He has made fruitful. He's not out there, not in some far-off heaven somewhere, He's right there in the garden which ***you are***. You may not be aware of His presence, you may not have experienced the beauty and wonder of intimate fellowship and vital union with Him, but these words are here to awaken you, to cause you to rise up, to listen for His voice, to discern His presence, to yield to His love, to follow after Him in a whole new realm of reality and experience. "The voice of my beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills...my beloved spake, and said unto me, *Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away...*" Some who read these lines are hearing His voice, receiving His call, even now...

"Rise up...***look from the top of Amana***...thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart." Oh, yes! It is *up there* — in the high places of experience in Him — that we are made one in Him. Only in the heights of HIS VICTORY are we adorned in the robe of His righteousness. It is upon the mountain tops of spiritual experience that we are perfected. It is there, in the heavenly places of the spirit, that the bride is made ready for the marriage of the Lamb. Can you not see the mystery? That is why John did not see the perfected bride-city "going up" to heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Oh, no! In rapturous wonder John stands transfixed as he beholds the New Jerusalem bride COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN **PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND** — ready for the marriage, ready for union! Oh, the mystery of it!

## THE MARRIAGE

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the *marriage of the Lamb is come*, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the *marriage supper of the Lamb*" (Rev. 19:7-9).

We may notice that there are two distinct elements in the vision; first, that of the *marriage* and second, that of the *marriage supper*. Neither one of these is described as being witnessed by John himself; but they are pictured by him in terms of the words of the multitude and of the angel. The multitude of the saints is pictured, first of all, as saying, "...for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Then the bride of the Lamb is described, also in the words of the multitude who at this moment behold her in all her beauty and elegance. And finally, the marriage supper is introduced into the picture as the angel commands John to write, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Once again we must keep in mind that we are dealing here with a vision, with a picture which is highly symbolic. We cannot take the language of this passage literally without falling into all kinds of absurdities. What we have here is a highly symbolic picture of *spiritual union with our Lord* — the *marriage of the Lamb*. Should we try to take it literally we would see Jesus standing on a cloud with vast multitudes of saints standing before Him, while the Father, or an archangel, or one of the Patriarchs, or someone else recited the wedding vows. The marriage would then be followed by a great wedding feast of earthly food set upon tables stretching into infinity, followed of course by the final act of the drama — sexual union. Any thinking person knows that such is not the case! Ray Prinzing once expressed it this way: "It readily becomes an allegory, but for many it reaches only their natural mind to be viewed after the flesh. They talk of being a 'bride,' and see themselves someday walking down a pathway clothed in beautiful bridal attire, to where the Lord waits for them, and God performs the ceremony, and they, with Jesus, enjoy a

thousand year honeymoon on the Beautiful Isle of Somewhere. How they think that this ‘individual ceremony’ shall be repeated innumerable times for every other member of this bride-company, I don’t know. And if they make it a great universal ceremony, just imagine the crowding in to be one of those ‘up front,’ with tens of thousands all around. So who is the selected one to walk hand in hand, while all the others yearn to touch Him too? Obviously all such thinking is of the carnal mind, relating, or trying to relate spiritual truth to natural conditions of this present world. No, we cannot do this, nor think of fulfillment in Christ according to the literalness of the flesh. But there are beautiful applications to be seen for spiritual reality, and we find much to be desired in this relationship with Christ.”

These are all *spiritual realities typified by earthly things!* And in that picture there are several elements, namely, the bridegroom, the bride, the attendants and guests, the wedding, and the marriage supper of the Lamb. The light of inspiration and revelation must shine brightly upon each of these elements to give us understanding!

The Bible begins with the marriage of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis and ends with the marriage of the Lamb and His bride in the book of Revelation. The marriage scene is one of the most joyful that we witness on earth, and among Eastern nations especially was celebrated with great pomp and magnificence, the joy and splendor of the occasion being enhanced according to the rank and wealth of the parties. Modern day weddings attract varied responses. The prospective bride waits eagerly the day. The bridegroom is eager also, but perhaps a bit more apprehensive in view of the responsibilities he is taking on. Mothers are tearful as their “little darlings” stroll down the isle. Fathers are nervous. Little brothers and sisters can’t understand why there is such a fuss. Yet, the wedding day is one of the highlights of society’s functions. But earth has never witnessed such an event as this special and unique *marriage of the Lamb!* Well may the inhabitants of heaven and earth, in view of this sublime spectacle, swell the song of praise — “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready!” The special preparations that the bride is making represents the “perfecting of the saints” which has been the theme of the great moving and prophetic voice of the Holy Spirit beginning especially with the “Latter Rain” visitation in 1948 and continuing on throughout the whole earth to this present time. Purging the Lord’s called and separated elect from the errors of the carnal church systems of man; raising up the Christ-life within to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil; drawing an overcoming company into the paths of His leading, into paths of righteousness, truth, purity, and power — truly His wife is making herself ready!

In writing these precious truths relating to the marriage of the Lamb, we are reminded again of the words of the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep...” (Jn. 4:11). Ah, what *depths* there are to every particular realm and relationship which is prepared for us to attain to in Christ! There are beautiful truths — deep depths and high heights — to be explored as we ponder this special relationship of brideship and the marriage of the Lamb. Is it an individual experience? Is it a corporate experience? Is it a present reality — or a future event? Let there be no doubt in the mind of any man that it is *all of these* — and much, much **more!**

Just the sound of the words “The marriage of the Lamb” brings great joy, excitement, and anticipation to my heart, as it should to every member of God’s elect. Beloved soul, we have rightly rejoiced in the beautiful truth of our *brideship* to Christ, however we must have anointed eyes to see and a quickened heart to understand that in the final analysis the bride, though beautiful and blessed beyond words to describe, is not the center of attention at the marriage of the Lamb. *It is the Bridegroom who is exalted there!* “Let us be glad and rejoice, and **give**

***honor unto HIM: for the marriage of THE LAMB is come..."*** It is not "the marriage of *the bride*" that is rejoiced in, but rather "the marriage of *the Lamb*." It is the Lamb who brings the bride to His glory! It is the Lamb who loved her, and gave Himself for her! It is the Lamb who sanctifies and cleanses her with the washing of water by the word! It is the Lamb who *presents her unto Himself a glorious church*, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...holy and without blemish. It is the Lamb who woos her and wins her! She takes *His name*, she walks in *His paths*, she shares *His life*, she is *made one in Him*. Oh, yes! Truly, it is GOD who worketh *in you*, beloved, both to will and to do of His good pleasure! It is CHRIST in *your spirit* who is drawing your soul, wooing you, and raising you up to live in Him! Thank God, we are not left to our own devices to try and find our place in Him. "Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things!" It is the Lamb who has taken the initiative! It is the Lamb who has desired us, called us, proposed to us, planned for us, and determined the outcome. Therefore — it is the Lamb that is exalted — exalted by the bride at His side and exalted by the unnumbered millions who fill the universe with their paeans of praise! It is indeed wonderful!

# Chapter 206

## The Marriage Of The Lamb (continued)

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the *marriage of the Lamb is come*, and *His wife hath made herself ready*. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the *marriage supper of the Lamb*" (Rev. 19:7-9).

The next thing we need to understand in order to grasp this great mystery of the Lamb and His wife is that the bride of the Lamb is the *virgin church*, and the virgin church is just that — a virgin. I do not mean that every person who makes up this virgin church company is naturally and physically a virgin, one who has never had sexual relations in the flesh. The Spirit is not talking here about natural things, but He is teaching us of *spiritual realities*. Can we not see by this that the beautiful bride of the Lamb is spiritually a virgin, that is, she is virgin in her relationship to the Lord, reserved for Him and for Him alone. We have known what it is to be conformed to the course of **this world**. Then we have known what it is to trust Christ as Saviour and seek to serve Him while being entangled in all the defilement of a corrupt Babylonish religious system. But God is calling forth a glorious body of Christ who, because of the word of the Lord and the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is desiring to be **VIRGIN** — separated only unto her glorious Bridegroom. How lightly we sometimes take the purposes of God in us! It is one thing to be washed in the blood, freed from all our past sins, and quite another thing to truly be virgin in our desires to keep ourselves only unto the Lord — no other loves. Separation is coming from everything of the flesh, the world, the devil, and from every vestige of entanglement with the false church systems of man which we have made our Head in place of the living Christ. Though we may have previously been fornicators with this bawdy religious harlot, the Lord is cleansing us, changing us, transforming us, and bringing us forth as an entirely **new creation**, and in this new creation He is causing us to be virgin in our desires toward our Lord.

The next mystery that we need to understand, in order to comprehend what the Holy Spirit is really saying to us, is that not only does this virgin church company keep itself wholly unto the Lord, but while she is truly *espoused* unto the Lord the marriage of the Lamb has not yet been consummated. She has not been joined in marriage union with the Lord, else she would not be a *virgin*. When we speak of the "virgin church" we must understand that we speak of the *bride of Christ* who is espoused to Jesus Christ as His wife. We often entertain very faulty ideas concerning this beautiful truth because many of our Western customs are so different from the Eastern customs. Many people think that the true church is *not yet* the bride or wife of Christ and will only *become* the bride or wife of Christ at the time of the "marriage of the Lamb" as revealed in chapter nineteen of the Revelation. But such is not the case! Let me explain the Eastern custom of betrothal and marriage, the traditions from which the analogy of marriage in scripture is drawn.

The Israelitish marriage customs in Bible times involved three major steps. The first step was **betrothal**, the establishment of the marriage covenant that bound the man and woman together as husband and wife (Mal. 2:14; Mat. 1:18-19). The apostle Paul referred to this great mystery when he wrote, "*I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*" (II Cor. 11:2). The meaning put on "espousal" is vital. The Basic Bible reads, "*You*

*have been married by me to one husband...*" Wuest says, "*I gave you in marriage...*" Both show the marriage as a past event. In Bible days, prior to the actual wedding and marriage consummation, there was what was known as *betrothal* or *espousal*. This was somewhat like our modern engagement, except that it was much more binding and obligatory. It was more than a mere promise between two individuals to eventually "get married," for it was in fact *the marriage* — at least the first step of the process. At the time of the espousal the families of the man and woman were involved in the negotiation of a contract between the two parties. It was a notable occasion! The payment of a suitable dowry was usually a feature of the contract. The groom or his father had to pay a price to the girl's father for the bride. When the contract was signed and sealed in the presence of witnesses, the contract meant that the couple were legally married — they were husband and wife. Matthew makes this plain when he records, "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away (divorce her) privately*" (Mat. 1:18-19).

This period of engagement or betrothal was taken so seriously that any violation of the engagement was considered adultery and any break-up of the espousal required a legal procedure — a bill of divorce. This reveals the seriousness of the situation when Joseph learned that Mary was with child. The news did more than stun him! It forced him to make a decision; either to expose Mary publicly or divorce her privately. In either case, Mary would have been dishonored by her family and friends, and degraded by the Jewish community. Even worse, her son would have been born an outcast with no rights of citizenship, and prohibited from worship in the temple. Under these circumstances, Joseph chose to be as gracious and kind as Jewish law permitted; he decided to put her away privately. But then the angel brought the message to Joseph and he took Mary home as his wife, accepted her child as his own, and became legally the father of Jesus. What explains his change of heart? Just this — his belief in God's message that Mary's child was a special creation, conceived of the Holy Spirit, to bring salvation into our world!

Now let us return to the marriage customs. After the espousal, at a later time, usually about a year, the second step in the wedding took place. During the interval, the two were not joined physically in intimacy. The bride remained a virgin. The girl continued to live in her own home, and the man in his. The groom begins to prepare a home for them to live in. This period also gave the bride a chance to "prepare herself" and "make herself ready" for the coming union. She learns many needful things and beautifies herself in every way. She wants to be perfect for her lover. One of the most important parts of her beautification was her gown. The white wedding dress was then chosen and knit together into a beautiful garment for her to wear when the groom comes for her. The wedding dress symbolized her pure and chaste life.

The second step in the marriage was when, on the appointed day, the groom came with his friends to *take* the bride back to his home. This "taking" of the bride was usually done at night approximately one year after the betrothal. This led to the consummation of the marriage through physical union of the bride and groom on the first night at the groom's house. Since this second step was the essence of the marriage ceremony, it was regarded as the wedding or marriage. Thus the actual "wedding" or "marriage" was not a ceremony at all — it was *union!* We constantly read in scripture of a man *taking* a wife unto himself. We get our attention, in modern marriage customs, fixed on the *ceremony*: forgetting that in the biblical pattern the real *marriage* is "this man *taking unto him* this woman" to *be his wife* in all that it means. The espousal only *announces* it; just as the wedding feast only *celebrates* it! The perfect picture of Christ taking His virgin church as His bride is seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four, where

Abraham would “make a marriage for his son.” He sends Eliezar, his steward, to far away Mesopotamia, to find and woo Rebekah by showing her the “things,” that is, a sample of the wealth of Abraham and Isaac (as the Holy Spirit now shows us “the things” of Christ, the firstfruits of the Spirit); and eventually Rebekah says to Eliezar, “I will go.” And then, the journey over, the record states that when upon their camels Eliezar and Rebekah arrive in the land of Canaan, “Isaac took Rebekah (into his tent); and she became his wife; and he loved her.” The same scenario is repeated a number of times in the Old Testament and this second step corresponds precisely to the expression “marriage of the Lamb” in the book of Revelation. It signifies the ultimate completeness and fullness of UNION WITH OUR LORD!

The third step in the marriage was the “marriage supper,” actually a seven-day *wedding feast* took place to which guests had already been called and assembled. Once the marriage had been consummated by the bride and groom, that same night the wedding guests would begin to feast and make merry! They often celebrated these feasts twice a day during those seven days. The feast was the part of the “marriage” that Jesus attended in Cana of Galilee when He turned water into wine. And this is also the scene at the “marriage of the Lamb” in the Revelation! It is called the “marriage supper” or marriage feast of the Lamb. This is not espousal, but the time of **union**. *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage (union) of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready (for this union). And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!”*

If we stand back and get a correct perspective of the sweep of the entire picture I think we will understand it. You go back to the very beginning — marriage was the first institution that God made for man. And it was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (the Word, the Voice of God) that brought the first woman to the first man. He introduced them and performed the marriage for them and made them one. In that far-off beginning, at the dawn of human history, the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). What fathomless and holy truth lies buried in this remarkable statement! While God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” I would like to give another rendition and it goes like this: “It is not good that GOD should be alone.” You see, my beloved, God’s creation is the mirror, the reflection, and expression of God’s own personal character and state of being. How can we know this? Because God said, “Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness*” (Gen. 1:26). Would you like to know what God is like? You can see it in man! God did not create just a man! “Male and female created He *them*. And God blessed *them*, and said unto *them*, Be fruitful and multiply...” (Gen. 1:27-28). The message is just this: If it was not good for man in the image of God to be in that image *alone*, if the man needed a wife to complement him and reproduce their life in the world, then it was likewise not good for GOD to be alone! That is the mystery! It takes the mind of the Spirit to understand that when God saw Adam in his loneliness and said, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” God was expressing the great mystery of His own Being within Himself. God had need for companionship. God had need for a **union of love!** This divine need is expressed by the apostle Paul in these words of revelation and truth: “According as He hath chosen us *in Himself before the foundation of the world, that we should be...before Him in love: having predestinated us...according to the good pleasure of His will*” (Eph. 1:4-6).

God’s ultimate desire and need was for the companionship of beings like unto Himself, of His own kind, with whom He could share His mind and heart, and through whom He could expand Himself, incorporating them into the outworking of His own eternal purposes. As we view from the Father’s heart it becomes obvious that God in His social and paternal nature has “marked

out for Himself" a vast family which shares His own life, nature, mind, spirit, purpose, and power. I do not believe that any creature or entity that existed before man either in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, even came close to providing what God needed. This is the condition which prompted God in that long ago beginning to issue the wonderful fiat, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion..." (Gen. 1:26).

Little wonder, then, that we read from the literal translation of the Hebrew text these remarkable words: "And Jehovah God saith, Not good for the man to be alone, I do make him an helper — as his COUNTERPART" (Gen. 2:18, Young's Literal). The Goodspeed translation reads, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I must make a helper for him WHO IS LIKE HIM." Another interesting translation says, "...and God made for Adam a COMPARABLE helper." There we have the very first symbolism of the bride of Christ! God made for Adam someone with whom he should have complete and total correspondence and intimacy. This only mirrored the desire within God Himself, so we find that He came in the cool, or *spirit* of the day, as it reads in the original, to fellowship with this man and woman made in His image and likeness. The message is just this — if the Christ is to have a bride then the bride must be COMPARABLE to Christ! She must be HIS COUNTERPART! She must be one who is in every respect LIKE HIM! And that's awesome, isn't it! But how could Christ become intimate, on all the levels that intimacy implies, with anyone who is not comparable to Him? A human would not marry a monkey, a horse, a dog, or a chicken. There is no correspondence! There are no grounds for union of mind, desire, emotion, knowledge, understanding, body, or love. And even within the same species, not everyone is suited for the marriage union. Would Christ become intimate with a little girl who is not mature and cannot comprehend the ways of love or responsibility? Would He share all that He is and has with a child who is physically and emotionally incapable of returning mature love, relating to His deepest thoughts and heart, or participating in His divine activities and purposes?

God gives us patterns in the Bible. All the patterns point to the central truth that God wants a people for Himself — a special, purified, prepared, developed, matured, loving, and capable people joined in union with Himself. All other revelations and truths are secondary to that — just as all other considerations in life should be secondary to a man's relationship with his wife. God's desire for such a people is the thrust of the entire message of the word of God! Everything must revolve around that truth. It was not good for man to be alone, and it was not good for GOD to be alone! He wanted offspring, and Paul tells us in Acts 17:28-29 that WE are the OFFSPRING OF GOD! Nature itself teaches us that pigs have little pigs and dogs have little dogs. And I do not hesitate to tell you that God has little gods! That is the great mystery of our *sonship*. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the *children* of God" (Jn. 1:12). "Being born again, *not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever*" (I Pet. 1:23). "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I (God) said, **Ye are gods?** If He called them *gods* unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, **I am the Son of God**" (Jn. 10:34-36). Oh, yes! As *children* — *offspring* — *of God*, made in His image, after His likeness — we are COMPARABLE! When once we learn this one grand truth we discover our true identity and state of being and all the word of God begins to fall into place. My beloved, it is therefore in keeping that as the very first act of His sonship ministry our Lord should go yonder to a wedding in Cana of Galilee! There He went and put His seal of approval and His blessing upon it. He was there by His very presence and power to proclaim that UNION between God and man is the grand theme and purpose of God in creation and redemption!

Robert Browning poetically tells the story of Andrea del Sarto, a famous painter in Florence, Italy. In his youth, del Sarto married a woman of rare beauty. She was, however, a shallow-minded, superficial creature. She was the woman, who, with a careless swing of her skirt, smeared the noble picture he had painted in hours of great spiritual ecstasy. She filled his life with disappointment. Not because she robbed his hand of its deftness, or his mind of its genius, or his soul of its inspiration — the tragedy was this: she was heart blind; she never understood the moral majesty of his mind; she never genuinely entered into the great spiritual hunger and depth of his heart. Consequently, he could not disclose to her his noblest and best self. In like manner, the yearning of God is able to reveal Himself to us only in proportion to our spiritual development, capacity, and maturity. Methinks that many Christians have not reached the stage of growth and development in Christ which prepares them for being a *bride*. They have little understanding of the majesty of the mind of Christ, or the loftiness of His great and eternal plan and purposes, nor have they even begun to enter in to the deepest yearnings of His heart. Multitudes are spiritually childish — heaven to them is a vast celestial *playground* where they can frolic and dance and shout throughout eternity without a care or any responsibility beyond strumming a harp and polishing their crown!

Children are children. Children are not **sons** in the scriptural sense, for sons (Greek: *huios*, mature sons, placed ones) are those who have grown up into the nature and authority of the Father. By way of example, if you saw a hardware store with the sign over the door saying BROWN AND SONS, you would not expect to go into the store and find the "sons" playing in a crib. You would understand that these "sons" are mature sons who share with their father the responsibilities of the business. In like manner, a girl, as long as she is a child, is neither prepared for nor capable of fulfilling the role of a **wife**. In order to enter into marriage a young girl must pass through years of physical, mental, and emotional development. Finally, upon becoming mature in all these areas, she is fitted for marriage and her role as a wife. And so it is in God's family! Both **sonship** and **brideship** are MATURE RELATIONSHIPS — not the prerogative of children! The term "child" describes the believer in his walk of immaturity in God. But as one begins to grow up into **spiritual maturity** it is then that the truly feminine and masculine aspects of his or her relationship with God begin to form and become manifest. "Vive la difference!" someone once said. And starting from early childhood we all begin to notice that there is indeed a difference. We become increasingly aware of it as we grow up. But it is only as fully developed adults that the true power, potential, and purpose of the feminine and masculine attributes find their function and fulfillment.

Any man can know something of the acts and ways of God, but only those born from above, who also *follow on to know* the Lord, can ever come to know Him in the most wonderfully personal and intimate manner. The depth of "knowing" Him is like the intimate relationship of a man with his beloved wife, in which love he seeks to reproduce after his own kind. In fact, this is precisely the way in which the scriptures in a number of cases make use of the word "know" — to describe the giving and receiving of seed in the act of love. For example, we read in Genesis 4:1, "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain." This statement does not mean that Adam was able to recognize his wife as he walked about the house! "Knowing," in the sense of recognition, does not beget children! When Adam *knew* his wife he explored her emotional and physical being beyond any external observation, and she *knew* him in return in a personal and intimate way that words could never communicate. Only by the experience of intense love and sexual union does man *know* woman in this sense, and she him.

May the blessed spirit of truth from God enable all who read these lines to understand that it is only in that exquisite relationship where the believing heart completely yields itself to the spirit, the presence, the mind, and the will of God, where the believer proves by his wholehearted

response that he truly and totally loves the Lord, that he *knows* and is *known* by God. This is the basis for Israel as a people under the Old Covenant being given the name “wife of Yahweh,” and the chosen ones of this age under the New Covenant the intimate title “the bride of Christ.” As husband and wife, by means of the act of “knowing” become **one flesh**, so Christ and the believer, by the spiritual act of “knowing” become **one spirit**. “He that is joined (in union) unto the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT” (I Cor. 6:17). The intimate relation and ecstasy here portrayed, are not found in any but those who are following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth!

There is no higher, no holier, no more blessed and joyous relation that can obtain between a man and a woman than true marriage. The marriage relation means more than the common possession of each other, more than the sharing on a basis of equality all that either may possess, more than the mutual exchange of admiration for personal charms, or of confidence and trust in the integrity each of the other. True marriage means all of these things, but in addition to all of these things, and above them, and more than all else it means the *union of hearts* on a level which results in profoundest love and unselfish devotion, such as will cause each to live for the other, promote the welfare, comfort, and happiness of the other rather than of SELF (I Cor. 13:4-8).

One who thinks chiefly of self, who talks for the most part about those things that promote his own self-interests, who takes opportunity to act with downright selfishness, and therefore one who is self-centered, self-opinionated, and self-willed, is incapable of entering into a true marriage relationship with anyone. In the marriage relation, to whatever degree SELF is made first and exalted, to that extent the relation is doomed to failure. The love of self will destroy true love and engender strife, bitterness, indifference, and even hatred. Ah, Christ Himself, our Bridegroom, has given us the example! Let us dwell on the words, “Christ also loved the church and *gave Himself up* for it.” He values His bride as Himself. And upon her, He lavishes His personal affection, without limit, without reservation, constantly, and forevermore! He loved the church with an infinite and eternal love and gave Himself up to the death of the cross for her. He nourishes and cherishes the church that He might sanctify it, and present it to Himself glorious in beauty, holiness, and power, without blemish in the presence of His glory. All that is required of the bride is simply to *love Him in the same way and measure as He has first loved us!*

The late George Wylie shared some penetrating and instructive words of admonition in this connection. He wrote, “I have never known two people who were deeply in love with each other who did not want to spend a lot of time *alone* by themselves. When a young man and woman are truly in love, you may see them walking hand in hand down the street, sitting in a restaurant having a piece of pie and a cup of coffee, or strolling through a department store looking at things together. They love to be together and they get together as often as they can. But why is it that being together on the street, or in the restaurant, or window shopping, still does not satisfy the longing of their hearts? Why is it that after being together around town they will get in the car and drive out to Lover’s Lane or Sunset Point, or to some deserted beach at night, where there is no one else around and they can sit and talk, watch the sunset, or stroll together under the light of the moon? What difference is this from walking hand in hand down the street or sitting together in a restaurant? They are *alone* — *that’s* the difference! It is being by themselves in the solitude of their love.

“A man and his wife who are much in love with each other, may work together all day in their business, go shopping together, or greatly enjoy going on a picnic with the children. They may spend a lot of time together during their busy daily lives. But even then they are looking forward to the evenings when the children are asleep in bed and they can spend a few quiet hours alone, sitting on the couch or retiring to their bedroom and closing the door so they can be by

themselves in the intimacy of their love. Their togetherness during the day cannot take the place of being alone and sharing the tenderness of their love. In their aloneness they are able to communicate with each other and share together things they could never share in the company of others or in the course of their busy lives. *This* reveals the wonderful mystery of the bridegroom and the bride! When we love the Lord with all of our heart, when we truly are deeply and passionately in love with the Lover of our soul, we cannot be content to just have His company and think of Him, talk to Him, and sing to Him during our busy times, or even in the congregation in our times of gathering together unto Him. We will most assuredly have an intense desire to BE ALONE WITH HIM! The more we love Him the greater the desire and the more time we will want to spend alone with Him in intimate fellowship and communion. Those who say they deeply love the Lord, but who rarely get alone with Him to spend quality time *in the solitude of His presence*, cannot possibly be material for the company of the bride of Christ! The yearning of the bride is expressed in the words of the beautiful chorus:

Shut in with God, *in the secret place*,  
There in the spirit beholding His face;  
Gaining new power to run in the race,  
I love to be *shut in with God!*

"The truth is, many a man has lost the love of his wife and his marriage relationship has been broken up because he was so busy attending to his business and making money, that he didn't have time to be with his wife. I have known wives of many of these workaholics who, suffering from lack of their husband's love, looked in other places for the attention and love the husband was too busy to give. They would find another man to love them and who would supply the human need that the busy husband didn't give. Some of these wives turned to drink and became alcoholics, and many of these marriages ended in divorce. The business may be important, and making a living is necessary, but neither of these are *as important* as the marriage relationship! When the husband and wife get so busy that they do not have quality time to spend *alone* with each other, their relationship suffers; they draw apart and there is not that *oneness* that should be there. How true this is also in our relationship with our Lord! When we are so busy, and our time is taken up with other things, perhaps even *good things* including our work 'for' God, so that we haven't time to be alone with Christ, our relationship with Him suffers, and we draw apart. There isn't that *oneness with Christ* that we should have! Oh yes, we may talk to Him for a few minutes a couple times a day, maybe address Him a few times during the day, or perhaps even speak of Him to someone as we try to share Him with others, but our spiritual life and our union with Him suffers when we fail to find the time to get alone with Christ in seasons of intimate fellowship, communion, and love" — end quote.

When we come to the Lamb and His wife, however, *here* is a marital love, a tenderness, an appreciation, and a delight, *that will grow forever and ever*. Oh, wonder of wonders, that such a record can be written! *Christ will never change* in His affections! What must the ages hold for the wife of the Lamb! And the love of the bride, the wife of the Lamb, will correspond to that of her husband — *unceasing, increasing into infinity!* Have you known a husband and wife whose love deepened as the years went by, whose satisfaction with and delight in each other was such as to keep them together constantly, of their own *mutual will*; whom neither "society" nor "business" nor "outside pleasures," nor any "calamity" could separate? Let such a happy marital existence be a whisper to you of what Christ and His bride will enjoy more and more throughout unending ages! The bliss of the marriage of the Lamb is without limit. And this is not something to transpire some glad day after while or in some far-off heaven somewhere! This bespeaks the union of soul and spirit, a union within ourselves, in which we are MADE ONE IN HIM. Oh, yes! It is the personal delight of THE INDWELLING CHRIST, not of a Christ far away. It is the

personal delight of our very own soul — of our mind, will, emotions, and desires, finding union with His glorious mind, His holy emotions, His wonderful will, and His divine desires. It is an internal union of love. Parents love their children because they are children. Brothers and sisters alike have a love of natural relationship. Friendships are based on common interests. But the love of bridegroom and bride is a delight each in the person of the other. That is why marital love is so wholly unexplainable! We say, "What did he see in her?" or, "Why did she choose him?" There is no answer but one — LOVE!

While we write much in these pages of the glorious truth of sonship to God, we want to contemplate in our meditations at this time what it means to be the bride of the Lamb. If you have never really fallen in love with the Christ of God — and made HIM YOUR HEAD and ABSOLUTE LORD — don't ever expect to be a member of the bride company. If you are not truly VIRGIN in your desires toward the Lord; if you are not walking in His spirit, putting on His mind, learning to know His heart; if you are not keeping yourself unto Him and Him alone; if you have not utterly forsaken the company of the wanton harlot of Babylon, the carnal church systems of man; if you have not renounced the many schemes and plans and ambitions of your own carnal mind nor abandoned your love of the world and the desires of the flesh — don't expect to stand in that glorious company which has made itself "ready" for the marriage of the Lamb! If you have any other love before Him, any other master that rules your life, any other lord that dictates your actions, any "reserved" areas of your life you are not ready to relinquish, then you have not yet learned HOW TO **BE** A BRIDE TO CHRIST!

Only the wonderful spirit of truth can teach us how to truly **be** a bride. As I have pointed out, the key to being a wife is love and submission. We are prone to think of submission in such a carnal way. The term conjures up images of the husband ruling, bossing, lording it over, barking commands to his wife while the little woman, intimidated, coweringly complies with his every demand. But true, godly submission is the *love* of a woman that is so pure and intense that she wants to yield herself to the high desires of her husband — a woman so in love with her man that it transcends infatuation — her submission becomes a willing and loving laying down of her own life until she no longer has a life because HER LIFE IS SURRENDERED AND JOINED IN UNION WITH ANOTHER! Her cry becomes, "I don't want my life...I want to SHARE YOURS." Oh! how few of us truly know HOW TO BE A BRIDE!

"For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). To be a virgin means to be pure, undefiled, and separated unto our Lord. God is creating the desire in a called and separated people in this hour to be truly **virgin** in their desires toward Him. We have known what it is to be conformed to *this world*. Then we have known what it is to come into fellowship with Christ while remaining entangled in all the defilement of a carnal and corrupt Babylonish church system. But God is laying His mighty hand of dealing upon a people and calling forth a glorious body of Christ who, in response to the quickening of the Holy Spirit, is desiring to be **virgin** — separated only unto her Bridegroom, unto intimate and vital union with Him! How lightly we sometimes take the purposes of God in us! In this hour separation is coming from everything of the flesh, the world, the devil, and from every vestige of entanglement with the carnal church systems of man which we have made our HEAD in place of the mighty indwelling Christ of God.

Let us suppose — Rhonda has a new boyfriend. He's funny, charming, and handsome. Her pulse races when he calls, her temperature rises when they touch. It feels wonderful to be with him. She gushes, "It's like we've known each other all our lives." People who don't know her are charmed by her infatuation. Her friends are not. They've heard all this before. Rhonda

always has a new boyfriend. One goes, another comes in an endless parade. Each is the true love of her life. And then they disappear.

Multitudes of Christians are like that! They are looking for the perfect love, the ultimate union, and again and again they think they have found it as they flit about from church to church, from preacher to preacher, from revival to revival, from teaching to teaching, and from movement to movement. Oh, how "turned on" they are with each one at first — they have found the most exciting, fulfilling, loving, caring, *perfect church!* And they gush all over everyone who will listen about how *wonderful* it is! But then before long they begin to see flaws, hear the gossip, catch the undercurrents, discern the problems, and it soon wears off and they start looking for another. The problem is just this — they have not found HIM! They are spiritual adolescents, juvenile, immature, undeveloped, inexperienced — not ready yet to **become a bride**. They desire true love, but like the girls that get picked up in bars, they are looking in all the wrong places. Their eyes are on the boys — on *men*, and *ministries*, and *movements* — and not yet have they truly SEEN THE LORD! Some day, hopefully, they will hear the call, "Come out of her, my people," and will cease the spiritual "bar-hopping" and come apart to meet the one and only lover of their soul!

I will close this article by quoting from a message delivered some years ago by the late brother Stacy Wood. This message contains some profound truths that I believe will be an edification and blessing to all who read.

"I was in New Mexico a few years ago and while ministering to a group I made a statement that I was corrected on. The statement I made was simply this. I said, 'There are some things in the earth, and also things in God, that are certain, immutable, unchangeable, ever the same. For instance —  $1+1=2$ . If you have an apple plus an apple, you have two apples — and no matter how you calculate it, how you count it, one plus one always equals two.' After the service a young man came to me, a young man that has a doctorate degree, a young man that speaks numerous languages, a young man that is in my opinion is a genius, and he said, 'Stacy, I want to share something with you — one plus one does not *always* equal two.' Well, he took me back. I just stood there and looked at him as if to say, 'Hey, wait a minute! I've been taught all my life that one plus one equals two — what are you trying to tell me?' He sat down and with a formula and a series of pages he expressed to me what he meant. The man is a nuclear physicist. Of course I didn't understand the formulas too well — but he convinced me after four pages that he had a valid point which I wasn't able fully to grasp — that one plus one doesn't always equal two! So I considered this and then in the scriptures I began to see the pattern and the reality that one plus one, even in God's economy, does not always equal two.

"Paul says it very plainly in his first letter to the Corinthians. '*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*' (I Cor. 6:15-17).

"Here Paul tells us that one man joined to one harlot equals *one flesh*. Therefore Paul says that  $1+1=1$ . So when two things are joined, fused, knit together, they are no longer two things, but become one thing. Another example of this is found in the book of Ephesians. '*For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church*' (Eph. 5:30-32). This is indeed a great mystery, but what Paul is declaring is the divine formula —  $1+1=1$ . He shows that we (Christ

and us) are *made one* in the body of Christ. We must lose that vision of our uniqueness, particularness, and individuality and grasp hold of the concept that ***we are one***, not many.

"I was looking at this principle here in Ephesians chapter five and it is the principle of marriage. A man leaves his father and mother and he cleaves to his wife, and joined to his wife, one man and one woman become *one flesh*. Most of us that are married look at that verse and try to make it so mystical — that we are one *somewhere*, but we don't understand the disagreements! We do our best to get beyond the disagreements and dissatisfactions to truly become one so that we always think alike, desire alike, enjoy alike, and act alike. But that is not what Paul is saying. The reality is that God took one individual, me, and one individual, my wife, and has made an expression of one. I can tell you exactly where and when it happened — it happened when our daughter was born, and again when our son was born. For Jana and Stacy are simply Sheri and Stacy ***as one***. When God joined Sheri and me He put us together in such a way that we can never be separated. He took all of the structure of my life and all of the structure of my wife's life and He joined them together between a sperm and an ovum and brought forth *one new creation* that is neither Sheri nor Stacy — it is the perfect joining of the complete whole of both of us into one new whole. "When we traveled with our children years ago we made note of people's reactions when they would see our children. Often people would look at our son and say, 'He's the spitting image of your wife — and your daughter, man, she's so much like you!' Then we would go to the next group and someone would say, 'Your son looks so much like you, he doesn't look like your wife at all, and your daughter looks just like your wife, she doesn't look anything like you!' By the time several years passed I was somewhat puzzled and thought and meditated on the incongruity of this. Why is it, I wondered, that some people think Jana looks like Sheri, whereas others think she looks like me? Then it dawned on me — they are bound to look like Mama and they are bound to look like Daddy because all that we are, all of our genetics are brought together and combined in one new form. Both of us are *so joined, so fused together* within them that you really can't distinguish or divide between what is Stacy and what is Sheri. Different people with different perceptions pick up on either the Sheri or the Stacy characteristics that shine through, so that in the final analysis Jana and Stacy are each a new creation, ***one flesh of us two!***

"Can you see the mystery that is great in that? Christ and the church are also JOINED! HE who is spirit, Christ, and SHE who is soulical, the church, when they corporately are joined become ***one spirit***. The spiritual essence of humanity is the soul — the soulical life. The soul is simply spirit that is at a lower vibration, at a lower frequency, or on a lower dimension than the Spirit of God. That is, the mind, will, emotions, and desires of the natural man are not flesh in a tangible way. The soul pertains to a *spiritual dimension*. Few understand the truth of this, but when God breathed into man's flesh the *breath or spirit of life*, man ***became a living soul***. The Lord, on the other hand, ***is spirit***, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in reality. When you take God who is spirit on the highest plane, and then you take soul which is spirit on a lower plane, and join them together you get a BRAND NEW SPIRITUAL DIMENSION that has not yet been and that dimension is called '***the Christ***.' As I meditated on this I saw that in the marriage of Christ and the church, of the Lamb and His wife, there is a joining of one plus one that would equal ONE!" — end quote.

## Chapter 207

### The Marriage Of The Lamb (continued)

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for *the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.* And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:7-9).

I have heard great stress laid upon the fact that the bride of Christ consists of a body corporate, not of the individual; and therefore that we cannot, without irreverence and impropriety, personally experience Jesus Christ as the spiritual Husband of the individual soul. I readily admit the fact, but I demur to the inference. It should be obvious that the church, though a body, is made up of individuals; and it is as an aggregation of individualities, each containing its own individuality, and not a unit — in which individuality is sunk and the individual absorbed — that the church is to be presented to Christ. We no more believe in the absorption of the individual in the church than we entertain the notion espoused by the eastern religions of the absorption of all things into God in such a way that all personal identity is lost.

The body of Christ is now multiplied by thousands, tens of thousands, yea untold millions, and it is not just one little girl that Christ receives but a corporate bride composed of a vast multitude of individual members. The point is just this: all that happens to the corporate body *must* be experienced by *each member* — it is first and foremost the experience of each member that finally constitutes the experience of the whole. By way of example, in school each year you have a graduating class. The "class" is a corporate body, but the corporate expression can only exist when each member of that body has completed the same courses with essentially the same grades. Each individual member must have had a like relationship with the school, the teacher, and the work required. Thus, it is the corresponding experience of each member that finally constitutes the experience of the whole. In just that way, if I do not know the Christ **personally** as my Bridegroom, it is impossible for me to be a part of that corporate body which is joined into experiential union with Him. Let us by all means remember that we are to be perfected in One; but let not this check the outflow of our individual affection to Him with whom, in some strange way, we are to be thus closely related. The thought of this most intimate relationship loses all its warmth, and even its reality, when we miss or eliminate the personal element in it. We teach the sinner to see in "God so loved the world," that God loved ME. Surely we can't be wrong in seeing in "Christ so loved the church," that Christ loved ME!

It is a precious experience when any child of God begins to understand **personally** something of the import of these prophetic words: "In that day thou shalt call me no more *Baali* (that is, *my lord, master*); but thou shalt call me *Ishi* (*my husband*)" (Hos. 2:16). The grammar of that prophecy is both singular and personal. And there are moments when His voice seems to sound in our ears, as though we heard Him say personally to each of us, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider...forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty: for He is thy Lord God; and worship thou Him." He is the Bridegroom of the corporate bride, but our love and relation to Him is to be as gloriously personal as though to each of us He had made this revelation of Himself, and to no other. Let it be the one work of our

lives to fit ourselves for the enjoyment of this wondrously close relationship with Him. Let all lower affections be dominated by this one, and all that is unworthy of this be renounced. We are espoused to Christ! We are called and chosen and separated to be presented as a chaste virgin to Him! Oh, let us be true to His claims upon us, for with His own blood He has paid the dowry for us! Let us gladly sacrifice all that keeps us back from full self-surrender to Him! So shall the King of glory have pleasure in us, and we shall find our crown of eternal fulfillment in HIM!

In our text the cry is, "...the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready!" This addresses the heart. It is not an historical event. Nor is it merely a future dispensational event. It is a *spiritual experience!* The marriage of the Lamb is that revelation of the Christ that causes us to know that we are *united to Him*; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. We cannot understand the relationship of the bride with the Lamb Bridegroom until we know UNION. We cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name bride or wife expresses until we yield ourselves to be made ONE IN HIM. And that is not something which happens someday when Jesus comes crashing down through the clouds. Oh, no! This is a present reality! When I know that I am united with the Christ I am so identified with His name, His person, His presence, His life, and His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it! A wife is one who has reached maturity, fully developed in mind and body, her hormones have kicked in, and she has given herself in a mature relationship completely and unreservedly for her lover; one who has lost her own name, residence, and self-identity to take his. She has left all to follow him! The result of such a union is described by the inspired apostle in these words: "...that we should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4).

It was to the church which is His body that Paul wrote, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be *joined* unto his wife, and they two shall be *one flesh*. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" (Eph. 5:31-32). It was also to the saints that Paul addressed these significant words, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be *married to another*, even to HIM..." (Rom. 7:4). Again it was to the elect of the Lord that Paul explained, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have *espoused* you to ONE HUSBAND, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to CHRIST" (II Cor. 11:2).

In our consideration of the Bridegroom and the bride we need to remember that first of all these precious realities are fulfilled within each of us personally! Christ is not just in some far-off heaven somewhere; for us He is our life, our reality, and our only hope of glory; and that hope of glory is neither Christ in heaven nor Christ coming again — it is CHRIST IN YOU! This is a phrase of inexhaustible wonder — "Christ *in you*, the hope of glory." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME" (Gal. 2:20). "For He abideth with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU" (Jn. 14:17). "He shall be IN you." In these simple words our Lord announces the wonderful mystery of His indwelling which was to be the fruit and the crown of His redeeming work. It was for this that man had been created! It was for this, God's incarnation in flesh, that the Spirit had revealed God unto men! It was for this that Jesus had lived and was about to die. Dwelling in them, He would prepare them to receive Himself as their true life and identity — as Bridegroom! We can never understand the deep mystery of the Bridegroom and the bride until we know that Christ is the Bridegroom and that Christ ***lives in us***. All who give godly consideration to these simple truths cannot avoid the conclusion that the BRIDEGROOM IS WITHIN OURSELVES. There is deep within the inner sanctum of each of us a place where the Bridegroom dwells and He comes out of that place and woos us into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Himself! Isn't it wonderful!

Suppose someone wants to visit me. He must first find where I live! If he cannot locate my home, he will have to forfeit his visit. Some years ago a precious brother from Kenya, East Africa was on a mission to the United Nations in New York. While here in our country he boarded a bus and traveled from New York City to El Paso, Texas to visit us. He failed, however, to contact us ahead of time and make the necessary arrangements to see us. When he arrived in El Paso he was unable to locate us and had to get back on a bus and make the long journey back to New York. Although there is much talk about Christ living in us, the vast majority of Christians have absolutely no idea **where it is** that He dwells in us! They are searching, looking for the Christ, and cannot find Him because they do not know His address. We can never know Christ the Bridegroom, or union with Him, until first we know **where He dwells!** A wonderful clue is found in these words: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you...and if Christ be in you, the *body is dead*...but the *spirit is life*" (Rom. 8:9-10). Roman 8:9 refers without doubt to the Holy Spirit of God, but verse 10 refers to the human spirit. "The *body is dead*...but the *spirit is life*." Of course, the Holy Spirit cannot be compared with our body. The contrast is between what is true in OUR BODY and what is true in OUR SPIRIT. If Christ is in us our body (the earth man) is dead, but our spirit (the new man) is life, quickened and energized by HIS INDWELLING LIFE!

Ah — Christ is in us, but where within us is He? In what part? What is His address? Is He in our brain? Is He in our liver? Is He in our solar plexus? Is He in our bloodstream? It is abundantly clear — Christ today is in our spirit! There is no need to be vague like many who say, "Oh, the Lord is in you and the Lord is in me." The Holy Spirit has definitely revealed that Christ is in our spirit. "The Lord be with thy spirit" (II Tim. 4:22). The preposition "with" is from the Greek *sun* which denotes "union." The Lord is in union with our spirit! There is a mighty working taking place within God's elect — no more to have that duality — our spirit, His Spirit, but to be so fully merged into one with Him that HIS Spirit is mine, and MY spirit is swallowed up into His. "There is but ONE SPIRIT," says the apostle. And the great truth is that that one spirit is neither the Holy Spirit nor our spirit — it is His Spirit *joined* to our spirit — for the testimony of scripture is irrefutable and immutable: "He that is *joined* to the Lord **I-S O-N-E S-P-I-R-I-T!**"

It is a blessed day for any man when he makes the amazing discovery that Christ Himself is the Bridegroom; that this Christ is in our spirit; that the Bridegroom (the Lamb) is thus in our spirit, His place of residence; that the coming of the Bridegroom is WITHIN! It should be obvious to every spiritually thinking mind that if the Bridegroom is within, the bride is likewise to be found within! Marriage is the conjunction to two into one. When these two enter into union, they are called one. It is no longer Miss Jones and Mr. Brown; it is Mr. and Mrs. Brown. There is, therefore, a part of our being which must be wooed by Christ in our spirit and brought into relationship and oneness in Him. Bride in Hebrew is *kallah* meaning "the completed one" or "the perfected one." It reveals the concept of a woman being completed once she is married to her husband — and, as Paul so beautifully expresses it, "YE are complete IN HIM!" In order to identify this bride within we must understand what part of us it is that must be completed and perfected. The bride is a woman, a female. THE BRIDE IS THE FEMALE PART OF YOU! Your *soul* is the female part of your being; therefore your soul is the woman or the bride of the Lamb who is in your spirit. For a clear picture of this truth I now call your attention to the awe-inspiring words of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden!

The story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is the greatest parable in the Bible. I do not mean by that that there was no literalness to the garden or to Adam and Eve in it, for literal things always serve as *parables of spiritual realities!* The record of Adam and Eve in the Garden is supremely important because it explains the real nature of life here on earth. It tells us about ourselves, it portrays in vivid imagery our true state of being, our testings, our fall and

redemption, and our destiny in God. It is the blueprint of spiritual anatomy. Once we thoroughly understand Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden we then understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the ground-plan for the outworking of the purposes of God through the ages. There is one thing about which the Lord's people must be perfectly clear. The Bible is not primarily intended to teach history, or biography, or geography, or natural science. It is intended to teach **divine principles and spiritual realities!**

On a day in the long ago the inspired apostle Paul penned these telling words: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin to Christ**. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent **beguiled Eve** through his subtlety, so **your minds** should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:2-3). In this significant passage Eve in the garden of Eden is contrasted with two things: the *bride of Christ* and the *mind*. The mind is a function of the *soul!* In fact, the Greek word *psuche* is often used interchangeably for both *mind* and *soul*. In a broader sense the four-fold function of the soul as revealed in scripture is the *mind*, the *will*, the *emotion*, and the *desire*. It was in the soul that Eve was beguiled! It was in her mind, in her will, in her emotions, and in her desires. The vision of the bride of Christ pervades the whole of scripture, from Eden onward, with ever-increasing clearness. Eve, the mother of the human family, is the first type of this great mystery. Let us not underestimate this remarkable woman from whom the whole human race has sprung!

In that ancient shadow Adam stands as a type of the spirit, Eve is a type of the soul, and the garden of Eden serves as a type of the body where both dwell, which Adam was to "dress and keep." Thus we see our tri-partite being symbolically portrayed in the Adam-Eve-Garden story! The Garden was the earth, the land, the locale; and Adam and Eve were its inhabitants, in the same way that our spirit and soul are the inhabitants of the physical body. It is through our "Eve," our soulical faculties of mind, will, emotion, and desire, that we who have been espoused to Christ the Bridegroom in our spirit, can be "beguiled" and turned from our single and pure devotion to Christ, entering instead into intimate but illicit associations with the flesh, and the fleshly systems of the world and religious Babylon, thus disqualifying ourselves from being presented to Christ as a pure and holy virgin. Paul speaks of the "simplicity" that is in Christ; that is how the King James Bible renders it. The Greek word denotes not simplicity but *singleness*. A bride is to have a *singleness* of eye, of desire, of heart, of love for her husband. Paul shows that just as Eve was beguiled from her singleness to God and her husband, so those espoused to Christ can be corrupted **in their minds or in their souls** from their **singleness to Christ in our spirit!**

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the *marriage of the Lamb is come*, and His *wife* hath made herself ready." When God created man in His own image he was ONE, not separated in the beginning into two persons. This reveals to us the nature of God Himself who is both male and female, both Father and Mother, both Begetter and Nurturer, both the Propagator of sons and the Mother Hen who gathers her chicks under her wings (Mat. 23:37). Thus Adam remained until the Lord separated the feminine from the masculine, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, to exist separately. Within the one man's nature were both masculine and feminine characteristics, all the possibilities of both male and female, all the potential of fruit and power, wisdom and love, strength and nurture. The spiritual man, being a son of God, possessed that perfect chaste virgin **within himself** and could have replenished the whole earth with his kind in God's image and likeness simply by a word of power!

It was not the burning self-desire of Adam that caused Eve to come forth, but the purpose of God! It was God Himself who initiated the whole process, for the record states, "And the LORD GOD said, It is *not good* for the man to be alone; I WILL MAKE him an *help meet* for him" (Gen.

2:18). Eve was God's idea! "Meet" in the expression "help meet" is an old English word meaning "suitable, fit, proper, corresponding." The whole flavor of the word "meet" is to fit, join, agree, be compatible, be in union, be together. No hostility here! No war between the sexes! No men from Mars and no women from Venus! And no division. God made a helper to properly and suitably and equally fit, join, combine, agree, be in union with, yes, to be ONE with Adam, and he ONE with her!

When Eve had been built by the skillful hand of the Creator we read that He "brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:22). I cannot conceive of anything more exquisite and meaningful than that beautiful type! I say to every soul reading these lines, Have you been brought to Christ where Christ is? If you do not know union with Christ in your spirit, you will never know union with Him in the sky nor in any heaven anywhere in all God's vast universe. And know this, oh man; you cannot become "spiritual" by any self-effort! Many seek to be spiritual by *doing something*: by prayer, reading the Word, devotedness, keeping the commandments, paying tithe, doing good works, keeping the traditions, attending meetings; but spirituality is not found in any of those things! The only pathway to spirituality is to be **brought by the Spirit to realize union with Christ!** One can only be *spirit-ual* by union with *spirit!* Union! What was Eve's thought when her eyes first rested upon Adam? Do you suppose she immediately questioned within herself if somewhere there might just be another man even more handsome and desirable than he? Perhaps she should wait a while? Ah, I doubt not that she was immediately and completely overwhelmed, truly *fell in love at first sight*, was at once drawn by irresistible cords of love and passionate desire to find *union* with him!

Let us meditate deeply upon the soul-bride that Eve reveals to us. I must remind every reader of these lines that there is an essential and radical distinction between the spirit and the soul. God is the *Father* of spirits, but He is the *Former* or *Builder* of souls. "And the rib (Hebrew: side, chamber), which the Lord God had taken from man, *built* He a woman..." (Gen. 2:22). I know not why this has been forgotten by the church world, and I know not why men claiming to be Christian scholars have never told you that the soul is not the spirit, and the spirit is not the soul. It seems to me a remarkable thing, that that which God has so clearly revealed, the distinction between the soul and the spirit, men have, through their ignorance and devotion to a false platonic philosophy, been unable to see. If you read your Bible carefully, starting with the first chapter of Genesis, you will find that what the apostle says in the epistle to the Hebrews is true; that the word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder, separating soul and spirit. It is not the philosophy of Socrates or Plato that does this! They confound soul and spirit, not recognizing any difference. It is not the philosophy of Kant or Hegel or Strauss that does this! It is not the philosophy of the Hindu or the Buddhist or the Transcendentalist that does this — but it is the Word of God that separates between soul and spirit! What a marvelous thing! In the same way that God separated Eve from Adam, the Spirit of God separates between the soul and the spirit of man.

What is this thing called spirit? How can we know the spirit? How can we touch the spirit? To speak of the body is very easy, because we can see it and touch it. To speak of the soul is also not difficult because we can discern it, feel it, and know it by its functions and actions, such as thinking, reasoning, determining, being pleased, angry, fearful, seductive, vindictive, sorrowful, or joyful. But it is not as easy to understand and speak of the spirit.

Romans chapter eight speaks of the spirit and gives us a wonderful clue. In verse two the apostle refers to "the *spirit* of life." In verse six he says, "to be *spiritually* minded is life." In verse ten he adds, "the *spirit* is life..." In these three statements he shows us that the spirit is the spirit of life, the spirit is related to life, contains life, and belongs to life. If we desire to have true

spiritual growth in life we must be able to discern what is the spirit and what is the soul, and what is *spiritual* and what is *soulish*. Paul has declared without equivocation, “For we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God...but the natural man receiveth not the things of the *Spirit of God*: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*” (I Cor. 2:12,14). These inspired words speak of two classes of men: one is the *soulish man* (the Greek words for “natural man” are “soulish man”), and the other is the *spiritual man*. This reveals to us the great truth that man can live by and belong to either of these two distinct realms, the soul or the spirit. Man can either live by the soul, thereby becoming a soulish man; or he can live by the spirit, thereby becoming a spiritual man.

The soul is our individual human personality, our natural consciousness, our ego; therefore the soul is our natural Self. That which is included in the soul, analytically speaking, is the mind, the will, the emotion, and the desire — these four parts. The *mind* is the organ of man’s consciousness and thinking. It is what we usually think of as the brain; physiologically it is the brain, but psychologically it is the mind. It is the dominant aspect of the soul. Man’s thinking, reasoning, memorizing, are all functions of the mind in the soul. The *will* in the soul is the organ of man’s conscious, deliberate decision making and action as well as the process of exercising this power or faculty of choice, volition, judgment, acceptance, rejection, determination, and self-control. These are all functions of the will in man’s soul. The *emotion* in the soul is the organ of man’s love, hatred, sorrow, joy, fear, contentment, etc. Man rejoices, mourns, is excited or depressed — these are all functions of the emotion in man’s soul. There are many people who are emotional, easily stirred to be ecstatic or sad, animated or depressed. They often deal with matters by their emotion rather than by knowledge or careful deliberation. The *desire* in man’s soul is the organ of man’s wishing for, longing for, craving, wanting, and coveting of things either tangible or intangible. The desire in man’s soul is both his biological and psychological appetite of various kinds. These four parts are present in every man, for every man possesses the quality of soul.

Regardless of whether a man is functioning in the mind, the will, the emotion, or his desire, he is soulish. Every man that lives only by these natural senses *apart from the spirit*, is a **soulish man**. Therefore it is very easy to discern whether a man is soulish! I would be remiss if I did not point out that the soul can be moved upon to act religiously — and what a fine act it is able to perform! But forget not for one moment, precious friend of mine, that in spite of its “religious” appearance, it is still the soul! The soul can be taken into a meeting where a religious atmosphere is created by a man at the podium; with a suave and dynamic personality he directs you to stand, sing, clap your hands, raise your hands, praise the Lord, say Amen, etc. Often with peppy choruses, hand clapping, and rhythm your soul is stirred and takes on the appearance of spirituality. Now, there is nothing wrong with standing, clapping, singing, raising the hands and praising the Lord. The real issue, however, is the **source** of these things! Are they instigated by the spontaneous outflow of HIS LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, or are they merely contrived actions of the soul? If the soul is responding only to the command of man, there is nothing of the spirit or spiritual about it. I know many people who prefer peppy songs and clapping because it creates a good feeling. These often don’t appreciate a slow, worshipful chorus, because this doesn’t stir their soul. They are not *worshipping in spirit and in reality* — they are merely praising the Lord in the soul. Ah, better that the soul praises the Lord than that it becomes upset or angry and utters vulgarities! Better that it sings the songs of Zion, than the perverted music of the world! But we do not want to mistake that which is soulish for that which is spiritual. If none of these “good” things are motivated *from within by the spirit*, it is still naught but the vanity of the flesh!

If we can recognize what kind of person is soulish, it is not difficult to realize what kind of person is spiritual. Since a soulish person lives by the mind, will, emotion, and desire, a spiritual person is one who *does not live by these*. A spiritual person must live in the spirit, act by the spirit, speak out of the spirit and not the soul. These allow the spirit, the power of the inward spiritual mind, will, emotion, and desire of the ***indwelling Christ***, to be the master and source of all their action and behavior. The spirit, the living presence of Christ, in them occupies the pre-eminent position; it is the source of their behavior and the starting point of their action. The soul in them is in the position of submission, under the government of the spirit and controlled by the spirit. They are not like soulish persons, who let the soul be master in everything; they deny the pre-eminence of their own mind, will, emotion, and desire. They do not stand, sing, clap, speak, praise, or do anything simply at the command of man or their own volition; they do any or all of these things and more only when the command comes from within, out of the moving of the spirit deep within themselves. They allow the spirit to BE LORD in them! They allow the spirit to direct their whole being so that they become the expression of the spirit. Whenever they encounter a situation they do not draw from their mind, will, emotion, or desire to deal with it; rather they draw from the divine wisdom and power in their spirit first to understand and comprehend it, seeking first in the spirit for the Lord's mind and purpose in the matter. THESE ARE SPIRITUAL, living by the life of the spirit, and the soul is but a vehicle of expression for the spirit. Praise God! It is the ONE SPIRIT that becomes the Bridegroom within which ultimately is fully joined to the bride-soul within — the spirit becomes the master of the soul and receives the soul into union with itself. This is the *marriage of the Lamb and His wife* within ourselves — and that is the mystery!

The allegory of lover and beloved, bride and groom, marriage and union, gives to us the highest example of the **oneness** which we desire to share with Christ, which we seek within ourselves, the union of our soul with our spirit. We are weary of the sense of duality and separation! We are frustrated with the unending warfare between the flesh and the spirit! We are tired of speaking in tongues one minute and flying off the handle the next! From the time we were awakened to Christ in our spirit we have struggled with this dualness — our mind often pulled in the direction of the flesh, while yet our soul truly *yearns* for that life from above which alone would satisfy. Thank God! The spirit of Christ within is gaining the ascendancy as He woos the soul and the soul becomes more and more subdued. But the prayer remains, "that they all may be ONE..."

Long millenniums ago the aged prophet-king of Israel articulated the deepest cry of the soul-bride for her Beloved, saying, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth **my soul** after **Thee**, O God. My **soul** thirsteth for **God**, for the **living God...**" (Ps. 42:1-2). As a woman yearns for union with her husband, so the soul longs for union with Christ. The natural mind cannot comprehend what fearful loss befell the man in Eden when the woman was severed from him. All the female qualities of tenderness, patience, long-suffering, intuition, nurturing, gentleness, submissiveness, and succor were separated from his bosom and embodied in Eve. But consider also what the woman lost in strength, wisdom, courage, bravery, energy, stamina, and much more. Nature has created the fundamental urge of every human being for re-union with its counterpart — to find itself again in WHOLENESS. This complement of the sexes one with the other, and the need for union to find wholeness and experience fulfillment — and the ecstasy that brings — is the greatest proof that the Genesis record of how the woman was taken out of the man is absolutely true and reliable! Just as there is the natural drive for union with the opposite sex, there is also within the soul the intense thirsting for union with God! The truth is, this urge exists not only within the soul — it is just as powerful in the spirit! This is the meaning of the mystery of "the way of a man with a maid," the mystery that every human being, male and female, goes through a "mating season." We call it dating, courtship, and engagement! In the

natural, it is the man who courts the woman and is the aggressor. It is most often the boy who chases the girl! The bride of Christ (the soul) has now entered a great “mating season” of reunion with God. In His appointed times the Christ within our spirit initiates the courting in His own subtle yet divine way as He woos the soul, drawing our desires and affections unto Himself. There is to be a unification within, so that all our soul realm is swallowed up into the life of the indwelling spirit of Christ, bringing us eventually into the personal experience of THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!

Nowhere is this beautiful truth presented more clearly and powerfully than in the Song of Solomon. Nowhere in scripture does the unspiritual mind tread upon ground more mysterious and incomprehensible as in this book, while the saintliest men and women of the ages have found it a source of pure and exquisite delight. The story is written as a dramatic play having six distinct scenes. Hear now a sample of the interplay between the Bridegroom and His bride...

*“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine”* (S. of S. 2:10; 1:2).

*“Behold, thou art fair, my love: behold, thou art fair...thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart...how fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine!”* (S. of S. 4:1,9,10).

In the Song of Solomon you have two key symbols: a male and a female. And it is a story that depicts the way by which the two are brought to each other in the union of love. What is significant for us to understand is that the story is as important for her as it is for him. The young maiden, the Shulamite, is a type of many things — not the least of which is that this story is a picture of heaven being joined to earth. It is also a picture of Yahweh and Israel under the Old Covenant. It is furthermore a picture of Christ and the church. And most importantly for us today, on the individual plane, it is a picture of how the spirit is wedding your soul. And why is that important? Because the soul is what you are in your human consciousness. The soul is more than something you have, the soul is *you* in all your earthly identity. When God breathed into Adam the breath of life, man *became* a living soul. When that fact is repeated in the New Testament the term “living soul” is expressed in the Greek as *zoe psuche*. *Zoe* is the word always used in the New Testament for the divine, incorruptible life of God. *Psuche*, on the other hand, is the word for the human soul. The great truth the Holy Spirit would make real to us here is just this — man is both divine and human, *zoe* and *psuche*, spirit and soul — truly a LIVING SOUL! There can’t be anything more outstanding than being a living soul!

The story of the Song of Solomon is the story of how *she*, the soul, comes to know *Him*, the spirit, and how *He* comes to know *her*. Few of the Lord’s people have this kind of experience with God! We have a religious experience where we learn of God and worship God along with others in the group in an external kind of way. THAT’S NOT THE SONG OF SOLOMON! Solomon’s Song bespeaks a **personal** and **intimate** encounter. Solomon’s Song is a personal awakening and personal journey into God. And the thing we are awakening to is not God out there someplace, but God in you, one with your soul, joined as one spirit, God in you **as you!** We must awaken to the value that God is in us, and God in us is part of us. You can never truly serve someone out of obligation — but out of love and respect you can serve. You cannot serve anybody out of laws. God does not want you to serve Him faithfully out of obligation — He desires you to rise to your true nature, dignity, and stature. He wants you to become equal to Him so He will have a counterpart, a help meet, a help equal to Him — a **bride!** Can you not see the mystery? To accomplish this God has devised a very special plan that revolves around His firstborn Son, Jesus the Christ. That plan is revealed again and again through the various dynamics of scripture, but ultimately it is no more beautifully portrayed anywhere than in the

mystery of this divine romance between the “Shulamite” and her “Beloved.” For in this drama we have a clear representation of how the invisible, holy God is pursuing us, awakening us, and wooing us to Himself by bringing us into His own high places where we may experience Him as He is.

The Song of Solomon begins for you when you find your personal love for God not merely as Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, and Blesser, but as the Lover of your soul, your Beloved, your Bridegroom. The Song of Solomon begins for you when you have experienced Christ enough to know *that's what I want to explore and experience in the most personal, intimate, complete, and powerful way!* “**One thing** have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after...that I may dwell in the house of the Lord...to behold the beauty of the Lord...when Thou saidest, Seek ye my face; *my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord will I seek*” (Ps. 27:4,8). You aren’t in the Song of Solomon until you have zeroed in on THE ONE. If you’re still skipping about from revival to revival, from preacher to preacher, from movement to movement, from group to group, from church to church looking for “the One” — that’s not the Song! But the day will come when you, too, will exclaim, “Oh! the Song of Songs! *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Thy love is better than wine* — I’ve found Him! Now that I’ve found Him I can’t live without Him — I want Him!” I don’t know where you are today, my friend, but He’s calling you to come out of that place and “*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away with me!*” Oh, yes!

Do you know what the Song of Solomon is all about? It is called “The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s.” Just as the “holy of holies” was the holiest of all places, just as the “heaven of heavens” is the highest heaven of all the heavens, so the “Song of Songs” is above and beyond all the songs that have ever poured from the human heart and human lips. This is the Song that is above all other songs, a Song sent down from the courts of heaven, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, a strain from the celestial choir. “Song” in the symbology of scripture means “a message.” So the Song of Songs is the Message of Messages, the Word of Words, indeed, the Revelation of Revelations! Yet, I could teach you every single verse in this Song and if your soul is not awakened you would miss the point. The awakening of the soul is your most precious experience in life! The only time the Song of Songs can become the Message of Messages is in your *heart of hearts*. “The voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” (S. of S. 2:8).

Ah, the voice of my Beloved upon the mountains and upon the hills, out of the high places of God in the spirit! “My Beloved is like a roe or a young hart” (S. of S. 2:9). He is like a warrior, powerful, quick, strong, fast, and furious. The voice was leaping, the voice was skipping, experiences were occurring, remembrances of previous blessings and dealings, of past revelations and unfoldings of Himself, the voice of the Lord coming and breaking through — ah, and suddenly she hears a new sound, a fresh word, “**My beloved spake, and said unto me...**” As you learn to remember your experiences in God, with all His divine interventions in your life, and the levels of growth and development He has led you through, the voice of the Lord will come leaping and skipping upon the hills, and suddenly the voice of the Beloved will speak, and say, “**Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away!**” Have you reached a plateau, have you been in a place where nothing much is happening in your experience? The word of the Lord is for you today, “Come away my love, come on...I want to lift you up, I want to take you away, I want to bring you into new and greater and higher dimensions in me!” Release yourself, trust the word of God, and take a journey. For those of us who have walked with God for a while the voice of the Lord still comes leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills, entreating, “**Come away, my love!**”

“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come...” The winter is past, the season when the heavens appeared as brass and the voice of the Lord seemed a million miles away, is ending, the dark ages are over, and a new season has dawned. Sure, you have problems and face challenges and difficulties, but the real winter is past, the real night of darkness when you could not sense His presence or His unfailing love, is gone, and His love has appeared and remains and abides still and shall shine brighter and brighter with radiant beauty unto the ages of the ages in a people whom He has called unto Himself, unto union with Him in the high places of His Spirit; yes, rise up and come away, for the winter is truly past, saith the Lord!

“The rain is over and gone...” The seasons of showers of blessings have ended, and the great “Latter Rain” of the Spirit has also come to an end. Looking back at the “glory days” of the great movings of the Spirit of the Lord, there is no need to mourn their departure, nor any need to pray, “Lord, do it again!” because God is not going to repeat the former visitations — THE RAIN IS OVER AND GONE. “The flowers appear on the earth.” Don’t you see the flowers appearing? There have been flowers for ages and ages. Peter the apostle was a flower. Paul was a flower. All through history the flowers do appear — these new manifestations of His life, these fresh forms of His beauty, these pristine expressions of the indwelling Christ do appear. His Spirit, His life is in the earth, and now His voice is heard, saying, “Rise up my love and come away, for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone: *the flowers appear on the earth!*” We have seen flowers appear, we have seen saints of the most high, we have seen the goodness of God, we have beheld the beauty of the Lord, He has shined the glory of His grace and power through many vessels down through the ages, but now the winter is past, the seasons of refreshing have gone, the voice of the Lord is heard anew from out of the high places of the spirit, the virgin bride is called to arise and ascend into the deepest and fullest union with her Beloved, proclaiming that this marriage of the Lamb unfolds THE SEASON OF THE FLOWERS; the earth shall break forth with beauty and glory everywhere as the glorious company of God’s sons appear in the earth! Oh, yes! The sons of God are the flowers appearing on the earth, appearing out of our *union with Christ!* Great is the mystery!

The following words from Joyce Morris give precious insight into God’s great purpose in our union with the Lamb.

She writes, “The Father has shown me in glimpses that He has an order in which the marriage of the Lamb must take place. He also spoke very clearly and said, ‘My sons must *become the Lamb.*’ To become the Lamb, you must first marry and have a union with the Lamb! As God swallows up your soul to where all that is left is Him, you become the Lamb because you *are one.* In order for you to become the Lamb, you must also eat ALL the parts of the Lamb. Just as with Israel before leaving Egypt, they had to consume the whole lamb and nothing could remain uneaten. You have to eat the hind parts. You have to eat the head. You have to eat the inward parts. You have to eat all the uncomely parts of the Lamb. In other words, you have to eat the Word, and the Word is the Lamb!

“John 1:14 says, ‘And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...’ Then in chapter six we read, ‘Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by my Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is the bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers*

**did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever...it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU, THEY ARE SPIRIT, AND THEY ARE LIFE.'**

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth..." (Rev. 14:4). In other words, THEY LIVE BY THE WORD! But there are many parts of the Word that your flesh doesn't want to eat — so your self-will pops up its head and says, 'Well, that part is not for me. I don't need to walk that out. That part isn't for me, it's for that person over there — look at what they're doing. I don't have to eat that. I can do what I want, say what I want, and think what I want. Nobody is going to tell me what I can or can't do. I don't want to love that person. I don't want to forgive that person. God, I'll give you this part of my life, but I want to keep that part for myself.' The reason so many parts of the Word are uncomely and displeasing to the flesh, is because if you eat and digest those parts of the Word, then *your soul will have to change and die out to its self-will!* The more you eat of the Lamb, the more your soul will be swallowed up. And when God has swallowed up everything in you that is not like Him, *you will have become the Lamb.* You will be totally one! You will have entered into a place *in Him* where you will go out no more, and He will be all-in-all in every area of your life. There will be no more temple within, because God will have filled the whole house, '**...for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.**'

"The marriage of the Lamb is all about God's sons (and eventually all creation) becoming the Lamb, or taking on the nature of the Lamb through union with Christ. It is all about two becoming one, and as you continue to go deeper and deeper in your relationship with Christ — your union is producing a Son. As you walk in oneness with the Lamb, He is causing you to BECOME THE LAMB. In Isaiah 4:2 we read, 'In that day shall *the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious.*' Why shall the branch be beautiful and glorious? Because the branch abides in the vine and from their union they bear the nature of God! The branch has been thoroughly purged, or pruned, and now yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. In this way the bride of the Lamb has been clothed in the glory of the Son. She has been arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. She has put on the new man which *is Christ* and has come into the nature of the Lamb! This is the way it is when you are married to the Lord! When you keep your relationship with Him first, and take time each day to go *within* and commune with Him, people actually see the glory of the Lord upon you!" — end quote.

It is a great blessing to our hearts to understand the true order of *union* in the kingdom of God. "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He **him**; *male and female* created He **them**. And God blessed **them**, and God said unto **them**, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and **subdue it**; and **have dominion over** every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:27-28). My reader will observe the change from "him" to "them." We are not presented with the actual fact of the formation of the woman until chapter two; but even here we find God blessing "them," and giving "them" JOINTLY THE POSITION OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT. All the inferior orders of creation were set under their JOINT DOMINION. As Andrew Jukes has somewhere pointed out, Eve received all her blessings in Adam: in him, too, she got her dignity and position and power. Though not yet called into her individual identity, she was, in the purpose of God, looked at as part of the man. Universal dominion was not given to the male characteristics of Adam alone; it was not said, "let **him** have dominion," but "let **them** have dominion!" There was no other creature so near to Adam and Eve, because no other creature was part of himself. What affection Eve had for Adam! What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in his thoughts and in all his powers! In all his dignity, and in all his glory, wisdom, and authority, she was entirely **one!** He did not rule over

her, but *with* her. He was lord of the whole creation, and she was ONE WITH HIM! They were the king and queen of the universe!

There is neither time nor space to consider the myriad ghastly consequences of the fall of man, but I would draw your attention to one disastrous result. The curses reaped **caused the inequality between the sexes** so prominent in the human family. "Unto the woman He said...thy desire shall be (subject to) thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). Can we not see by this that the headship of man over woman was not God's intention for them, but is an integral part of the *curse of sin and death!* The primeval beauty and equality of man and woman in the garden of Eden disappeared in their sense of *separation*. Strife, guilt, shame, discord, competition, and pain took over — the way of the flesh held sway! This bespeaks of the separation of *soul* and *spirit* within ourselves, making every man indeed *bi-polar!* And this is the re-union God is effecting through redemption and restoration in the experience of every son of God! The wonderful goal is not just our mind, our will, our emotions, and our desires **submitted** to Christ in our Spirit, but for our mind, our will, our emotions, and our desires to be so MADE ONE IN HIM until there is only ONE MIND, ONE WILL, ONE EMOTION, ONE DESIRE — the marriage union of the Lamb and His wife restoring **one new creature** — Christ and us, spirit and soul — **UNITED IN ONE!** It is not His mind "*controlling*" our mind, but just ONE NEW MIND! It is more than a "fill me" with more of God, but a being swallowed up into Him, that henceforth it is only the **GOD-MAN!** This is perfect man, the image of God, male and female, spirit and soul dwelling in unity and oneness in the Garden of a redeemed body, united in one, given dominion over all things. "*Let us be glad and rejoice...for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.*" Oh, the mystery of it!

# Chapter 208

## The Marriage Of The Lamb (continued)

"And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb**" (Rev. 19:9).

Who are those blessed, truly happy, and abidingly fortunate, who have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb? I turn to the only possible authority, that is, to the Lamb Himself. When Jesus told the parable of the king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and of the invited guests who gave various excuses as to why they couldn't attend, while others made light of the invitation, and some even abused his messengers, he continued, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited are not worthy. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the disabled, and the lame, and the blind. As many as you can find, invite them to come to the marriage feast." And the servant said, "Lord, it is done just as you have commanded, and there is still room." So the king said to the servant, "Go out into the highways and the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

The question follows — who *are* those who are invited to the marriage supper? One thing is quite certain — they are *not the bride!* The bride is never "invited" or "called" to her own wedding, for it is *her wedding* and the bridegroom himself escorts her there at his side. And if for some reason the bride "made excuse" not to be at her own wedding feast, she certainly wouldn't be *replaced* by a vast crowd of unfortunate folk! The "blessed" ones are the invited guests. As a rule, in most any culture, a wedding consists of a number of guests which are friends and relatives of the bridegroom and bride. Every marriage feast is filled with guests! In its spiritual meaning, they are redeemed ones no less than the wife, but they have not attained to the same degree of relationship, intimacy, glory, or honor. Certainly that vast throng that sings, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor unto Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and *His wife* hath made *herself* ready," are not themselves the wife, for they sing *of* the wife, and they rejoice *with* the Lamb and His wife!

The bride, on the other hand, is composed of those elect saints who live in most intimate communion and union with the Bridegroom. Who can deny that there are vast multitudes of believers who know Christ as Saviour and rejoice in the blessed knowledge that they are forgiven and are redeemed children of God, but have never themselves matured into that true godly submission in the love of a woman that is so pure and intense that she wants to yield herself completely to the high desires of her husband — a woman so in love with her man that it transcends friendship or even infatuation — her submission becomes a willing and loving laying down of her own life until she no longer has a life because HER LIFE IS SURRENDERED TOTALLY TO ANOTHER! Her cry becomes, "I don't want my life...I want to share yours." Oh! Most Christians know so little of HOW TO BE A BRIDE! They know how to be "sinners saved by grace," and many know how to be "servants" of God, but only the blessed Holy Spirit can teach us how to truly **BE a bride!**

The question is just this — Do we really love Christ, or are we merely using Him? When we are mere children, we love Him out of a childish, immature love. We love Him primarily for what He *gives us and does for us.* When you hear someone testify, "I love the Lord *because* He saved me," or "I love the Lord *because* He healed me." or "I love the Lord *because* He answers my

prayers and supplies all my needs," you know you listen to the testimony of a **child**, imperfect in love. That kind of talk is like the girl who married a rich man and confessed, "I love John because he provides me with a fabulous beach house, a new Mercedes, a mink coat, and a \$5000.00 weekly allowance!" Obviously, she loves John ONLY FOR HIS MONEY! Should John lose his wealth her love would soon die away like grass upon a lawn. And untold millions of immature Christians, the "little children" of God, profess to love God basically out of those same selfish and self-centered motives!

Do we know what it means to come into His sweet presence, asking nothing for ourselves, but only reaching out to HIM with gratitude and thanksgiving for loving us so completely? Haven't we been most selfish and ego-centric in our prayers? We will pray for God to save America from judgment. "Spare us — don't judge us," we cry. "Give us, meet us, help us, bless us, strengthen us, deliver us, heal us, prosper us, use us, protect us," on and on goes the list of our petitions! That is all good in its place, but the focus is still on US. IT IS NOT THE CRY OF THE BRIDE! Even in our work for Him we have become selfish and self-centered. We want Him to bless our service to Him to prove that our faith is genuine. We seek to be considered diligent, capable, successful — as a sign of His blessing upon us. The focus is always on the benefit derived, rather than the pure adoration of love. But the claims of the Bridegroom are paramount upon the bride — she is to love Him, not for His gifts, not for what He can do for her or make of her, but for HIMSELF! The true heart of a wife loves her husband FOR WHO AND WHAT HE IS! It's not about the bride, it's about the Bridegroom! "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor unto HIM..." When a wife really, deeply, fully loves her husband, she loves him just as much if they are poor and have nothing. As God brings forth a people into brideship to Christ, this people is coming to love our Lord Jesus Christ out of a pure heart *for who He is* and not because of the blessings and benefits received. Children are always excited about the GIFT, but the bride is excited about the GIVER!

I feel assured that the foregoing truths will aid us in understanding that there are many guests at the marriage of the Lamb who are not the bride, but are very dear friends and relatives of the Bridegroom and the bride. There are many saints who shall enter into realms of glory in God's great and eternal kingdom, but they will not be of that elect company which makes up the bride of the Lamb. They know the Lamb, they love Him and have a relationship with Him on some level, but are not drawn by that irresistible love which craves ultimate union with Him. These will indeed inherit heavenly glory and its bliss as servants, attendants, and guests at the wedding of the Lamb! They shall have a part: but that part is not the higher part of the perfected and beautified bride. Still, they are invited to share with the Bridegroom and the bride the joy and gladness and bountiful provision of the marriage supper! This may include all those Christians now in the church systems. The church systems are ill prepared for that glorious union to come! But they will most certainly be prepared by the Spirit to have a share in its glory, by being cleansed from their corrupt and unholy affiliation with the Babylonish systems of man, and of all their many false doctrines, by the fiery purgings of the Spirit of the Lord! They will receive their call, their "invitation" to the wedding, and they will wear a wedding garment provided by the Lord of the wedding feast, but it will not be the fine linen, clean and white, of the bride. It is a lesser glory!

Americans often have a false sense of "equality" and this view carries over into their understanding of the kingdom of God. Our ideas of equality have their origins in Thomas Jefferson's claim that *all men are created equal*. Obviously there is an important truth there — yet it is sometimes mis-applied. We all know that none of us is "equal" in our aptitudes, in our abilities, potentialities, opportunities, or life experiences. There are striking differences between individuals that make some stronger, smarter, and better than others. Some are brighter, more

talented, and more beautiful than others. Some of us could never become CEO of a large corporation or president of the United States no matter how hard we tried! We are just not "equal" to the tasks. I do not believe that the Bible teaches anywhere that all men are created equal. That is a Jeffersonian concept, but not a biblical one. Is that child created equal who is born in the slums; the child of a harlot and a whoremonger; a child without a name, who grows up in a wicked and dysfunctional atmosphere, and never knows virtue until it is steeped in vice? Is that child created equal and endowed with the same inalienable rights who grows up amidst falsehood, and never knows what truth is until it is steeped in lies; and never knows what honesty is until it is steeped in crime? Is that child created equal who is born in a communist land and in a godless home; who is told by its government and taught by its teachers that there is no God in heaven, and never knows even a verse of scripture until it is steeped in unbelief and infidelity? Is that child created equal with all the more privileged children born into homes of love, purity, faith, and blessings? It is a sham, a delusion, and a snare to say it. It is not true. All are not born into this world on an equal footing! They are perhaps "equal under the law" but they certainly are not created equal in their state of birth, their opportunities, their growth and development, or their life experiences.

How sad my heart often gets when I hear someone trying to explain how we are all "equal" in Christ. How often we have heard the remarks that they who have received Christ as Saviour are all the "bride of Christ," or are all "sons of God," or that irrespective of denomination or spiritual experience we are all "going to the same place." Such statements indicate a lack of both spiritual perception and scriptural understanding. Beloved, nowhere within the pages of God's holy Book is it taught that all believers have the same gifts, the same ministry, the same degree of maturity and spiritual stature, the same calling, the same position, the same rank, the same order, or even the same goal or destination. Yet most Christians and almost all preachers entertain the mistaken notion that all any child of God needs to do is just be faithful and "hold out till the end" and we'll all go to the same heaven, walk the same golden streets, strum the same kinds of harps, sing and shout the same praises to God — and that will be IT. They seem to associate "going to heaven" as the ultimate reward. "We're all going to the same place," they croon. OH, NO, WE'RE NOT! In the visions of John we see clearly that some are *in* the throne, others are *before* the throne, and multitudes of the "nations of them that are saved" are *outside* the city — walking in the light of it! Does not even nature itself teach us that the "babe" in Christ, or the "carnal Christian," or the spiritually dilatory, the reluctant, the sluggish, the dawdling, the procrastinator, the spiritually lazy, the one weak in faith, the idolater, would not receive the same reward as the consecrated saint who diligently seeks God with a pure, undivided heart, who draws nigh to God, takes up his cross, lays down his life, seeks the Lord with all His heart, and walks in the Spirit of the Lord?

In the poetry of the Psalms the Lamb's wife, the virgin bride, is referred to as "the daughter of the king," that is, the daughter of the king of Tyre, or Egypt, or any other country which became the bride of King Solomon (Ps. 45:10-13) who pre-figured Christ. But the bride does not come to the wedding alone! She is accompanied by a train of followers, called her "companions." "The *king's daughter* is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the *virgins her companions that follow her* shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace" (Ps. 45:13-15). Ah, how those words resonate with the song John heard in the spirit: "Let us be glad and rejoice...for the marriage of the Lamb is come!"

The 45<sup>th</sup> Psalm speaks of the King, who comes forth from the ivory palaces, whose qualities are described so graphically, with great vigor and animation. But there is also the Queen, the King's Bride, standing on his right hand, adorned with gold of Ophir, clothed in wonderfully wrought

garments of beauty and glory, and inwardly she is all glorious. But besides the Queen, the King's Bride, there is another blessed company, who are also to enter with gladness and rejoicing into the King's palace, and to share his favor and the light of his countenance. They are called "the virgins," the "companions," associates, and bosom friends of the Queen, but plainly distinct from the Queen herself. They do not go with her when she is "taken," but "follow her," — come after her — and are "brought unto the King" at a subsequent time, and in quite another capacity from that of the Queen and Bride. All of them are citizens of the kingdom, members of the congregation of the Lord. All of them find their joy in association with the King and Queen, but they do not share that one thing — total intimacy and ultimate union. The Queen is related to the King on a deeper and higher plane than any of "the virgins the companions" that follow her.

Throughout the scriptures we see great diversities in the attainments of the saints and the rewards apportioned to them. Our Lord Himself frequently spoke of those who would be *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven as well as those who would be *least*. He also revealed that some would be *first*, while others would be *last*. It should be obvious that there would be many levels in between! There are some who get crowns, and there are others who get none. As we have pointed out earlier, in the Revelation there are those blessed overcomers who are granted to sit with the Lord in His throne, while others are positioned "before" the throne, and besides these there are vast multitudes of those who are characterized as "the nations of them which are saved" who are completely outside the city but who "walk in the light of it." That there is no equality of rewards in the kingdom of God is revealed plainly in the words of the Lord of the kingdom Himself: "And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). The Lord also stated that in the kingdom there are some who are assigned dominion over ten cities, some over five, and some who lose all reward, and are saved only "so as by fire."

These are truths that vitally concern all of God's elect who have received the call to brideship and sonship — the *high calling* of God in Christ Jesus! Even in the church of this age there are *diversities of gifts and differences of administrations*. And Paul tells the saints, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and *members in particular*. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts..." (I Cor. 12:27-31).

Our blessed Lord and Elder Brother has opened up the way into a realm of ministry that transcends all that we have hitherto known or experienced. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, that we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to *lay hold upon the hope set before us*: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which *entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK*" (Heb. 6:18-20).

The word "order" in the phrase "order of Melchizedek" is something like the word "order" we use when we speak of certain religious orders, such as the Franciscans or the Dominicans, or the orders of various secret societies or lodges. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is a high priest after the "Melchizedekian Order." And that was a startling statement when it was made! It was startling because the people who heard it first, knew only one order of priests. They were the Levitical priests of Israel and they were of the Aaronic order. When the new age of the church was inaugurated, the priesthood of Aaron was terminated and Christ ascended to become a high

priest in the ORDER OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. This is why Jesus had to be a special kind of priest. He had to have the Melchizedek Connection.

Never under the Aaronic order of priesthood, apart from one example, do we find where a king exercised the office or ministry of a priest. In the Levitical order the offices of king and priest were separated, there were those who reigned as kings, and there were those who were the Lord's priests. Kings could not intrude into the priest's office, and priests were not permitted to sit on the throne. The tribe of Judah produced the kings, and the tribe of Levi supplied the priests. On one occasion Uzziah, king of Judah, tried to assume the role of priest and "went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" and for this infringement upon God's due order was smitten with leprosy in his forehead (II Chron. 27:16-20). God had separated the two offices for that time, and the one was not to intrude into the other.

God is a God of order, and not of confusion! Truth has an order for all things that God made by Jesus Christ, who upholds all things by His word and power. So, with His word and power He keeps all things in their places, and in their proper order, and in their times, and in their seasons; the summer and the winter, the night and the day, the sun, moon, and stars, as also billions of galaxies with their untold trillions of stars and suns and planets and moons, all things are kept in order by the word of God and his power; and the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent," speaking of the Christ, "thou art a priest for ever, *after the order of Melchizedek*" (Ps. 110:4). And Christ is not called after the order of Aaron (Heb. 7:11-22). Here you may see, the priesthood of Melchizedek was not made WITHOUT AN ORDER, just as Aaron's priesthood was made by an order of God, according to his rod's budding in the Tabernacle. And Jesus Christ is not a priest made without an order, but it is a *priesthood of many sons called to share His fullest glory and His highest order*, and is after the order of Melchizedek; and His royal priesthood, that is, His kingly priesthood, who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, are in His spiritual order, which is the order of the Son of God, which is the order of SONSHIP.

Now, I have said all that just to say this: Melchizedek is a priesthood of ORDER! Jesus Christ is made a priest for ever after the ORDER of Melchizedek! How important it is that every member of God's elect who is taught by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God should understand and comprehend the great truth and the deep mystery of all the "orders" that exist in the vast and eternal kingdom of God! We find that in the resurrection, every man comes up in his OWN ORDER. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept. For as in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*. But EVERY MAN IN HIS O-W-N O-R-D-E-R: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end (of the resurrection)...all things subdued...God all in all" (I Cor. 15:20,22-24,28). But what does this mean? The Greek word translated "order" is *tagma* and means "a group," or "rank," or "band," or "company." *Tagma* actually comes from a root word meaning to appoint, determine, or set in array, as used in Acts 13:38, "and as many as were *ordained* (appointed, set in array) to eternal life believed." The thought is of soldiers marching in bands, companies, regiments, or battalions. As in times of war the country calls age groups and forms them into companies of men, so in like manner the Spirit of God shall call to life every man who has ever lived on planet earth in his own time, order, and rank. Some glad morning, when the ever unfolding plan of God is complete, every man will behold with endless joy the reality that his rank in the resurrection is determined not by what he became on earth, but by the pre-ordination of God before he was lowered into this realm!

You came into this realm out of the bosom of the Father! Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, but

He knew you as spirit. God spoke to you about His plan for your life before ever you were formed as an embryo in the womb of your mother. Paul states it so clearly when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "Even as He chose us (actually picked us out for Himself as His own) in Christ before the foundation of the world." Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His special and highest purpose before the foundation of the world is that you truly existed in and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to His purpose for us. I thought the work of God began in my life eighty years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with humanity began in eternity! It didn't begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God knew me, God loved me, counseled with me, and picked me out for a particular purpose, a specific ordination, work, company, rank, and order, and assigned me to that order, placed me in that order, before the foundation of the world! And that, my beloved, is what it means to come up in the resurrection IN YOUR OWN ORDER. Resurrection is the work of raising men up and bringing them back into the order they came out of when they were lowered into this gross material realm. You are raised up into the order you came from, not merely an order that was attained to on earth. Oh, the mystery of it!

Oh! How many realms of glory there are in God's vast, illimitable, inexhaustible, and eternal kingdom! "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the *glory* of the celestial is *one*, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is *another*. And there is *one glory* of the sun, and *another glory* of the moon, and *another glory* of the stars: for *one star differeth from another star in glory*. **SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**" (I Cor. 15:35,39-42). Let us not then lightly lay aside this truth of the MORE EXCELLENT GLORY, which the Holy Spirit has illumined and to which the word of God points the way. We may want to settle for just any degree of glory, but let us all who value the *glory of God* lay hold on the prize that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

Now let us return to our thought of the bride of the Lamb and the companies of saints which surround her. Princesses and queens, above all on occasions of their marriage, always have their associates, companions, maids of honor, attendants, and friends, who, in a general way, are counted with them as making one and the same company, but who in fact are very distinct in honor and privilege from those on whom they find it their joy to attend. Just as the Bridegroom comes not alone, but with attendants, companions, and a long train of rejoicing ones who make up his party, the whole of whom together are called "the Bridegroom's coming," while in reality there is a vast difference between Him and those with Him; so it is on the side of the bride. The great crowd that gathers at any marriage, attendants or guests, are indeed *blessed* and *honored* to be "called to the marriage feast," but they do not share that most sacred *relationship* and *union* of the bridegroom and the bride! And so it is also in the kingdom of God!

Throughout the beautiful Song of Solomon, from time to time the "daughters of Jerusalem" are addressed by the bride, or they address the bride. On one occasion they ask this question: "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? *that we may seek him with thee*" (S. of S. 6:1). The "daughters of Jerusalem" are the old-order church system Christians who love the Lord but are not "bride-like" in their relationship with

Him. The Shulamite always addresses them as those who are looking on and are not enemies, although they are not seeking the most intimate fellowship and vital union with Christ. But here we meet the beautiful truth that because of the exquisite beauty of the Bride and because of the bride's fervent love for her Beloved, a real hunger is *aroused in their own hearts to seek after Him with her*. From an attitude of indifference and detachment, they are at last brought to a place of hunger and desire, to a longing to seek Him with the bride. Oh, how wonderful are these things! For these are *spiritual realities*, and when one is dealt with by the Lord and responds to His dealing, that one can ascend in Him from one company to another — from being a "companion" of the bride to becoming a bride within himself or herself!

A little later in the same chapter we are shown even more "companies" of the bride's companions. "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but *one*; she is the *only one* of her mother, she is the *choice one* of her that bare her. The *daughters* (of Jerusalem) saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her" (S. of S. 6:8-9). Though there are beautiful and highly honored "daughters of Jerusalem" without number, the Bridegroom declares that His dove is but *one*. In the second chapter, we are told that all the daughters are as thorns when compared to His love, who is the *only lily*! The expressions, "but *one*," and "*only one*," in the passage above are both translated from the same word in the Hebrew language. Their meaning throws much light upon our oneness and union with Christ. "But *one*" means "the united *one*; to unify or make *one*." This reveals the great truth that there are many in the bride of the Lamb, but they are so united or unified in mind, heart, devotion, and will as to make "but *one*." The bride is *one*; the companions are many. The bride is **from among** the daughters, but is singled out from them. From this moment of separation, a difference is made. The bride is that **special one** out of many! We can know by this that those who are truly the bride of the Lamb share a common understanding, revelation, submission, and purpose, being brought together in such perfect unity of spirit as will make her *one*. They are *one among themselves*, but even more importantly they are *one in mind, heart, love, and devotion with their Beloved*!

"The daughters saw her, and called her blessed; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." All the precious children of God on earth, all of those who could have been in the bride of the Lamb and are not, all the hosts of heaven, every creature in heaven and upon earth, shall behold her, even as they shall look upon the Christ when He is revealed through His "many brethren" in all of His glory. Those who love God will rejoice in her brightness, those who could have been in this blessed company, will rejoice that she has attained to that which they have missed. In the wonderful glory of that day there will be no regret, bitterness, or resentment in any heart of God's people, and they will call her blessed, they will praise her; not because of herself, but because she shows forth the purpose and handiwork of God and is to His praise and glory as she bears the image of His Son.

The Lord Himself has told us, "**Many** are *called*, but **few** are *chosen*." Ah, "Blessed are they which are *called* unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!" Oh, how bountifully blessed they are! Yet — can we not see that these are the "*called*" ones? "**Many** are *called*..." May I say it this way — in our present application, the multitudes attending the marriage of the Lamb are *the called ones*. The bride, however, is the *chosen one*! And the mystery is just this: "...**few** are *chosen*." There is a little company today, who have come out of all the defilement around about us, who have forsaken man-made churches with their fears and fables, to be married to their Lord, and to Him alone. These are they who rule over His household, and who are now in travail to bring forth (Isa. 65:8). And there is a great feast spread, a feast wherein the wife and a portion of the "daughters," the "virgins," will attend (Mat. 25:10). It is the third feast of the Israelite year: not Passover, for that was fulfilled at Calvary; and not Pentecost, for that has been

fulfilled throughout the church age. This third feast of the year is the feast of Tabernacles! It is “the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year” (Ex. 23:16, 34:22; Deut. 16:13-15). And this feast IS THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB! “**Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!**”

God is calling many in this hour and He is also choosing a few. We are now in this place where God is choosing, just as He chose Moses, David, the prophets, Peter, Paul, Andrew, James, John, Martin Luther and others who have been His instruments in every great move of God throughout the ages to be used by Him specially; we are now in an hour of divine choice. God is again choosing men! We are not choosing Him, He is choosing us. We are just responding to His choosing! God is making choice of those through whom there will come the complete, the full, the total revelation and manifestation of Jesus Christ in all of its glory, all of its power, all of its authority, and all of its salvation, so that all flesh shall see the salvation of God and all the ends of the earth the glory of the Lord upon the Lamb and His wife and His many brethren!

Behold — I show you a mystery! While we speak of the bride, and what a glorious and illustrious company she is, and those called, what a blessed company they are, let us not lose sight of the fact that the marriage is the “marriage of the Lamb.” It is the Lamb and His wife. It is the celebration of their joy, of their love, of their union, of their lives. The deep mystery which the Holy Spirit would now make precious to our hearts is just this — there is a corporate body of overcomers having a masculine character identified with the Lamb and they share His holy mount of Zion, they sit with Him in His throne, they ride white horses with Him in His conquest — for just as the bride is a corporate body of beloved ones, so also the GROOM is a corporate body of sons. Paul by inspiration wrote of those mature ones who “grow up *into Him in all things* WHICH IS THE HEAD, EVEN CHRIST” (Eph. 4:15). Can we not see that this signifies those who *grow up into HIS HEADSHIP*. These are also designated as a MANCHILD and as KINGS AND PRIESTS unto God, indicating that they grow up into HIS KINGSHIP, into HIS PRIESTHOOD, and into HIS SONSHIP. It should be obvious that a *son* cannot be a *bride* anymore than a *king* can be a *queen*. The bride of Christ has a joint rulership as a queen — but she is not the king! Christ is *King of kings* — signifying a KINGSHIP COMPANY.

George Hawtin has so ably written of this, “This is none other than Jesus Christ, the first begotten Son of God, together with all those other precious sons that have come into His image and likeness throughout the ages. This is in truth the FULLNESS OF THE BODY of the BRIDEGROOM, for the Bridegroom is more than Jesus of Nazareth. He is JESUS CHRIST AND ALL THE SONS whom God has given Him now joined together as one glorious BODY OF SONS, the Bridegroom of whom it was said, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.’ Christ together with ALL THE SONS OF GOD is the completeness of the BODY OF THE BRIDEGROOM. The long awaited time has come to take the bride, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready. The marriage of the Bridegroom, the male company of sons, to the bride, the female company, will be the signal for the beginning of that age of all ages in which everything in heaven and earth will be gathered into Christ (Eph. 1:10)” — end quote.

This spiritually masculine company of overcomers are those sons of God, the manchild out of the virgin bride, of whom it is written by the prophet, “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall **thy sons marry thee:** and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa. 62:5). In this ONENESS WITH HIM in His headship there are positions and qualifications which denote a mature, spiritually masculine state of being in Him, with strength, authority, wisdom, and power. There are likewise positions and qualifications which denote a mature, spiritually feminine state of being in Him, with tenderness, compassion, mercy,

succor, and love. The Father is *choosing* His GROOM COMPANY just as Christ is *choosing* His BRIDE COMPANY. The **rest** of God's people are **called** to the marriage! That is the mystery.

## THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto *the marriage supper of the Lamb*. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:9).

God is an incredible host. He throws parties with the things we love: great food, great people, warmth, and laughter. God's parties are lavish, extraordinary. Traveling through the desert, God's people Israel pictured a promised wonderland "flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 13:5). And Joel 2:24 says, "The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil." It's no surprise, then, that Jesus describes the kingdom of God as a joyful banquet (Luke 14:15). And in our present text John describes the time of the ultimate union of Christ and His bride as "the marriage supper (wedding feast) of the Lamb."

Just the sound of the words "the wedding feast of the Lamb" brings great joy, excitement, and anticipation to our hearts! Weddings are a time of celebration, which usually includes a meal of one kind or another. Because of tradition we have visualized the bride of Christ whisked away into the sky, where millions of Christians sit down at a physical table set high in the atmosphere upon a brilliant white cloud, the table stretching to infinity with Jesus seated at the head and the saints of all the ages are with Him enjoying a meal of heavenly filet mignon; the angels standing at attention, refilling our glasses with living water and celestial wine. Many say this feast lasts for seven years, while the great tribulation is wreaking havoc on earth. Then, these stuffed saints come back and watch while God destroys the world system in the Battle of Armageddon. After that, Satan is bound up in chains and cast into a bottomless pit, and all the saints reign with Christ for precisely one thousand years. When the one thousand years are over, for some inexplicable reason, Satan will be let loose again to deceive all those people the saints have reigned over for the past thousand years. Eventually, fire will come down from heaven and destroy all those people and Satan will be thrown back into the lake of fire, and the saints will rule and reign with Christ forever — over something, somewhere!

A number of weddings are described in the Bible. The first wedding was performed by a very special guest minister. Whatever ceremony He may have chosen, it did not include those familiar words, "If man can show just cause why these two should not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else forever hold his peace." This statement was unnecessary, for the minister was God Himself, and the couple was Adam and Eve. Then there was a very unusual wedding in which the bridegroom found out the next morning, by light of day, that he had married the wrong girl (Gen. 29:21-25). One of the most beautiful wedding stories began in the barley field outside the little town of Bethlehem (Ruth 2). Perhaps the most tragic wedding was that between Ahab, king of Israel, and Jezebel, a godless Baal worshipper. This marriage would result in much sorrow and suffering for God's people (I Kings 16:29-31). Finally, the Saviour of men chose a wedding in the city of Cana of Galilee to perform His first miracle and show forth His glory (Jn. 2:1-11). However, the most fantastic and wonderful wedding of all time is recorded in the book of Revelation — the marriage of the Lamb and His bride!

Much has been said about the proceedings involved in the marriage of Christ and His bride, and it is rather natural that Bible students speculate about what actually occurs in the marriage. Some are prone to view the marriage of Christ in a rather literal way, after the pattern of a wedding in our modern society, in which there is a ceremony with the bride being given away and nuptial vows taken. Of course this is absolutely foreign to the scriptures! If we are to understand what the Bible means by a marriage or a wedding, we must view it as it is portrayed

in scripture itself. There are some Bible examples of marriage which will, to this writer's thinking, adequately depict the marriage of Christ to His bride, and will show what constitutes that marriage.

The first is the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. The beautiful story is related in Genesis chapter twenty-four of how, when Abraham was old, he sent his eldest and most trusted servant, the steward of his house, into his own country from whence he had come, and among his own kindred to select a bride for his son Isaac. When the servant came to the city of Nahor, by the guiding hand of God he was brought into contact with Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel. Through his conversations with Rebekah it was clearly evidenced that she was the one God had chosen to be the bride of Isaac. After Rebekah consented to go and become Isaac's wife, and after the servant had given some special gifts to her, he began the long journey to deliver Rebekah to Isaac. The scripture relates that "...Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. **AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT, AND TOOK REBEKAH, AND SHE BECAME HIS WIFE;** and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. 24:62-67).

There was no ceremony, no giving away of the bride, and no nuptial vows exchanged as we see in formal weddings in our society. The marriage simply consisted in their personal agreement and in Isaac's taking Rebekah unto himself. There is no evidence in scripture that there were any special religious forms in the ancient weddings, no priest or clergyman officiated or validated the marriage. The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom. That event had previously been arranged, of course, by the mutual consent of the families involved; the matter was publicly known and acknowledged and the marriage was binding.

Another beautiful example is presented in the book of Ruth. When Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, redeemed both Ruth and the estate of Naomi according to the law of the kinsman-redeemer, he redeemed Ruth to be his wife. When the marriage occurred, there was no ceremony. The record simply states, "So Boaz **took Ruth, and she was his wife...**" The marriage consisted simply in the bridegroom taking his bride to himself. It is my deep conviction that, in keeping with these analogies, the marriage of Christ and His bride consists simply in CHRIST TAKING HIS BRIDE UNTO HIMSELF. The spirit of inspiration has stated it this way: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it...that He might PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF a glorious church..." (Eph. 5:27). The Emphatic Diaglott expresses the thought beautifully and correctly: "...that he might PLACE THE CONGREGATION BY HIS OWN SIDE, glorious..." Ah, He draws us to Himself, to His side, He takes us unto Himself, into union, and that, my friend, IS THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!

The marriage of the Lamb is the revelation of Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. It is not a ceremony nor merely an assent or agreement. You cannot understand the marriage of the Lamb until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name of bride expresses until, forsaking all others, you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. When I know that I am united to Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it! A wife to Christ is one who has reached full maturity in the spiritually feminine

characteristics of her spiritual life, one who has given herself unreservedly for her Lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take His. She has left all to follow Him! In mind, will, emotion, desire, hopes, plans, and actions the two become one.

In later times it became a custom in the Israelite wedding to have a feast after the bridegroom had taken his bride to his house and consummated their union. To this feast, all the family, friends, and neighbors were invited. Such a feast was celebrated when the marriage of Jacob occurred, when he had worked seven years for Laban in order to obtain Rachel, but on the night of the wedding, was given Leah instead (Gen. 29:18-31). In the days of Christ this "marriage feast" was arranged by the bridegroom at his parent's home, his own home, or some other suitable place. When the night arrived for the wedding festivities to begin, the bridegroom, attended by friends and accompanied by musicians and singers, set out to claim the bride at the house of her father. The bride would be waiting at her house with her maid-servants stationed along the road to alert her when they saw him approaching. The first one to see the bridegroom would shout to the next, "Behold, the bridegroom!" and the shout would be passed along from maid to maid until it reached the bride. She would hasten to put the final touches to her wedding attire and stand ready for his knock on the door. At his knocking the door would open and there would stand his bride, in beauty and splendor, all adorned and prepared to go with him to the marriage feast. It was this wonderful scene, applied to Christ and His bride on the spiritual plane, that John beheld in his awe-inspiring vision on Patmos!

After receiving the bride from her parents with their blessing the bridegroom conducted the whole party back to his own house. There were demonstrations of joy all along the road to the destination. On the way other friends of the bride and bridegroom joined the party and there was much music and dancing. When approaching the bridegroom's house, the bridegroom took his bride into the nuptial chamber. They were then left alone and the bridegroom took his bride and the marriage was consummated. At last, there was UNION! Following their union they both went out to join the festivities of the marriage feast.

Now, lest you get the idea from this typology that Christ is coming to take His bride away, to leave this earth and take a flight to some other planet for a big supper of steak, baked potatoes, and apple pie a-la-mode, let me set things straight. For long centuries the church world has been telling us of a day in the sweet bye and bye, a time when we would be "caught up" in the air and find ourselves feasting and dining at a huge banqueting table in the sky. It would be a wonderful time indeed, this meeting in the air, and we would all feast lavishly on the richest dainties, while all the poor souls on earth who didn't make this "rapture" would be suffering the hellish torments of the "great tribulation."

Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. As we have previously pointed out, there is not one scripture in the whole Bible that speaks of being "caught up" to meet the Bridegroom, or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. This "marriage supper in the sky" business is naught but an ignorant invention and senseless delusion of the carnal church systems of man — Mystery Babylon. Most Christians today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. All their fuss and stir is in vain. I tell you plainly — THERE WILL BE NO MARRIAGE SUPPER IN THE SKY! In order to meet the Bridegroom one must go "out." "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him" (Mat. 25:6). The marriage supper is not "up." It is OUT!

Great harm is done to God's children in teaching the coming of the Bridegroom and the marriage supper according to the wisdom of man. The natural mind does not receive the things of the

Spirit of God and therefore does not receive the spirit of wisdom and understanding which illuminates the precise wording of scripture as given by the Spirit. There are not words in the English language adequate to express how important it is to make the proper preparation for the right event. Suppose that I am invited to a special work day at a church and am instructed to wear old clothes and bring along a broom, a mop, a bucket, some rags and cleaners. Let us further suppose that I get the date confused, and upon arrival at the church discover that a very formal wedding is in progress to which I have also been invited, but have confused the date with the work day, and which I feel obligated to attend, and many of my friends are in fact there. How unspeakably embarrassed I would be standing there before my well-dressed friends at this lavish event attired in ragged clothes, with mop and bucket in hand! Ah, one must be very certain about where he is going, and what the nature of the event is, and precisely how to prepare for it. And should someone find my illustration too crude or inappropriate, let me hastily add that it is a great fact that one does not prepare in the same way for going UP as he does for going OUT! Is it not a delusion that men are preparing themselves for a literal trip through the tangible air to feast on some kind of natural food in these last days?

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this, our day, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and *went forth to meet the bridegroom*...and at midnight there was a cry made, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye OUT to meet him!*" (Mat. 25:1,5). May our hearts be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion — to detach ourselves from the world and its pressures and values, from self and its demands, from present things, from religion with its carnality, from ALL — to **go forth**, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical or astral location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away into the skies to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply **spiritual**. It is the out-going of the heart to be uniquely joined in union with our Head and Lord. It bespeaks such a detachment from *this world system* that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM!

The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds and static creeds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom, and His coming in many other ways and forms. Therefore they know not how to prepare for His comings. This much is clear — in order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go "out." And "out" does not in any way indicate UP! The great truth the Holy Spirit would now make real to our hearts is just this: the only way one may go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is to "come out" from among the world and the flesh and the harlot church systems with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union!

One cry in the book of Revelation is for us to "*Come up hither*" into a higher realm of life and glory. The important truth for us to understand now is that in the Revelation there is both a coming **out** and a coming **up**. Pay attention to the Holy Spirit's use of terms! "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, **Come out of her my people**, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). That very word came to us in great power by the Spirit many years ago during the time of a most sovereign move of God in our midst. We were obedient to the word we heard from heaven and hastened to come out of the carnal confusion of Mystery Babylon, the old-order church system, and out of the whole religious order of man. God began in us a process of complete and total restoration of His truth, His ways, His will, His purpose, His mind, His heart, and the things of His spirit and His kingdom! The reason we must go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is because He is Himself "out." The

message of the Gospels is very clear — all things related to Christ are OUTSIDE of organized, man-made religion!

The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken it! May Christ who is the power of God open the eyes of all who read these lines, even as the scales fell from the vision of Saul of tarsus when Jesus purged them away. In Matthew 22:1-14 we are informed in the solemnest of tones about the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who invited different ones to a marriage feast for his son. A great number of people were invited and the wedding feast was filled with guests. Among the Eastern peoples, noblemen kept in their wardrobes a great number of garments which are called caftans. They are given at such occasions as this to be worn by the guests. It is a great affront for anyone to come and not be appropriately costumed for the occasion.

Since they were giving out wedding garments at the door, we can only assume that when this fellow Jesus told about came to the door, and the servant inquired, "What size are you — small, medium, or large — you look like a medium," the man replied, "I don't need one." "Well," the servant insisted, "The King expects you to use this." "I don't have to do that, don't worry about it, the King knows me very well," and with his heart full of neglect or rebellion he entered into the hall. Soon the King entered into the wedding chamber to welcome his guests. But immediately he noticed a man who was not wearing the wedding garment. "My friend," he said, "how did you come in here without putting on the required wedding garment?" The king was simply enquiring whether he had an excuse, if there was a valid reason why he had no garment. "Did we run out of garments at the door? Did we have no garment that would fit? Did the garment not look good on you? Did you not like our color schemes? Were you allergic to something in the material? Friend, give account of your conduct!" The scripture says he was speechless — not because he could not speak, but because he was without excuse!

Brethren! Are we not told by the preachers that the marriage supper is celebrated someplace far away in the sky, and sometime *after* the "rapture" of the church? Were we not fervently taught that we are going to be in the air for seven years and have a wedding feast with the Lord? The question follows — If the wedding feast is after we are raptured, and somewhere in the sky, HOW DID THIS MAN WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT GET IN THERE? WAS HE SOMEHOW "RAPTURED" BY MISTAKE? Did the Lord Jesus commit a terrible error and accidentally "translate" a man who was not adequately prepared or properly invested for the marriage supper in the sky? How preposterous! This parable proves beyond any possibility of contradiction that a so-called "rapture" has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the marriage supper of the Lamb!

This parable shows that the wedding feast takes place right down here on this earth, and there are people who are feasting on the riches of present truth and the depth of God's revelatory word just as you are, and are standing right in the midst of those who are experientially entering into union with Christ, but they have not had a change of garment; they have not been clothed in the transforming righteousness of Christ; they have not put on that precious mind that was in Christ Jesus; they have not put off the old man with his works and put on the new; they have not died to sin and self and religion; they are neither living nor walking in the Spirit of the Lord! But they have come into the marriage hall of the Lamb!

These have presumptuously "jumped on the bandwagon" of the message of the hour. With unsanctified minds and fleshly zeal they grasp after the deep things of God; they are along for the ride; they mingle with those elect saints who have been apprehended of God to the high calling in Christ Jesus. They show up at every meeting and attend every convention; with unwashed hands they eat from the table so bountifully prepared by the Holy Spirit for those who

forsake all to follow the Lamb; they parrot all the right words, and mouth the sacred secrets revealed by the spirit of truth, and may, with feigned piety appear as one of the choice vessels of the kingdom; but beneath the cloak of pretense there is no true consecration in their lives, no inworking of the holiness of God, no conformation to the image of Christ, no transformation of mind or heart or nature; they are clearly imposters, deceivers, usurpers, pretenders, hypocrites, and cheats.

They have no wedding garment! And now, exposed to the penetrating gaze of the King's presence, the man of nice words and spiritual-sounding expressions no longer could conceal his true condition. In due time, prior to the event of the marriage of His son, the King dealt swiftly and effectively with the usurper. "Then the King said to the attendants, Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into outer darkness (the darkness outside the hall); there will be weeping and grinding of teeth" (Mat. 22:13). No, the poor fellow is not cast into hell fire, nor into Hades, nor into Gehenna, nor into eternal damnation — he is simply excluded from the marriage feast, outside the blessings and benefits of this realm of glory, devoid of true understanding and revelation, denied for that time the privilege of fellowship in the higher light of the kingdom of God and the glory of union with Christ. What a word!

## Chapter 209

### The Marriage Of The Lamb (continued)

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto *the marriage supper of the Lamb*" (Rev. 19:9).

How precious the knowledge that we have a God who hungers, thirsts, deeply desires, to feast with His people — a God who from the beginning has tried to show us that His greatest delight is not in showing His authority or His power, but in enjoying intimate and close fellowship with His own. He set a feast of fruits before Adam and Eve, the like of which man has never been able to reproduce, and He came in the cool of the day and communed with them face to face. He ate and talked with Abraham in his tent at noonday. He spread a table in the wilderness for the entire nation of His chosen, and He gave them the very bread of heaven. He instructed the priesthood how to make twelve loaves of bread, called the bread of His presence, and had them eat it there in the tabernacle of His abode. Jesus performed His first miracle and began to show forth His glory at a wedding feast. He fed five thousand on a hillside. He did not hesitate to attend feasts, but sat at meat with many, even the rich and famous, and went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feasts of Yahweh. Even after His resurrection He grilled fish upon the fire and ate it there with His disciples. And He has established the New Covenant with a feast, the great spiritual feast, wherein He has given His sons and daughters His own body for their meat and His own blood for their drink, that death might be swallowed up of Life.

God has promised through the prophet Isaiah that in the latter days He would make a great feast of spiritual blessings and benefits for ALL NATIONS, upon His holy Mount, the mount of His glorious Kingdom. "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. 25:6). God Himself has prepared this feast! And right now, the Lord is in the process of preparing this banquet for all the peoples of earth. The Lord is telling us in essence, I've saved the best wine for last, and now I'm pouring it into the vessels of my called and chosen elect who shall pour it forth before all people. All the families of the earth shall be gathered to *this feast* and partake of wonderful things in the presence of the Lord! Now, the mountain where this feast is spread is very significant. It bespeaks a holy place, the house of the Lord in the tops of the mountains (Mic. 4:1) where the presence, glory, and power of the Lord is manifest. It's a place where the Lord's people *become the feast* by being filled with all the fullness of God! The mountain of God's presence, glory, and power is an important concept for His elect, for everything that the Lord shall do in the earth in these days is contingent upon His fullness formed in a people. Believe me, there is a spiritual mountain that is high and holy where God is preparing a glorious feast! God intends to work an amazing display of His glory that will overwhelm our minds and hearts! And He's had all this planned since before the world began! This feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, speaks of a people who aren't satisfied with the milk of God's word or just His gifts. They seek to know the Lord for themselves, to know Him in all His glorious fullness, to have the fatness of His word raised up in them, and to become within themselves His refined, aged wine!

It is my conviction that this is the greatest feast of all — the marriage supper of the Lamb — which ushers a people into the most intimate relationship with their Lord! It is not in meetings,

preachings, teachings, prophesying, singing, dancing, or any outward exercise that we enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb; it is at the marriage union of our “soul bride” with our “spirit bridegroom” that we discover *within ourselves* the glorious marriage feast provided by our Father! God cannot spread a table in His holy mount for all people until we have this feast prepared *within ourselves*. Little wonder, then, that John on Patmos admonishes, “**Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!**” The word “blessed” makes this a beatitude — a new beatitude, the fourth one in the book of Revelation. This beatitude proclaims the blessedness of them who are *called* to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The perfect passive tense of the verb speaks of these blessed ones as people who do not just have an invitation and may accept or decline, but as people who have accepted the invitation and are ready for the feast. They for sure are blessed — their happiness is guaranteed!

A marriage feast is a time of great joy and festivity. Those who have tasted something of this heavenly meal know how bountifully the table has been spread with His presence and glory and power! I have good news for you. Many are called to partake of this supper! Not all shall know Him as the bride knows Him, but vast multitudes shall be at attendance at His feast and be filled with the overflow of the abundance that is provided upon His table! The attendants will be there, the friends of the Bridegroom and the bride will be there, and guests from far and wide will be there, and what rejoicing and music and dancing there will be as we all eat of His meat and bread and drink of His wine! What quickening, what impartation, what fulfillment, what strength! As we leave this feast in great strength, it shall mean a new day of hope and deliverance and glory for the whole earth as the Lord comes as the heavenly Bridegroom to spread the great and glorious feast of HIS FULLNESS!

What constitutes the marriage supper of the Lamb? When we think of a feast we are prone to think in natural terms and picture a banquet of rich foods and an evening of superlative entertainment. There was a day when Jesus and His disciples came to Samaria. The day was long and the disciples of Jesus were weary and hungry. The disciples went to buy food and tried to get Jesus to eat. He refused, and said to them, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” This statement troubled the disciples, they wondered whether someone had brought food to Jesus. Then Jesus explained plainly, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.” To do the Father’s will! That is what Jesus lived for; but it is also what He lived ON! “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that is proceeding out of God.” Nothing could satisfy Jesus’ appetite but this: He hungered to do the Father’s will! And nothing else could fill Him. The truth of these words is simply this: the strength of life for the firstborn Son of God was to do the Father’s will. He did that will by eating of the Father, allowing the Father to live in and through Him as the expression of His life. “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (Jn. 6:57). Now this is a great and surprising revelation to many. When we have thought of eating and drinking and feasting with Christ we have entertained such carnal concepts. Roast beef and potatoes — indeed! This is not what the Christ feasted upon, and it is not what those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb feast upon! We are commanded to feed upon Christ Himself, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, “for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (Jn. 6:55). Those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb no longer feed off the husk’s of man’s sustenance, no more do they feed off the putrification spread upon Babylon’s polluted tables, but are drawn to feast on the bounties of the fullness of Christ in an exceedingly rich and intimate manner!

Jesus promised that when He returned He would “gird” Himself and make His servants to sit down to meat, and that He would “come forth and serve them...meat in due season” (Lk. 12:35-44). In these days at the transition of the ages we have in a unique way and in an abundant

measure experienced the very fulfillment of this promise. The Bridegroom is here! He has come and has served "meat in due season" to the elect household of faith. Rich indeed, faith strengthening and spiritually nourishing has been the fare made available by Christ in the spirit and by the spirit, as He has spread upon His table profound truths of the kingdom of God reserved for this hour. Only those who are prepared to enter into a deeper and more mature and intimate relationship with Christ are bidden to come and sit with Him at this reserved table at the feast — HIS TABLE! In the natural, babies do not have teeth and therefore must drink milk or eat baby food; neither do babes in the Lord have mighty faith to feed upon His deep truths and His rich word and His incorruptible life; but God metes out to them the milk of the word, and the food that is specially prepared for babes. He sends them His word and promises, presented in such a way, most often by charismatic and entertaining preachers, teachers, and programs, and on such a level that they are able to take them; and He gives more than they can ask or think, not according to their faith, but according to His grace and mercy. But — BLESSED ARE THEY THAT ARE CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!

I would be remiss if I failed to point out in clear and unmistakable words the fact that the "marriage of the Lamb" is not exclusively a future event as the preachers are wont to proclaim. Let me make it quite clear before we go any farther that what our Lord is speaking about under the figure of the marriage feast is an actual personal experience which every soul may have, something intensely real and precious, not in the sweet bye and bye, but right here in our today. What it is, is a past event, a present event, as well as a future one! It is an on-going reality in the same sense that initial salvation is past for some, present for some, and still future for others. Millions of souls have through the centuries experienced the Lord as Saviour, some are now receiving Him, and many more will experience Him in the future. The future will indeed be greater by far than anything in the past! In like manner, the "marriage of the Lamb" is a relationship of union with Christ entered into as a result of spiritual growth and participation with the Lord. The marriage supper of the Lamb has already become a reality in the lives of countless saints who have responded to the gracious appeal, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will *come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*" (Rev. 3:20).

There is an old song of the church that has a profound meaning. It says, "Jesus has a table spread, where the saints of God are fed; He invites His chosen people, Come and dine!" That table is in the heavens of God's Spirit, and in the Spirit and by the Spirit we are seated there. Paul confirms that we have been "raised up, and made to *sit together* in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). There is a table of the Lord spread for us in the heavenlies! Jesus said to His disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that ye may *eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*" (Lk. 22:29-30). Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the elders of Israel were at the Lord's table on mount Sinai. "And they saw the God of Israel: and there were under His feet as it were a paved work as a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And...the nobles of the children of Israel...saw God, and *did eat and drink*" (Ex. 24:9-11). What an awesome picture! Seventy-four men of God, seated with Him in the height of a mountain peak, eating and drinking! What a supernatural table! What glory was there! It seems from the record that it was so overwhelming that none but Moses could take it in. Can we not see by this that the one thing the Lord seeks above all else from His chosen ones is COMMUNION AT HIS TABLE! Oneness around His heavenly table! A continual abiding in Him as our food, our nourishment, our strength, our enjoyment, and our *life*!

To sup with Christ is to commune vitally with Him; it is to fellowship intimately with Him and freely partake of all that is proffered by His Spirit. He comes in to dine! That is His heart's desire. It is there, deep within — in the inner union of soul and spirit — as nowhere else, privately and alone, that spiritual edification and the understanding and participation in heavenly things begins and

continues and consummates. Numerous yielded souls have attained this glorious experience, sitting with Him at His table; it is now happening for others, and it shall yet happen for multitudes of others. It is, first and foremost, an individual experience for believers. Multitudes are called to the feast, but for those chosen ones who sit at this feast *with Christ at His table*, it occurs for the individual when he reaches a condition of being ready for marriage — to fulfill the responsibilities and privileges of truly BEING A WIFE. Not many of the teeming millions of earth who profess to know the Lord are ready at this time for this high and holy calling, but those who do make themselves ready will be married to the Lord here and now in this life. It is a blessed and glorious fact that the marriage of the Lamb is taking place now, but only those with spiritual understanding know it. The rest are “star gazing” — watching the clouds — waiting to go to a banquet in the sky! While they wait, snug and smug in their childish denominational beds, the Lord is taking a bride! The Bridegroom stands knocking at their door — but they sleep on.

If you will step from the little boat of human understanding to tread the waves of revelation with Christ, the following experience between the Shulamite and her Beloved will speak to your heart in liberating, transforming power. *“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. She answers him, I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My Beloved put his hand in the hole of the door, and my heart was moved for him. I rose up to open to my Beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer”* (S. of S. 5:2-6).

Beloved reader of this message, have you ever heard your Bridegroom’s voice calling you to come apart with Him, to leave everything and every one that hindered you and come into a higher place of revelation and separation unto Himself? Have you kept your Lord waiting while you pampered your flesh, or while you did something that you wanted to do, or while you clung to the religious excitement of a lower realm of so-called church life, instead of coming away with HIM? Have you heard Him chide you because you neglected Him, because you were not giving yourself to seeking *His face*, because you were not putting Him above *all else*, because you were not following on to *know Him* in deeper measures? When you have heard His voice in these and other ways, have you risen up eagerly and quickly hastened to obey? Or have you asked Him to wait until a more convenient season? Did you have some “religious” work which you felt was very important? Did you have some association you felt you could not break? Did you tell the Lord to wait until you could leave them, or finish what you were doing? Not always in words do we tell Him to wait; we just go on with our “work,” with our little religious games, with the carnal programs of Babylon, with the demands of family and involvements with the flesh, with the admiration of friends, with pleasures and pursuits. We are going to respond and obey, we are going to come out and go away with Him, we are going to arise and commune with Him, we are going to explore the deeper measures of His wisdom, purpose, and love, His power and His glory which He waits to disclose to us, but not until a more propitious moment when we have finished what we are doing!

In this vision of the marriage of the Lamb, the Spirit of God has given us a strain from the heavenly choir, the theme of which is CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE. Has this divine music sounded upon your heart until your spirit has been caught away to the Mount of the Lord? Have you received a deeper revelation of your high calling in Him, and the processes by which we may attain? Has the Spirit revealed clearer visions of those things that mortal eye cannot see nor ear hear, neither can the human heart contain, even the things that God has prepared for you and

me? If you will draw close to God, He will anoint your eyes with heavenly eye salve: He will give you a divine perspective; He will cause you to behold the things that are unseen and eternal as you lose sight of the things that are seen and temporal. He will bring you into His banqueting house and your soul will be ravished with the revelation of His love. The noise and glitter of Mystery Babylon the Great will fade from mind and heart until it seems but a dream dreamed in the long ago. There is a remnant of the Lord's people over the whole earth that have heard the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" This remnant has arisen, trimmed their lamps, and with vessels full of oil and lamps shining bright have fixed their eyes upon Jesus, they are looking away from the earth, from people, from church systems, from everything to the Everlasting Hills of God.

### **WORSHIP NOT THE ANGEL**

"And I fell at his (the angel's) feet to worship him. And he said unto me, *See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren which have the testimony of Jesus: worship God:* for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

Do not forget that in the book of Revelation everything is communicated to us in the form of signs and symbols. Just as the horns, beasts, candlesticks, horses, etc., are symbols of spiritual realities so are the "angels" also figures that stand for something else. The word angel simply means *messenger*. In the Revelation an angel or a messenger signifies a *message communicated*. Never get stuck on the angel! The angel is unimportant and irrelevant except as he relates to the message that he imparts. Now think about that blessed day when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce to her that she is to bring forth a son, and this son will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Ah, can you comprehend, can you imagine with me the unutterable awesomeness of that moment when one of the mightiest of the angels from heaven stood there in Mary's humble house, delivering that message from the Lord God of heaven and earth! It wasn't just any angel, either, it was Gabriel himself. He stood there, right there, in her home, and delivered to her this word from the throne of God. Just imagine with me for a moment what Mary's reaction might have been to this remarkable event. Let us suppose that the following day Mary begins to tell some of her friends that Gabriel had appeared to her. She brings them into her house and says, "He stood there, right there. His feet touched my floor there by that chair. Gabriel stood there! Right there! This area will always be sacred to me because that is where Gabriel stood. In fact," she continues, "can't you see the burn marks from the glory that radiated out of his feet?" And I can imagine that she put some posts with a rope around that holy spot. Perhaps later she received an inspired idea and started charging twenty shekels for people to come in and view the spot where the mighty Gabriel stood and left the burn marks on her floor! And thus Mary's house became the primary tourist attraction in the town of Nazareth. I'm sure by now my reader realizes that I am truly being facetious!

But you see, my friend, should Mary have done such a thing ***she would have missed the point altogether!*** Gabriel was not the issue. Gabriel was not the item of importance that blessed day in Nazareth of Galilee. In fact, Gabriel disappears completely from God's holy record following that event — he's never mentioned again anywhere in scripture. It wasn't about Gabriel. The ***message*** was the point! We don't hear about Gabriel any more after that day, but we certainly hear a lot about THE SON OF THE HIGHEST! Gabriel spoke a word from God, a word of power, and that word produced a son in Mary. Gabriel faded away, but the Son of God is still seated upon the throne! His kingdom is unfurled from sea to sea and from pole to pole and His

mighty work of redemption and restoration continues its triumphant march to subdue all things unto God!

I'm just a flesh and blood man, but upon me today there is a *word*. Out of me there flows a *message*. You may not think much of me. You may be able to discern my weaknesses and perhaps you can see some of my flaws. You may not like me. I don't even like myself very much! But I know who I am and I know what Father has sent me to do. It makes no difference whether you like me, whether anybody likes me, or whether I even like myself. No difference at all! Because I'm not the issue. I'm of no importance. I am irrelevant to anything except as I relate to the message I bear. None of the "kingdom preachers" today are of any special importance within themselves. None of us matter. Never get your eyes on the angel! Never fall down and do obeisance before the messenger! If you get your eye on the angel, you've missed the point! I do honor the men of God who bear the revelation of the Lord in this great hour. But we are not called to participate in a Mutual Admiration Society or to exalt any man. We are called to deliver and to hear every word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God! It's the **word!** It's the **message!** And the *spirit of our prophecy IS THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST!*

The great lesson here is that God *speaks through man*. Have you not heard the Spirit speak *through man*? Peter said that we proclaim the good news *with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven!* Not only do spiritual men read by the Spirit, hear by the Spirit, see by the Spirit, and know by the Spirit — they also *speak* by the Spirit! "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11). I have heard the voice of the Spirit through a great many men and women during my lifetime. The word of the Lord and the revelation of God that flow through my pen in these days are not original with me. I cannot deny that the Holy Spirit has spoken many things to me right out of the depths of my being, out of the most holy place of my spirit. But much of our knowledge of the things of God has also been imparted to us as the voice of the Spirit has spoken to us through many chosen vessels across the years. Almost daily I hear the voice of the Spirit through precious letters we receive from members of God's elect all across the land and around the world. I have both seen and heard great and mighty things from the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in God's people! But we are never to pay homage to the vessel, we can never fall down to *worship the messenger* through whom God expresses Himself! We have to watch the esteem we give to the man God uses — for many have become followers of *men* rather than *followers of God*. This "angel" which showed John these things was in fact the spirit of a *man*, a saint from the other side of the veil, a fellow-servant of God, and one who with John bore the testimony of Jesus Christ. But he spoke by the Spirit! It was the Holy Spirit of God speaking through the man, unveiling to John the mystery and the glory of these wonderful truths! But John made the mistake of falling down to worship the *man*, the *messenger* — yet God Himself ordained this as an object lesson for us out of this book of pictures and symbols! He was straightway commanded, "See thou do it not!"

And I command you today — never get your eyes on me, beloved, nor on any other of the voices of God in the land today! I am but a vessel, a voice, a messenger. The voice is that of the Spirit, the testimony is of Jesus Christ, it is not my voice nor the testimony of myself. The sincere love and steadfast faithfulness of all those precious ones who esteem and value the ministry the Lord has been pleased to flow through us is truly appreciated on our part. But do not esteem us *too highly*, beloved! Be not followers of men, but be a follower of Christ Jesus the Lord! Do not worship at the shrine of any man, whether he calls himself an apostle, a bishop, a prophet, a teacher, a king-priest, a son of God, or any other title. And do not obey my word or their word above the witness of the spirit in your own heart. All — if indeed they are the

messengers of Jesus Christ — are but servants, of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! That is what the Spirit is teaching us in these things.

## THE SPIRIT OF THIS PROPHECY

"I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren which have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev. 19:10).

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. It is, in my opinion, *the* most important book for all who are called and chosen as God's government of kings and priests! It is difficult for many people to understand because it is written in highly symbolic language, understandable only to the spiritual mind. Long millenniums ago Joseph spoke a wonderful truth when he asked the burning question, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" (Gen. 40:8). Moses said, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this teaching" (Deut. 29:29). Many preachers spend far too much time delving into future speculations about world events. Time invariably repudiates their futile predictions. God did not give us a heavenly version of NEWSWEEK magazine, but the Book of Life!

When the book of Revelation was written, John was **in the Spirit!** This is a fact of extreme importance. The realm of the Spirit is a realm beyond the reach of the natural. Spiritual things are all about us to such an extent that we live and move and have our being in them, yet the natural man can never see them until the Spirit draws aside the dusky curtains of our carnality and opens our eyes to the realities of the spiritual world. Thus it was with John, in exile on barren Patmos, a place of few inhabitants and always swarming with pirates and banished criminals of various sorts, but the record says of him, "Who bare record of the word of God, and the *testimony of Jesus Christ*, and of all things that he saw...for the *testimony of Jesus IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY*" (Rev. 1:2; 19:10). Preachers and teachers ought to heed this wise counsel and concentrate on the **testimony of Jesus** which is the spirit of prophecy, rather than futuristic forecasts of earthquakes, plane crashes, riots, nuclear disasters, political coups, invasions, wars, terrorist attacks, foreign policies, world government, etc. When God gave us the Holy Spirit, it was not to take soundings of uncharted depths into the future of America, Russia, China, Europe, or the Jews, but to develop a SPIRITUAL CHARACTER, to put on the mind of Christ, and follow the Lamb whithersoever HE goeth!

The ministers of God were not meant to be soothsayers but truth-sayers. We were not called to predict all the changing events in the kingdoms of *this world*, not to herald a future antichrist, but to proclaim the ETERNAL PRESENT CHRIST! The book of Revelation is not primarily intended to teach *world events*. It is intended to teach *the purposes of God and spiritual realities!* Men have put so much stress on outward things, so much *carnalizing* of the word of God which is *spirit and life*, that when we read the scriptures we oft times overlook the real truth the Spirit is speaking.

The world is full of people today who are prophesying about a great many things. I never cease to be amazed at those who prophesy world events that are to come to pass. So many of them have prophesied and they were not right; their prophecies failed! Some of them have never prophesied anything that has come to pass, yet they keep right on prophesying, and their followers quickly forget the things that didn't happen and continue to cling tenaciously to each new prediction. Some have called me a prophet. I don't claim to be a prophet, though I have prophesied through the years, and do believe that my voice is a very small part of the *many waters* of God's *corporate prophet* who speaks in this new kingdom Day. I know what prophecy

is. I know Jesus who is the author of all *true prophecy*, and IS HIMSELF THE TRUE PROPHECY. “The *testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy!*”

In the spirit of Jesus is the real truth and it cannot be found in any other place! Jesus is alive in you, my brother, my sister, and He is alive in me. God has given us the spirit of His Son! The testimony of Jesus within ourselves is the spirit of prophecy! The spirit of prophecy most often speaks of Christ — of that of Christ which is becoming reality *within us*. Yes, the Spirit of God can reveal things to come in the outer world of politics, economics, warfare, the rise and fall of nations, disasters, etc. God has on occasion revealed such things to me. But those things are only incidental to the great spiritual realities of the kingdom that God is raising up within His elect! THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY! The Spirit bears witness to *God’s Christ* — that is where *true prophecy* will be found! A true prophecy contains the testimony of Jesus — the word which energizes and causes the life of the Son of God to be raised up in us! It is a spiritual testimony, therefore its fulfillment does not come literally — it comes spiritually and is realized in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ has come within us to reveal in us the unseen things of the kingdom of God!

Some people contend that the book of Revelation *cannot* be a spiritual book because the spiritual interpretation takes away from the true prophetic nature of this book. I ask, however — How in the world can spiritual understanding take away from the prophetic nature of the book when the book itself declares that “the *testimony of Jesus IS the spirit of prophecy.*” The testimony of the antichrist is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the beast is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the false prophet is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the dragon is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of Daniel’s 70th Week is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the rapture is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of what is going to happen in Israel during the tribulation is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the Third World War is not the spirit of prophecy! It is the testimony of JESUS CHRIST which is the spirit of prophecy! And Jesus Christ is the glorious, risen, ascended, exalted, spiritualized, omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal GOD-MAN! We are the body of Christ, and the testimony of Jesus Christ is *within us!*

“*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” The application of this expression is given a more specific meaning by both Rotherham and the Emphatic Diaglott when they translate the Greek as saying, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of *this prophecy.*” The fact that it reads “*this prophecy*” instead of merely “*prophecy*” indicates that there is a special relationship between the *spirit of Christ* and the words of *this prophecy*. The definite article is found in all the oldest manuscripts discovered, even though it is not expressed in the King James Version. In other words, a special work would be performed in relation to *this prophecy*. The prophecy itself is the *word of God*. But the testimony of Jesus is *the spirit of this prophecy!* The *letter* of this word is a lamb with horns, beasts, elders, locusts, women, angels, cities, wars, etc. But the *spirit* of this word is JESUS! The spirit of Christ within us is that which bears witness within ourselves to the true message of this book! And the spirit of Christ within us is that which accomplishes within us all the truth and reality of this book! The end of everything you will learn or experience out of this book is *Christ!* It can only be understood, known, and experienced by the spirit of Jesus Christ within us!

Understanding the book of Revelation *spiritually* is the only view by which you can interpret the book *by the Bible*. Every other view requires one to understand history, geography, politics or world events; and to have access to Newsweek, Time, USA Today or CNN in order to compare contemporary happenings with the symbolisms of the book. I have made the necessary discovery that the book explains itself, and I do not hesitate to tell you that this is the only view

that makes the book relative to our spiritual life today as well as to the spiritual life of the saints of every generation. It is the only view that makes the book relative to *anyone, anywhere, at anytime* who reads or hears the prophecy of this book and keeps the things that are written therein (Rev. 1:3).

"The time is at hand" for all who come into an experiential revelation of Jesus Christ! When the unveiling of Jesus Christ within us becomes the power of our life, the book of Revelation becomes a NOW book! Every other view makes the Revelation either a *past* book, or a *future* book. Let every child of God know for a certainty that it is *now*, in our *today*, that we are experiencing the unveiling of Jesus Christ! We will not be helped spiritually one iota by an understanding of what Titus did to Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or what the Moslems did in the eighth century, or by what the Pope did during the middle ages, or by what some future antichrist will do after the church has gone to heaven. Those are, one and all, exercises in carnal minded foolishness that have absolutely nothing to do with THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

In this connection George Warnock wrote, "People continue to cry out: 'We need another Elijah! We need another John the Baptist!' But God has something even better in mind. Twice John fell at the feet of this shining one who was showing him heavenly things. And twice the man rebuked him for his error. For this *angel* was a man who had gone on, perhaps one of the prophets; for he said, 'I am thy fellow servant, and of...the prophets, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.' And he said to John, 'Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' Is he not reminding us, who are often captivated by the charisma of some great prophet — that the testimony of JESUS in the earth is something better than having a great prophet? It is a corporate Testimony, *a people moving in such union with Christ that they speak with one Voice, and shine as one Light, in this world of darkness*" — end quote.

Those who interpret the book of Revelation *literally* give us only the "letter" of the prophecy and miss altogether the "spirit" of the prophecy. The "letter" is merely the outer shell, the husk, the chaff, which is inedible and fit only to be cast aside. The "spirit" of the prophecy, however, is its *inner kernel*, its *essence*, its *substance*, its *marrow*, its *reality*, its *life*! The "spirit" of this prophecy is THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST! It testifies of HIM! If you cannot see God's living Christ in every chapter and verse of the Revelation you have not yet come to or touched the "spirit" of this prophecy! That is the mystery.

# Chapter 210

## Spiritual Warfare

In the book of Revelation, in the nineteenth chapter, there is a great picture. The Holy Spirit has painted it. It is the vision of the coming of the Christ. It is the story of the Lord's coming told in colors. It is the great truth and some of its related principles portrayed in graphic action.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-16). What a description is this!

Day after day wonderful visions passed before the rapt gaze of the seer on Patmos' lonely isle. And none could have been more thrilling than the vision described in the passage above! In the far upper spaces, midst the maze and whirl of mist and cloud, and vast throngs of beings, the reverberations of great rolling noises, appears a snow-white horse, which at once attracts the attention of the apostle. Its arching neck clothed with thunder, its tossing mane, its dilated nostrils, its deep chest, its flashing eyes, its muscle-rippled legs, its superb grace as it pranced before him, made it the noblest horse and the most magnificent which he had ever beheld.

But his glance passed swiftly from horse to rider; and though the snow-white horse eclipsed any animal John had ever seen, yet it was mounted by a person who, in form and feature and bearing, surpassed any man he had beheld, and his gaze was riveted by the unrivalled dignity and charm of his person. He was robed in crimson apparel, wore many crowns upon his brow, and from between his lips there flashed a gleaming sword; while as he guided his spirited charger his eyes blazed with the intense fire of a warrior. As John watched him, he saw him move irresistibly along a pathway of conquest. And, as he gazed, he recognized the rider as being his own well-loved friend and master, Jesus Christ, whom he had so devotedly followed when, on earth, he walked slowly and wearisomely from place to place. Now, instead of being a pedestrian he was an equestrian, and instead of merely submitting to his enemies he was overcoming them by the tremendous might of his powerful advance. It was a vision very real to the apostle; but it was recorded to teach, in symbolic form, the warrior spirit of Christ, and the great campaign upon which he had entered to conquer the hearts of all men everywhere. The sphere of his movements, as perceived by the apostle, was the totality of this earth; and the time of his advance was through all the centuries.

As we have been discovering, the imagery of the book of Revelation is both graphic and beautiful. But some of it is also violent — so violent that not even movies or cable TV can match its intensity. The vision in chapter nineteen describes Christ as a divine warrior who meets his enemies in a great cosmic battle. This imagery is rooted in the redemptive work of Jesus, whose death and resurrection destroys sin, sorrow, and death. No high-tech spy thrillers or science fiction blockbusters or even true-to-life war epics, with all their dramatic special effects,

can top a message like that. Jesus destroys sin! Jesus banishes sorrow, pain, sickness, and limitation! Jesus conquers death, hell, and the grave! The point of the image is not to glorify violence. Precisely the opposite! The point is to clarify that God's opposition to evil, and the sin and death it spawns, is so strong that He will take any measures necessary to defeat it and achieve a complete and total victory. His warfare is *spiritual warfare* but it is strong, powerful, forceful, tempestuous, unrestrained, relentless, severe, and catastrophic!

The Bible is a book of war. "The Lord is a man of war" (Ex. 15:3). Heaven is a realm of war, as well as the earth. "And there was war in heaven" (Rev. 12:7). Jesus is a man of war. "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Mat. 10:34). "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them" (Rev. 17:14). David was a man of war. "Thou (Absalom) knowest thy father (David) and his men that they are mighty men, and thy father is a man of war" (I Sam. 17:8). David faced Goliath and took his sword. He was a man of war before he met Goliath. David is a type of Christ. Christ is called "the son of David." David's followers were men of war. "And there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker" (II Sam. 3:1). The sons of God follow a man of war! Thank God! as the battle rages the Christ within is waxing stronger and stronger, and the kingdom of the flesh is waxing weaker and weaker. So shall it be fulfilled — the natural man shall be subjected to the spiritual, the flesh shall be ruled over by the spirit, and then shall we see "all things in subjection under His feet" (Heb. 2:8).

The position and action of Christ in John's vision is very significant. He is mounted on a snow-white war horse. This signified victory! The old Roman conquerors, when celebrating a brilliant conquest, rode down the avenues of the imperial city upon a snow-white steed, and received the plaudits of the people. The Lord is described as the Word of God emblematically riding on a white horse; it is the image of aggressive action, of successful conquest over His foes. The horse in scripture represents strength, and fearlessness to accomplish its task. "He paweth the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrightened; neither turneth he back from the sword. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting" (Job 39:21-25).

The horse is without equal for beauty in the animal kingdom. His body is alive with rippling muscles. His mane and tail are items of extreme beauty. The horse is among the most intelligent of animals and few creatures can equal his strength and swiftness. No animal is of greater service to mankind — especially in most of past history. For pleasure, for work, and for war the horse has exceeded them all. The Greek word in our text intimates that this horse is a *war horse* of fine mettle. In Bible days the strength of armies was often reckoned by the number and greatness of their horses and chariots. Even in our modern world the power of an engine is expressed in terms of "horse power" — the number of horses that would be required to equal the amount of power generated. In his prophetic account of the army of the Lord, Joel declares, "The appearance of them is as the appearance of **horses; and as horsemen**, so shall they run" (Joel 2:4). "The horse is prepared against the day of battle" (Prov. 21:31). It is significant that in the scriptures you do not find horses mentioned in connection with agricultural purposes, but for riding or drawing chariots, and for use in battle. The oxen were used for plowing, etc.

The horse bespeaks royalty, judgment, and war. His white color bespeaks righteousness and justice. White is the color that most attaches to Christ in all the warfare and judgment scenes. When the first seal broke He rode a white horse, going forth conquering and to conquer. When

the great harvest is reaped he sits upon a white cloud. At the end of the thousand years He is seated upon a white throne. And so here He is riding on a white steed of battle, for "in righteousness doth He make war." White also bespeaks light — illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn Son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the churches, the out-called, challenging them to *overcome*, we read, "I counsel thee to buy of me...white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed" (Rev. 3:18). This is naught but the transfiguring glory of Christ, as it is written, "And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was *white as the light*" (Mat. 17:2). The light is the robe of divine majesty, the incorruptible life of God emanating from the nature in absolute righteousness and divine holiness.

In the days of His flesh He rode but once — when He came to the Jewish nation as its anointed King. But He then rode upon an ass, a colt, the foal of an ass. Then He was the meek and lowly one, coming to suffer and lay down His life for men; but here the little domestic animal is exchanged for the martial charger, for this is another and mightier coming of the King into the world! He comes in mighty spirit power, in the power of His own personal victory over sin, Satan, the world, death, hell, and the grave; and in His majesty He rides prosperously, because of the invincible power of His resurrection, ascension, and enthronement! The horse is the embodiment of speed and strength. He who is mounted can get over a greater distance, do quicker work, than on foot. Thus with Jesus Christ! By the strength of omnipotence He carries on His conquests with great rapidity and power! With great vigor and velocity He moves down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, charges upon the opposing ranks of flesh and carnality, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they have recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack.

And so our Lord Jesus Christ, astride a snow-white charger, is put in a position where He is perpetually celebrating a victory. His march is a victorious march! His movements always meet with success. His plans are fulfilled, and His campaigns unfurl to the breezes the banners of triumph. Jesus Christ is going forth as a conqueror, and He does so with great power. It is no easy campaign upon which He has entered — sin and death are formidable foes entrenched in the human mind, heart, and life. The action in which He is engaged requires the greatest power; and His movements are energized with tremendous force. The Bible represents Him at times in conditions where He sits and reclines in repose, already having accomplished His purposes. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down* on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). But here in the saddle He is roused, every faculty excited, every source of strength summoned, and He is bearing forward for the purpose of accomplishing something not yet attained. Calvary achieved a *legal victory*. But now that which has been won legally must be enforced to become *experiential* in the life of every *man* who has ever lived, does now live, or ever shall live. So now the Christ rides forth into the lives of men as the mighty conqueror to subdue and banish every enemy who has built a stronghold there!

In regard to this portion of the Revelation there are interpreters who delight to understand the entire scene in a *literal* sense of the word. They refuse to see any symbolism in the whole scene. What we have here, according to them, is the literal description of the second coming of Jesus and the literal picture of the attempt of the nations of the world under Antichrist to strike at Him and subdue Him. He shall come exactly as pictured, seated on a real white horse, or at least the real appearance of one, with a real crown on His head, and with garments splattered with blood. In a word, He shall come exactly as described in the vision. The Antichrist knows that Jesus is coming, and therefore he hurriedly musters his forces in the valley of Armageddon, in order to strike down the living and glorified King as soon as He sets His feet on the earth. For later verses in the chapter say that they are gathered together for the purpose of making war

against the Christ and His armies. So according to these literalists Christ will accomplish His great victory by killing millions of men who fight against Him with the sharp sword coming out of His mouth! There are many things wrong with such an interpretation, but I will mention only a few of the most obvious. Nowhere in this chapter (or anywhere else in the Revelation, for that matter) is an "Antichrist" mentioned. Nowhere in this chapter is the valley of Armageddon named. If the vision is *literal* then why would not all the other visions of the book be literal? And if they are also literal then Jesus was in John's day, or is in our day, walking literally, physically, in the midst of the seven churches in Asia — wearing a golden girdle, having eyes as a flame of fire, and feet of burning brass, holding seven stars in His right hand, with a sharp two-edged sword wielding out of His mouth, and His countenance shining with the brilliance of the noonday sun! If such a thing were true, the nation of Turkey today would have to build the world's largest airport to accommodate the millions of tourists that would be flying in day and night from all points of the earth just to catch a glimpse of this exceptional and miraculous sight!

Once I heard a preacher say that he believed Jesus would literally descend from heaven riding on a white horse. "Jesus Christ created the horse," he declared, "and if He chooses to charge through the clouds on one, He certainly can." Certainly He can! But I do not hesitate to add that lack of spiritual discernment is the greatest curse upon the Lord's people today. People are so afraid that someone will "spiritualize" away something in the word of God, realizing not that they themselves are "carnalizing" away the spirit of the word, for, said Jesus, "the words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" (Jn. 6:63). Of this we may be certain: we cannot think of these armies of heaven and the white horses they ride as a multitude of winged horses taken out of heavenly stables and riding down the skies to meet the massed forces of Antichrist on earth. The horses are as real as the blood-spattered robe of the risen Christ, as real as the winepress He treads, as real as the sword coming out of His mouth, as real as the letters imprinted on His thigh, as real as the birds which gorge themselves on human flesh, and as real as the brimstone in the lake of fire. All of this is real — SPIRITUALLY REAL! You see, my beloved, when we say that something is not *literal* we do not mean it is not *real*. We say that it is not *natural*, *material*, or *tangible* in the same form that John sees it in his vision. God is real, but He is not earthly or material. Spirit is real, but you cannot handle it. Love is real, but it is not something you can have a wheelbarrow full of. Peace is real, but you cannot cut it up and bottle it. All these wonderful scenes in the Revelation are *symbolic* and meant to be understood *spiritually*. The revelation is of *spiritual action* — the swift and powerful movement of God's army of sons to establish by His Word and by His Spirit HIS victory and triumph over all things in the earth realm!

Spiritual intelligence is the rarest of all spiritual things — and the least valued. In God's sight it is the only true wealth. How rare has true spiritual understanding become! The trouble with God's people today is with their ears and eyes. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day they insist that they **do** hear and they **do** see. But they do not **understand** what they hear and see! Neither do they **know!** The worlds exist all about us — the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural realm is the realm of man, but the spiritual realm is the realm of God. The carnal mind **cannot** understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are **spiritually discerned**. The greatest need among the saints today is for God to send forth into our hearts the spirit of wisdom and revelation to dispel the darkness of the natural mind that ever hangs as a veil about us, that He may reveal to our wondering eyes those supernal things that pertain to HIS REALM.

Words utterly fail me to describe the scene of the Rider upon the white horse! It is so heavenly, so divine, and wonderful, that it completely defies all human description. Behold! the open heaven, the white horse, the name Faithful and True, the righteousness of His judgment, the

eyes of flame, the head bearing many crowns, the vesture dipped in blood. Hear the name, The Word of God. See the armies of heaven following, which are the vast multitude of the enChristed sons of God, and their fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints, and their white horses, which signify the strength, victory, and power of the Christ by which they conquer. Consider the sharp sword with the double edge that goes forth from His mouth, the living word of God spoken — a sword to smite the nations, not with cruel force and merciless and bloody slaughter, but with the omnipotent power of ***truth*** and ***life***. Behold, too, the name inscribed on His vesture and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!

The apocalyptic description of Christ coming out of heaven on a war-horse, magnificently attired — attended by armies of celestial horsemen — to fight the battle against “the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His armies,” portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. Yet — it is a picture of divine judgment! The subject of judgment is a large one in the Bible, running through scripture from Genesis to Revelation, and it is so manifold in meaning, purpose, and application that it eludes simplification. The judgments of God run deep and are so vast and multi-faceted that they lie completely beyond the comprehension of the carnal mind and beyond the grasp of mortal man. As exclaimed by Paul, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how UNSEARCHABLE ARE HIS JUDGMENTS, and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). David prophesied, “...for *He cometh*, for He cometh to *judge the earth*; He shall *judge the world* with righteousness, and the people with His truth” (Ps. 96:13). Paul urged the Athenians to repent “because He hath appointed a day in which He will *judge the world* in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Judgment is inseparably related to the coming of Christ and His kingdom. “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *judge the living and the dead* at His appearing and kingdom” (II Tim. 4:1).

There is going to be a unique and different unfolding of this One we call Jesus the Christ! We have known Him as the Saviour of the world, and He is, in a totality that even most Christians do not comprehend — but He is about to go forth bringing His judgments to the whole earth, to the entire bestial order that the carnal mind of man has erected. In our text we see the Christ riding forth on a white horse with the armies of His many brethren, the sons of God, following in His path, “*judging and making war*,” the description of His action. In Revelation 6:16 this very same action, in the individual lives of the saints, is called “the WRATH of the LAMB.” What an amazing divine paradox! The “Lamb” of God who “*takes away the sin of the W-O-R-L-D*” on the one hand, and the “wrath” of the Lamb, on the other hand. The Lamb — precious embodiment of meekness, mildness, lowliness, gentleness, patience, and sacrifice — coming upon the men for whom He died in the hot fury of vengeance, until men are found fleeing from the wrath of the Lamb!

This dual nature — the meekness and sacrifice of the Lamb and the warfare of the sword-wielding General of the army — makes Him what He is, both the SAVIOUR and the JUDGE of the universe. In His redemptive activity His face is set against sin and death. Nothing can ever alter that. He will go to all lengths to turn men from evil, to break their waywardness and rebellion, and restore them into harmony with the mind and heart of God. The sheer simplicity and sincerity of His passion is enough to melt and win the most sophisticated or the hardest of men. The wrath of the Lamb is beyond our understanding. This much we do know: His wrath is not against *men*, it is against the evil that reigns in the hearts of men! It is against ignorance, selfishness, sin, evil, rebellion, foolishness, religiosity, sorrow, sickness, pain, and death! The Seer of Patmos was shown the unveiling of the wrath of the Lamb. I want to declare that God is going to come forth in these days at the transition of the ages in a revelation of Jesus Christ with

the judgments and wrath of God. This shaking and purging will affect the very church of the living God, but the whole world of men, the entire system of man, the whole earth will reel violently as He comes to "judge and make war."

It is not on any literal battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer and His heavenly legions confront the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus or Wells, or any other historian, for the events that correspond to these symbols. Nor shall we find them in the headlines of the Washington Post or Time magazine! The scene reveals one divine and sublime truth: CHRIST SHALL CONQUER! The kingdom of Christ is "not of this world" and does not conquer the nations in any such "pitched battle" of carnal warfare as the armies of men contend for the mastery in. The kingdom of Christ does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs, or beheading them with the sword and bloody savagery. Oh, no! I believe in no such way of deciding the question between Christ and the world — between "the kingdom which the God of heaven has set up," and "all these kingdoms" which it has come to "consume and destroy." Armed with the understanding that "the weapons of **our warfare** are **not carnal**," but (just for that reason) are "**mighty through God** to the pulling down of strongholds," I believe the warfare itself to **be not carnal**.

Ah — is it not within the corridors of men's souls that they must hear the hoofbeats of the great white steed thundering! The battlefield is the mind, the will, the emotions and the desires — the heart. He must ride right into **your earth**, engaging in battle with all the **internal enemies** of the flesh and the devil, conquering all the territory of **your land**. Don't you hear the clatter of the hoofs of the heavenly charger as he bounds through your own world, carrying its Rider to grand battlefields and glorious victories within? Don't you see His saber of Truth flashing its dazzling light upon the eyes of your understanding, and swinging effectively in the direction of every cherished tradition and human reasoning? His victories are victories of peace over conflict, of joy over sorrow, of faith over fear, of righteousness over unrighteousness, of love over hate, of purity over filthiness, or truth over error, of holiness over sin, of health over sickness, of power over weakness, of knowledge over ignorance, of spirituality over religiousness, of the image of God over the subterfuge of self, of life and immortality over corruption and death. What a battlefield that is! And what a victory!

This is the conquest that is going on right now in the inner world of the hearts of God's elect, in our minds and in our bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ, all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of God. But in that conquest Paul was to realize His greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ — a triumph which is even now proceeding into the wider battlefields of the world. The victories that He has been achieving in His called and chosen elect He shall yet accomplish in the lives of all the inhabitants of the earth, past, present, and future. There shall be such a glorious and total triumph until the great red dragon, the beast out of the sea, the false prophet, the great city Babylon, and all the vaunted kingdoms of men shall perish from the midst of men and be found no more at all! It is a *spiritual battlefield*, a *spiritual warfare*, and a *spiritual conquest*. That is the mystery!

By the army of God, the manifest sons of God, the claims of the kingdom of God are to be *enforced*; for all that is within man, and within the world, must bow to the supremacy of God's

Christ and the will of the Father in heaven. The weapons of the Spirit are infinitely more potent than all the guns that ever were fired, than all the battles that ever were fought, than all the bloody fields that ever were won; for the Holy Spirit's conquests are made without any of the weapons of men. They are made by a power greater than these! The kingdom of God is gotten by *violence* (Mat. 21:12) — by taking sin, sickness, sorrow, pain, and death by the throat, and saying, “You shall not rule this earth! Nor shall you rule this earth that *I am!* I am the Lord’s! The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein!” That is the only way the kingdom of heaven will ever be won — by violence, by those who know how to thrust men through with the sword of the Spirit, a two-edged sword that is sharper than steel. The manifest sons of God ride out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord and before them rides Jesus with the sword going out of His mouth: and with it He and they *smite the nations*. Oh, the wonder of it!

Another picture of this army is given us in Hebrews 10:12-13. “But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth **expecting** TILL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL.” So, if the devil is getting ready to take over the earth, as the churches teach, Jesus *can’t come!* It’s just as simple as that. Jesus has been on the throne in the spiritual heavens of God’s Spirit for two thousand years **expecting...**expecting His body on earth to put all enemies under His feet.. For you see, the Head is in heaven, and the *feet* are on earth. “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isa. 66:1). His enemies are to be put under His *feet!* The feet of God’s Christ are the elect of God upon earth when the fullness of the body of Christ comes forth on the earth. When a child is born, the head is the first member to come forth and the feet are the last members to be born. The head gives direction to the body, but the body must mature and then do the work, and the feet carry the body to the appointed place, and they are the members that actively “**tread** on serpents and on scorpions,” and are given “power over all the power of the enemy.” This is all talking about the many-membered body of Christ.

These members who are the feet company are the ones appointed of God to PUT ALL THINGS UNDER GOD’S CHRIST! They are also the “armies which were in heaven” which follow Christ Jesus the Lord as He comes forth by His Spirit within His people to judge and make war and smite all the nations with His Truth and His Righteousness. The members of the feet company are the only members of the Christ body on earth today, at the end of the age. For this reason, the feet company is uniquely chosen to usher in the new age and the next stage of the kingdom of God on earth! Not only shall the feet company arise in power and great glory to do warfare, but the rest of the body also shall be arrayed in spiritual attire to fulfill their roles as the body of Christ goes out to do battle in the name of the Lord. Oh, how wonderful are these things!

What a glorious day this is! Christ shall lead His army by the power of His indwelling Spirit, which is the completed and glorified body of Christ, into total and complete victory everywhere. This work has already begun in us! It is *within us* first that every enemy must be put under foot. We know this work is going on, for we are being thoroughly processed, purged, prepared, and strengthened by the Spirit. The Christ has arisen within us and is leading us and shall continue to lead us victoriously in battle until every enemy is defeated, within and without, and put under His feet. Then Christ shall be Lord and King indeed in all places and to all people! “And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day (in all the earth) shall there be (but) one Lord: and His name one” (Zech. 14:9). Our glorious Head is *still* seated at the right hand of God in the heavens of the Spirit, He is *still expecting* the job to be done, He is still expecting every enemy to be put under His feet company, and they shall be, praise His name!

The glory of the Lord will shine from within us when His work within us is finished, and the feet of the Lord's army shall march radiantly and triumphantly throughout the whole earth in the power of ***His might***. After speaking of how the body of Christ shall arise and shine in the fullness of the glory of the Lord, the prophet Isaiah declares, "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee (Humanists, Communists, Islamists, Buddhists, Hindus, Church Systems, sinners of all sorts, etc., etc.) shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 60:14). Why should it be that the enemies of Christ will bow down at the soles of His feet? Because the feet company of the body of Christ shall have done their work well! They are putting Satan under them and are overcoming him, thus destroying his power and bringing deliverance to every captive. What a hope! What a vision! And what a responsibility is ours!

There are many who profess to believe that the world is gradually growing worse and worse, that the cup of her iniquity is rapidly filling, preparatory to her catastrophic judgment and destruction. I do not belong to that class of thinkers, or rather croakers. First of all, that idea is under Old Testament economy. Such dealings of God were true in the Old Testament times! But today the Lord's people have forgotten the great ***change*** that came in God's plan and dealings with men since the day when Jesus came into the world and "God was in Christ, ***reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; and hath committed unto us the word of (that) reconciliation***" (II Cor. 5:19). That is the NEW COVENANT! I was born with my face to the sunrise, and live in constant expectation of great things! God has manifested His great and eternal love for all mankind in Jesus Christ! And we are His ambassadors, yea, His heavenly army, sent into the world to redeem the whole world and all men by the all-conquering power of His love! "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that *the world through Him might be saved.*" And may I hastily add, neither has God sent His sons into the world to *condemn the world!*

My observation has been, and is, that those who are saying so much about how terrible things are in the world, and how the world is growing worse, are doing very little to make it better. Those who invest in the cause of HIS KINGDOM are those who believe in its final triumph! Do not sit with idle hands and complain that the world is going to hell in a hand basket! Rather, invest in prayer, invest in love toward all men, invest in righteousness, invest in faith, invest in spiritual understanding and maturity, invest in spiritual warfare, invest in the mighty work of the Spirit of God in His elect today until you can fulfill the word, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but *the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising...then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea (the vast realm of sin and wickedness) shall be converted unto thee, and the forces of the nations shall come unto thee*" (Isa. 60:1-3,5). What a word!

### HIS EYES AS A FLAME OF FIRE

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. *His eyes were as a flame of fire...*" (Rev. 19:11-12).

As John gazed upon this One, his attention was attracted to His eyes, which blaze like flames of fire. The spirit within was so aroused that it shone through His eyes! This description of God's Christ is most illuminating. George Hawtin commented on this passage: "The eyes of the Son of

God are completely different from all other eyes. The eyes of mankind and of every living creature are capable only of receiving light. Our eyes receive reflections and images of things that are without, but the eyes of the Lord not only receive reflections of things without, but are LAMPS OF FIRE, shedding abroad the light of God whithersoever they are turned. Every creature and everything upon which His eyes shall fall will receive the LIGHT OF GOD. ‘They looked upon Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed’ (Ps. 34:5). Even in the hour of Christ’s greatest humiliation when Peter had denied his Lord, the Lord turned and *looked* upon him, and at that look the light of truth dawned upon this trembling and heartbroken man as he sat in his dismal despair and, being thus enlightened to the truth and to the knowledge of his guilt, he went out and *wept bitterly* in repentance and contrition.

“But this manifestation of the light of truth that shines as a burning flame from His eyes is merely a fleeting shadow of greater things to come. The day is coming and is near at hand when Christ shall be the Light of the World in the fullness of its meaning. His eyes run to and fro through the whole world and wherever He looks the light of heaven will shine. Upon whomsoever His eyes shall fall darkness will be dispelled from him and the light of Christ will shine upon him. Through long millenniums has the world sat in outer darkness and in the cold and gloomy shadows of death, but He who soon shall come riding triumphantly through the open heavens has eyes burning as lamps of fire, before whose shining darkness and shadow will flee away forevermore” — end quote.

The One who has the eyes as a flame of fire is He who comes to judge and make war. Ah, He stands in the midst of the seven churches with His eyes of fire! He rides upon His steed of conquest with His eyes of fire! He stands within the spirit of each one of us with eyes of flaming fire! To judge rightly He must see through and through, search all depths, look beneath all masks, penetrate all darkness, and try everything to its ultimate residuum. There is often something wonderfully luminous, penetrating, overawing, in the human eye. Men have been blinded by the look of kings. It is like the living intellect made visible, which seems to read all secrets at a glance. It is this infinite intensification, flashing like a sword of fire, that the apostle beheld in this heavenly Warrior. It is an eye-flame of omniscient perception, a searchlight that penetrates to the inmost thought and intent of the heart, laying bare in its awful revelation every fiber of self, even in purposes supposed to be pure, scorching, burning, shriveling every hypocrisy, and withering away every breath of the flesh.

Oh, the eyes of the Lord! The eyes of holiness, the eyes of infinite discernment, the eyes of depthless love and burning desire for those whom He died to redeem and transform into His likeness! They descend into the depths of the spirit, the candle of the Lord, to search out and make known what is of soul and what is of spirit, of what is beneath the surface, any wicked way within a man, and flash and burn and refine and purify with their flame of sincerity, truth, and shadowless righteousness. The word of God is quick and powerful — living and active — sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow — the deepest part of man’s nature. And when the glorious Warrior Christ comes galloping into our land He comes with eyes that are shining lamps of heavenly fire, penetrating, illuminating mind and heart, revealing all that is there, bringing the divine judgment of truth, and His warfare destroying every selfish motive and every secret sin, consuming every vestige of the carnal mind, purifying the deepest intents of the heart, transforming and flooding the whole being with righteousness and purity and power!

Christ’s eyes of fire, and the eyes of fire of every son of God who shares His glory, are eyes of the same fire that is revealed throughout the book of Revelation. The divine fire is the truth, the righteousness, the love of God; in a word, it is the *nature* of God! Any careful reader of the Old

Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol of the presence and action of God. "The Lord our God is a consuming fire." "God is love." Those are not contradictory terms — they are complimentary terms! It is no straining of metaphor to say that the love of God and the wrath of God are the same thing described from opposite points of view. How we shall experience it depends on the way we come up against it. The illustration of it is seen in the life of a family. The same love in the heart of a father for his child will on one occasion cuddle the child and embrace him tightly, whereas under different conditions it will take off the belt and apply it sternly in the act of discipline and correction. God does not change; it is man's moral state that changes! The wrath of God is a figure of speech to denote God's unchanging opposition to sin! It is His righteous love, His holy burning passion operating to destroy evil. Nothing can live in that devouring flame that is of the nature of a lie or that wars against the spirit of holiness!

Yes, this wonderful work of the eyes of fire is not a vengeful, vindictive, implacable, humiliating, destructive work, but that of *redeeming, transforming love!* It cannot be stated better than it was by Rex Andrews when he wrote, "Your enjoyment of the book of Revelation will depend, to a considerable degree, on what you believe about that fire-flame of His eyes. Unless you can perceive that that FIRE is pure-unadulterated-love, the LOVE which GOD IS, you will likely miss some of the most vital things intended to be conveyed by the Revelation. If you consider the flaming fire, and the two-edged sword of His mouth, and the face which is as the sun shining in its strength, as being destructive, bent on killing, you will have missed about all there is of value. That FIRE of the eyes, and face shining as the sun, describe a Being-like-unto-man, whose spirit and soul and body are utterly invested, and completely possessed by, THE ETERNAL SPIRIT. And that ETERNAL SPIRIT is declared to BE LOVE!"

## HIS MANY CROWNS

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and *on His head were many crowns...*" (Rev. 19:12).

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

There is a strange but wonderful statement found in Revelation 4:11. It is the cry of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, a heart-cry from the very throne room of God and the Lamb. "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power...*" The Lord is here declared to be worthy to RECEIVE POWER — as well as glory and honor. The question follows — How can the Lord, the Creator of all things, who inherently possesses ***all power***, who is ***the***

**almighty**, the absolute **sovereign of the universe**, the **omnipotent One** — how, I ask, is it possible for such an One to **RECEIVE POWER**? What power could He be given that He does not already possess? The truth is, of course, that although our Lord is the supreme authority and power of the universe He has ceded to His creatures and to His servants and to His sons **delegated authority**, particular areas of His own authority and dominion turned over to them. “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...*” (Gen. 1:26). “*What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou has crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands...*” (Ps. 8:4-6).

So we see that God has given man during these past six millenniums the right to rule his own life and destiny as well as the whole earth and indeed *all* the works of His hands! Collectively, this rule of man constitutes the “kingdoms of men” or “the kingdoms of *this world*” (Rev. 11:15). During the past two thousand years the world has been influenced, controlled, and ruled first by Rome, and later by the ten kingdoms that have emerged from the Roman Empire as one after another has achieved almost universal military, economic, and political supremacy in the earth. This age is now ending and the whole world is today experiencing the birth pangs of a new age when the sons of God shall be manifested before all creation and the new age and the new order of the kingdom of God shall arise and consume and destroy “all these kingdoms.”

The expression of the Psalmist wherein he says concerning God’s ordination of man, “*Thou crownest him with glory and honor,*” denotes clearly that God gave man **kingly rule** in the natural creation. It is a wonderful day for a believer when he becomes conscious of the fact that God’s purpose from the beginning has been that man should exercise that ruling authority as a *vice-regent* — one exercising the powers of another by *delegation* — **in union with HIM!** And this is what man departed from in the fall. Man set about to “do his own thing” apart from God! He rejected God’s authority over Him. He could no longer speak as a son, saying, “I come not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me; it is not I that doeth the works, but my Father who dwelleth in me: He doeth the works.” The luciferian spirit has ever been, “*I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High!*” (Isa. 14:13-14). **I WILL...I WILL...I WILL!** So man rules his own life, his own destiny, his own little kingdom apart from the mind, purpose, and will of God, yea, in opposition to God! And the inevitable result of this “independence” is chaos, sin, sorrow, tragedy, and death. For how certain it is that “*there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Prov. 14:12). And God has allowed this to be for an appointed time.

This brings us back to our question: If the Lord **HAS ALL POWER**, how is it that He **RECEIVES POWER**? The answer is not far to be found, for we have all prayed it hundreds or perhaps even thousands of times! “*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*” What does it mean for God’s kingdom to come, and what does it mean for God’s will to be done *in earth*, even in *this earth* which I am? I am the king of my life; I am seated upon the throne; I make the decisions; I do according to my own pleasure, purpose, and will. But when Jesus THE LORD comes I must **abdicate my throne** and let Him ascend the throne of my heart! The testimony of all who have received the call to sonship is just this: “Till I met THE LORD I was the commander of my life and my destiny. Since He has entered into my temple HE COMMANDS! “*Thy will be done in earth*” is something for now — not just tomorrow and the ages to come. You see, when I abdicate the throne and resign from the dominion I have independently exercised in my life, then that realm of dominion which I had reserved unto myself, and which He permitted me to reserve unto myself, is given to the Lord. The power which I once held in my own hands, by His concession, is yielded up to

Him and He now exercises the **power** and the **authority** that I formerly held. Thus, **HE RECEIVES POWER!** He receives the right to rule over my life and *through* my life. He now reigns *in me* and *through me*. He never took that right by force — but He receives the right when I yield it up to Him! Isn't it wonderful!

Yet there is a mystery deeper even than this. For when God's sons and God's royal priesthood (the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders) declare, "Thou art worthy to receive power," the record states that they "fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him...and **cast their crowns before the throne**, saying, ***Thou art worthy***, O Lord, to **receive power!**" Oh yes, the power which He receives is associated with the crowns they cast before HIS THRONE! Even in this new and glorious realm of the kingdom of God, where we reign with Christ over all things, we realize that all of our "crowns" are truly ***His work*** and not our own! We were created, they go on to say, for *His pleasure* and for *Him*. To HIM belongs the glory! To HIM belongs the honor! To HIM belongs the power! To HIM belongs the crowns! The worthy One is the Lamb that was slain! It is HE who has earned the crowns, for HE and He alone is our salvation, our redemption, our life, our righteousness, our wisdom, our sanctification, our power, *our all!* He Himself is our FULL AND TRUE REWARD! The Lord Himself is OUR CROWN!

I think that this is the scene that John beholds in chapter nineteen of the Revelation! "*I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were MANY CROWNS...and He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*" You see, my beloved, this is our Lord, even Jesus the Christ, and He comes wearing MANY CROWNS! When seen in chapter six as the Rider on the white horse, He wore only one crown. Now, followed by a train of warriors also riding on white horses, He appears with many crowns. He is not Warrior only, but also King of kings. Here the Victor who is King of kings and Lord of lords makes His glorious appearing crowned by all those making up His heavenly army. They are one and all no less kings than Himself, but it is now HIS KINGSHIP flowing through them! That is the mystery. Now, in this present time, it is the overcomers, those who are called and chosen to reign with Him, who cast their crowns down before Him and yield up all their own will, way, and authority unto Him! Many, even now, are crowning HIM Lord and King. He has my crown, He has yours, and He is receiving more and more glory, honor, power, and crowns as many sons are brought to glory! Great is the mystery!

# Chapter 211

## Spiritual Warfare (Continued)

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war...and *he had a name written, which no man knew, but he himself*" (Rev. 19:11-12).

It sounds beautiful — our Lord and Captain has this wonderful name and it is just His, a secret name, a title so important, a treasure so valuable that it is not to be shared with any other. But that is *not* the portrait the Holy Spirit is painting! You see, this "unknown name" is just the reason this great battle of chapter nineteen is about to take place — because He has a name, or a nature, that *mankind does not know!* No one but those who are part of His many-membered body, made *one in Him*, know the full and true nature of God's Christ.

There is a great symbolic battle described in Ezekiel, chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine. In this battle the Lord comes forth and fights against Gog and Magog and gains the victory. The Lord then explains the purpose of His great triumph, saying, "***So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel***" (Eze. 39:7). If, then, we are going to consider the revelation that the Lord is riding into battle bearing a name that no man knows but He Himself, we shall be obliged to recognize that that is not a good thing — it is a bad thing that His name *is not known!* The "names" of God and Christ are never mere empty designations. They are expressions of the divine nature and character. The fact that no one has known them and still does not know them except Christ Himself means more than the names are secret. It means rather that no one knows them *in their own personal experience*. In other words, no human being outside of Christ experientially shares these divine qualities and attributes in the divine nature of Jesus which are represented by His name. For example, men may hear the name "Christ," but if they have never personally experienced the "anointing" which we have received of Him, they really don't have the foggiest notion what the name "the Christ" is about!

Therefore, the great truth that the Holy Spirit would make real to us today is that the wonderful purpose of the battle, is that HIS NAME SHOULD BE KNOWN! His name is His nature, and I am certain that every reader of these lines is aware that men in general, and believers in particular, are abysmally ignorant of the true *nature* of our Lord Jesus Christ! The deepest desire of our Lord is that the seed of God in every man should germinate and spring forth, producing the life and image of God in man.

As brother Elwin Roach once pointed out in one of his papers, *The Pathfinder*, it is most interesting to note that the only place we find **names written upon people** is in the book of Revelation! There is one time in the Old Testament, of course, that Aaron's name was written upon the rod of Levi, which was symbolic of the people themselves, that is, the entire tribe of Levi. Aaron's name — his nature, his position, his office, his authority as high priest — was written upon the tribe of the priesthood that the rod represented, and now, we see the fulfillment of that type in the last book of the Bible. Let us take a moment and notice the exclusive verses where we read about names being uniquely written upon people.

**"Him that overcometh** will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and **I will write upon him the name of my God**, and **the name of the city of my God**, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and **I shall write upon him my new name**" (Rev. 3:12).

"I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having **His Father's name written in their foreheads**" (Rev. 14:1).

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had **a name written**, that no man knew, but He Himself" (Rev. 19:12).

"And He hath on His vesture and **on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**" (Rev. 19:16).

The **new name** is the **new nature** of the resurrection power and glory of our ascended Lord. It is not the name Jesus, or Lord, or Christ, or even the name The Word of God. As members of His body we have within ourselves the conscious experience of the reality, power, and authority of all those names and many more. But none of these are His new name! None of them are the secret name that *no man knows* but He Himself! It is the name or nature of the resurrected, ascended, glorified, enthroned Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens of the Spirit! Many would settle for the name of Jesus which means *Saviour*, and that is a glorious name, but it is not the name that *no man knows but Him*, for millions have experienced Him in that name which has been called upon them. This secret name that none of us has fully experienced yet is the name that Paul yearned to know within himself when he cried, "Oh! that I might **know Him in the power of His resurrection, and in the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain to the resurrection out from among the dead.** Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I *count not myself to have apprehended*: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:10-14). Can it be made any plainer? We have experienced Christ in many of His names, putting on more and more of His nature and character, but that name which is THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, ASCENSION, GLORIFICATION, AND ENTRHONEMENT — that **full redemption in spirit, soul, and body** — we do not yet fully **know that name!** We *will* know it when we ride with Him upon the white horses! And when that great battle is ended "*all shall (fully) know Him, from the least of them, to the greatest.*"

## HIS GARMENT SOAKED WITH BLOOD

"And He was clothed in a vesture *dipped in blood...*" (Rev. 19:13).

The imagery of the scene in this passage is rooted in one of the prophecies of Isaiah, wherein we read, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with *dyed garments* from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save! Wherefore art thou *red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the winefat?* I have trodden the winepress alone: and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and *their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.* For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth" (Isa. 63:1-6).

It is strange that any should interpret this as speaking of Jesus' sufferings on the cross, yet that is how many interpreters view it. The cross, however, does not reveal *warfare*, but the great love, reconciliation, and redemption of God in Christ! Furthermore, in the scene above it is not *His own blood* that is shed in *weakness* and in *meekness* and in *sacrifice*, but the blood of *foes* trampled in *wrath*. He is on His way to *battle!* And "every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and *garments rolled in blood*" (Isa. 9:5). The language is symbolic, of course. Jesus does not wield a literal sword of steel; His sword is the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. He does not go out physically killing multitudes of people, and soaking His garment with their blood. Rather, His warfare is spiritual, He slays the enemies *within man*, which appear as *the man*, but are not the man that God intends. Oh, yes! He slays men, but it is the *natural man* — the human consciousness, the carnal mind, the ego, self-will, lust, deception, fear, rebellion, bondage, and every sin of the old *Adamic man*. Wielding His powerful sword of the spirit He comes upon the world of natural, carnal-minded, sinning men, and He comes to judge and to make war! His flaming eyes picture to us the holy passion that burns in His bosom at this moment, now that He is ready to subdue the earth and establish His righteous kingdom in the hearts of all men everywhere!

He wears many diadems, royal crowns, symbolic of victories won in the past. This is not the first time He has won the battle! Spiritually, He has already overcome sin, the devil, death, and hell within Himself. And on His white horse of conquest He has already ridden into the lives of His called and chosen elect, pressing the battle, conquering and to conquer. He overcame, subdued, and conquered all who now ride with Him upon white horses, conscripting them into His own heavenly army. And therefore, many crowns that formerly belonged to them He has already placed on His own head. The battle now revealed before the wondering eyes of the Patmos seer is only the grand climax of the holy war this captain has fought throughout the ages.

The same truth is indicated by the fact that as He rides forth with His army, even before He smites the nations with His sword, His garment is *already* soaked in blood! This is not the blood of Calvary: for the garb He wears is the garment of battle and of victory. But it symbolically indicates that the Man from Edom, with sprinkled garments as from Bozrah, has judged many an enemy before, all through the age since all judgment was committed unto the Son, while now the final scene has come, in which He shall tread the winepress of the passion of God unto a glorious consummation. And this is also indicated by the sharp sword that proceeds out of His mouth. He shall surely not deign to fight as the princes of this world fight, with their swords and spears (guns in the modern world) in hand. No, He shall simply consume the enemy by the word of His mouth. His Word is His Sword! For it is a word of power! It is a word of judgment! And it is a word of life! It is a word that slays the natural man and quickens the spiritual man! It mutilates the flesh and makes alive the spirit! It destroys the outer man and raises up the inner man! By it the enemies are defeated. By it they are judged. And therefore, He is now come as He was pictured long ago in the second Psalm, for the purpose of treading the winepress of God and ruling the nations with a rod of iron! He shall be Lord of all!

Frankly, I never cease to be amazed at those who profess to yearn for the sons of God to be manifested, who continually quote the scripture about the whole creation groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, *because THE CREATION ITSELF ALSO SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD* — and then when you tell them that the sons of God, who are the armies out of heaven, shall really, truly, actually, factually, completely SET ALL CREATION FREE they get all bent out of shape and call you a heretic, or ask foolish questions like, "What good is it to believe that?" They are still afraid someone might not get what they deserve —

eternal damnation! I have no hesitation in telling you that if God is not going to do what He said; if the Christ isn't going to actually *draw* (Greek: *drag*) *all men* unto Himself; if the whole creation and every creature is not going to be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God; if God will not make *all men* alive in Christ, just as *all men* died in Adam; if the last enemy, death, and hell shall never be *destroyed* to never again exist anywhere in God's great universe; if the devil is going to possess the souls of the vast majority of men forever, and thus be the victor; if God is never going to become "ALL *in all*" or "everything to everyone everywhere," which is the meaning of that term; then I fail to see what is the **purpose** in all the qualifying for manifest sonship, for a glorious ministry in the age and the ages to come, for THERE IS NO MINISTRY FOR THE SONS, AND NO FINAL AND TOTAL TRIUMPH FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD! We may as well forget about sonship; forget about being kings and priests unto God; forget about setting creation free; and FORGET ABOUT BEING IN THE ARMY OF THE LORD, RIDING OUT OF THE HEAVENS OF THE SPIRIT ON THE WHITE HORSES OF UNIVERSAL CONQUEST! If no such army exists, if redeemed men are not in it, and if it shall not ride forth and fight until *all flesh everywhere is slain by His sword*, then let us content ourselves with our current church programs, and be satisfied that while untold billions are damned to the flames of hell forever God shall at least have His sweet little handful of saints to dance and shout with Him over the hilltops of that glory world above!

The next step in God's great kingdom program is the ruling of the nations with a rod of iron. There are many victories beyond that before God is truly all-in-all! According to the word of the Lord there is yet an age and also ages to come! "That in *the ages to come* He might put on display the exceeding riches of His grace in...us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). We are now standing at a transition of ages; the church age is swiftly drawing to a close and the age of the manifestation of the sons of God is nigh at hand. This is not *the end-time* as many Christians are wont to think. This is *an end-time*, but not *the end-time*. Every age has its "end," and there are yet ages to come! There was an end-time two thousand years ago when the age of the law was brought to its conclusion, and the age of grace dawned upon the earth. The true and final "end-time" the Bible presents speaks of the final consummation of all ages, the climax and end of all times and dispensations, when God's plan of the ages is fully fulfilled. All words about THE END-TIME close with Jesus reigning supreme over everything everywhere. "Then cometh **the end**, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down *all rule* and *all authority* and power. For He must reign until He hath put *all enemies under His feet*. And when *all things* have been *subdued unto Him*, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be ALL IN ALL" (I Cor. 15:24-25,28).

The word "subdued" means "to line up as a troop or an army in subordination or surrender." The verb appears three times in the passage above, in verse twenty-eight. Literally from the Greek it reads, "Now when the universe shall be lined up as a troop in subordination to Him, then also Himself the Son shall be lined up as a troop in subordination to the One lining up a troop in subordination to Him, in order that God may be everything to everyone everywhere." What a word! What a plan! What love! What wondrous love! What a victory! What a glorious consummation! The might of God's strength which operated in Christ, raising Him from the dead, was sufficient to exalt Him to the highest pinnacle of the universe, thus insuring that all His enemies would be subdued unto Him, that is, reconciled unto Him, that every opposing power would be made subordinate to Him, that all sin and death in every realm and in every man and in every creature throughout all the unbounded heavens would be so swallowed up of HIS LIFE until God would be ALL IN ALL, bless His glorious name! The conquest of Jesus Christ and the armies out of heaven! Truly it is not just for this age, but extends to all ages and all realms. May

the truth of it flood our hearts that they may, indeed, be illuminated with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

This kind of total subjugation to God is that which is now being wrought in the “firstfruit company” of God’s elect. Have you really *surrendered* yourself to God? This is what God demands. In numerous places, in various ways, in different words, God says the same thing over and over again. And yet, sometimes it seems that we fail to get the message: Yield yourselves to God! Submit yourselves to Christ! Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice! Lay down your life! Present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead! Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness but as instruments of righteousness unto God! Put off the old man! Put on the mind of Christ! Come out of the harlot Babylon! Walk in the Spirit! Bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ! Again and again, God says the same thing. The first thing a private learns in the army is *submission*. If we would ride with Christ in His heavenly army, that is the first thing we, too, must learn. And what He now requires of us, His firstfruits, He ultimately requires of the whole creation!

It seems that, usually, we are ready to do almost anything but surrender ourselves to God. I recall the time when the British general came to surrender to Washington. The general began with a flowery speech in which he praised Washington for his magnificent military tactics and the way he had conducted the campaigns. He was eloquently praising Washington when Washington suddenly interrupted him with these words: “Your sword, sir!” Similarly we come to offer God the flattery of our lips, the praise of our hymns. And God is saying to us, “Your sword, sir!” Surrender is what God wants! Total surrender of all our will, our ways, and our lives! It is, in fact, during the process of conquering us and taking from us our fleshly sword that His garment becomes soaked with blood! But, praise His name, He will conquer us, take our fleshly sword, conscript us, retrain us in the ways and tactics of *spiritual warfare*, and raise us up to ride with Him in His army. Oh, the wonder of it!

The following words by George D. Watson will help us see the unsurpassable beauty and majesty of what it really means to be SUBDUED UNTO GOD. “Before God can launch us out into the breadth and sweetness of His service, and entrust to us great things for Himself, we must be perfectly subdued in every part of our nature to His will and the disposition of His mind. We must be subdued in our hearts, in our wills, in our words, in our tempers, in our manners; subdued through and through so thoroughly that we will be flexible to all His purposes and plans. We must be subdued so that harshness, severity, criticism, sluggishness, laziness, impetuosity, and all wanting our way, even in religious matters, must be subdued out of us. Conversion will not finish this work.

“We must be subdued, not merely in our opinion, not merely think ourselves subdued, not only subdued in the esteem of our friends and fellow workers, but subdued so perfectly that the all-seeing eye of God can look us through, and the omniscient One knows that we are subdued. God must conquer the man that He can trust with His great thoughts and plans. The Holy Ghost must saturate us with a divine conquest, before He can use us to conquer other souls. The Lord will begin to subdue us with gentle means; and if we sink lovingly and promptly into His mind, the work will be done; but if we have flint or iron in our nature, and it is necessary, He will use heroic means and put us between the millstones and grind us to powder, until He can mold us without any resistance to His purpose. We must be so subdued that we can hold our tongues, and walk softly with God, keep our eyes upon Jesus, attend to our own work, and do God’s will promptly and lovingly, glad to have a place in His Kingdom.

“Oh! it is grand to be absolutely conquered by the Holy Ghost, and swing out a thousand miles from everybody and everything into the ocean of God’s presence. When we are subdued in the

sight of God, He will work miracles in us, and power in experience, in healing, in finance, in service, in gentleness, and in sweetness of the inner heart life; miracles of grace that will astonish us and surprise our friends, and utterly amaze our enemies, when they come to know the magnitude of what God has wrought. Let us get subdued in every way, in everything!" — end quote.

Oh, the ineffable glory to be revealed when ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND ALL POWER AND ALL ENEMIES AND ALL THINGS SHALL BE SUBDUED UNTO CHRIST AND GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL! That is the goal of the Rider of the white horse and those blessed ones who ride with Him. What expectation this evokes in our hearts!

A little seed is the beginning of a great tree. A mustard seed becomes a tree in which the birds of the air can nestle. That great day when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be All in All — that is the great tree of the kingdom of God reaching its perfect consummation and glory. Ah, beloved, let us take the seed of that glory into our hearts and let us bow in lowly surrender and humble submission, saying with a broken heart and contrite spirit, "Amen, Lord; this be my one thought, this be my life — to yield myself to the unutterable yearnings of the Holy Spirit that I may not rest, but ever keep my vision set on that day — the day of surpassing glory, when in very deed God shall be ALL IN ALL." God help everyone who reads these lines, God help us all to yield ourselves to Him, that we may be in the fullest and total sense the FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS KINGDOM. This is the beginning, the power, and the glory, of the kingdom of God! Amen!

### HIS NAME — THE WORD OF GOD

"And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and *His name is called The Word of God*" (Rev. 19:13).

My heart leaps within me for joy as I contemplate this beautiful theme of *His Name — The Word of God*. It is an instructive thing to know that God has *never* been silent. God's a talker! This truth is basic to spiritual understanding. Had God remained silent, we would either not exist at all, or our situation would be desperate. If God is a talker, then we had best be listeners. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners *spake* in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days *spoken unto us* by His Son...by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2). "In the beginning was *the Word*, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...all things were made by *Him*" (Jn. 1:1-3). "And God said, Let there be...and there was" (Gen. 1:3). God has always been a talker, but the writer to the Hebrews tells us that all God has ever spoken is now *embodied in Christ*. "God hath spoken unto us by His Son." The Amplified Bible says, "But in the last of these days He has spoken to us *in the person of a Son...*" The Greek text, however, reads simply, "God has spoken to us IN SON." IN SON! Or God spoke to us in One who has the character that He is a SON, revealing the realm and relationship of sonship to God. It means more than the idea that God spoke *through* His Son; it signifies that God spoke *in son*, that is, SONSHIP IS THE MESSAGE! God spoke through Christ's Sonship. "If you have seen me, you have seen *the Father*." Sonship is the revelation of the Father. Therefore, it was more than the words that Jesus spoke; it was the life He lived! HE was the message! HE was the word!

Ah, dear heart, Look at **His** sonship, and then look at the **whole realm of sonship**; look at all the enChristed ones who make up the vast family of His "many brethren," and IN THEM you see the message God is sending into the world! When you see the sons, at last you see what God is like. In the publishing world, it is sometimes said that a particular book is a definitive work. In other words, the book is a standard by which all future work will be judged or compared.

Sonship **is the definitive revelation of God, the standard for all time.** Jesus is the firstborn of this Word Company, and the pattern and prototype of all that it says. He is uniquely and supremely THE WORD. If someone asks what is revealed in this definitive revelation, we could say, it's all in the little preposition "with." He is "God *with* us," in *union* with us, *one* with us. It's more than simply being present. That is the mystery!

The Greek term for "Word" in our text is *logos*. There are two primary Greek words from which our English "word" is translated — *rhema* and *logos*. When you study the scriptures you have to get beyond the surface or "letter" of the word and find its true spiritual meaning, intention, and reality — the "spirit" of the word. The "letter" is the outer shell or husk, whereas the "spirit" is the inner kernel, the nutritional substance. Jesus said, "My words are *spirit* and they are *life*" (Jn. 6:63). Jesus was talking about the "spirit" of the word — its inner life and power! When we talk about the *spirit* of the word, we are talking about the "*logos*" of the "*rhema*." The *rhema* signifies a word expressed or spoken, whereas the *logos* denotes the inner power, intention, reality, and revelation of that word. If someone was making you a proposition and you just weren't interested and were perhaps even annoyed by it, you might tell them, "Go jump in the lake." The "*rhema*" of that word would be for them to find a nearby lake and literally jump into it. But the "*logos*" of that word (the inner meaning, true intention) is for them to stop trying to convince you and just leave you alone. The outward understanding of words does not really convey the true inner meaning. Nowhere is this more true than when you begin to try and understand spiritual truth that is being expressed in human terms. And this is just the reason most Christians and nearly all preachers have completely *missed* the true meaning and message of the book of Revelation! They focus on the *letter* of the word and never uncover the *spirit* of the word!

Nobel laureate professor of biology at Harvard University, the late George Wald, may have provided us an insight into the wonder of life in an essay he wrote entitled "Life and Mind in the Universe." He wrote, "*It has occurred to me lately — I must confess with some shock at first to my scientific sensibilities — that both questions (the origin of consciousness in humans and of life from non-living matter) might be brought into some degree of congruence. This is with the assumption that mind, rather than emerging at a late outgrowth in the evolution of life, has existed always as the matrix, the source and condition of physical reality — the stuff of which physical reality is composed is mind-stuff. It is mind that has composed a physical universe that breeds life and so eventually evolves creatures that know and create science, art, and technology-making beings. In them the universe begins to know itself.*"

That is science, not theology, speaking. But it is also theology! "In the beginning was *the Word* (*logos*)...and the Word was God...all things were made by Him!" "*Logos*" is the Greek word for "logic," "intellect," "word." Hundreds of years before John penned those words the Psalmist wrote, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6). And before that we find the opening sentence of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). That is the traditional reading. But there is a problem here. The Hebrew word *bereshit* in its simple sense translates as "In the beginning *of*." But there is no object in the Hebrew text for the preposition "of." So we would have to read it, "In the beginning of God created the heavens and the earth." Yet — that doesn't sound right, does it? So let me ask, "In the beginning of what?" The compound nature of "*Bereshit*" holds the clue to the meaning of the statement. The ancient Hebrew text has the "B" of "*Bereshit*" written twice the size of the remaining letters of the word. And that has significance! A more accurate rendering of the verse is "(B) With (*reshit*) a first cause God created the heavens and the earth." And what was that "*reshit*," that **first cause** of *Bereshit*? The apostle John gives us the answer: "In the beginning was *the Word*, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. ALL THINGS WERE

MADE BY HIM; AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANYTHING MADE THAT WAS MADE. IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN." Oh, yes! The "first cause" is said to be "the Word." "And God said, Let there be...and there was."

By the *logos*, the will, intent, inner power, reality, and revelation of His word God created. It was not merely a *rhema*, a spoken word; no, it was the inner kernel, the divine substance, the inward will, the purpose, yea, the very *heart* and *nature* of God that spoke all things into existence! It's as though He spoke *Himself* into manifestation *outside Himself!* Ah, this solves the puzzle of the origin of sentient life able to be aware of its own existence and to explore the very mysteries and powers of creation, as well as the ability to know and fellowship and participate with the Creator! We are the offspring of God, a *word* out of *The Word*, and therefore we have mind and conscious being and spiritual identity, for we are an emanation of the One who brought us forth into being. Speech originates in thought, thought is consciousness, words are thought converted into sound, and creation is that sound converted into substance. Truly, we are created by *the Word!* Oh, the wonder of it!

From the earliest dawn of history there have been means of communication between men. At one time smoke from fires was the way one group connected to another, sending signs and symbols to communicate their message. Then progressively they used flags, riders on horses, books, the telegraph and then eventually radio, telephone, and television. Now it is fax machines and computers and even wireless means of communication with much of our international communication coming via satellite. But God has been into wireless communication from eternity via His Living Word! His satellite of love, wisdom, and power sends messages to us, *but* our dish has to be pointed in the right direction in order to receive His message! We have to point our hearts, our minds, our paradigms, our attitudes in the right direction, toward *spirit* and away from *flesh*, toward *God's speech* and away from *man's words*.

An abundance of scripture points to the fact that Christ, the Word, was before Bethlehem. He is just as real in the Old Testament as He is in the New Testament. The great difference, of course, is that in the New Testament *He became flesh.* "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Word did not become a philosophy, a theory, or a concept to be discussed, debated, or pondered, but a **Person** to be seen, heard, touched, handled, known, and experienced! "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." That's how Eugene Peterson describes this event in *The Message*. Others have rendered it to say that Jesus "tented" among us. That's what happened when Jesus came into the world, the Living Word of God moved into our neighborhood and set up camp!

How could the Word become flesh? How could God become a man? The literal here has it, not that the Word "was made" flesh, as we have it in the King James Bible, but that the Word "became" flesh. There is a vast difference between these two propositions! If I say, "The wood *was made* into a chair," it denotes an action upon, an action from without; some person or force beyond the wood acted upon the wood and the wood, by no involvement on its own part, *was made* into a chair. If, on the other hand, I say, "The young man *became* a doctor," it denotes an action on the part of the subject. Nobody outside of the young man forced him and somehow "made" him a doctor, but he himself went to medical school, studied, burned the midnight oil, passed the exams, fulfilled his internship, and thus *became* a doctor. "Was made" bespeaks of an action upon the object from without, whereas "became" bespeaks of a personal accomplishment from within.

How could He who was God become a man? Look again at this statement by the inspired apostle: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of

the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:1,14). It says, "In the beginning was the Word," and it does **not** say, "In the beginning was Jesus," because Jesus wasn't in the beginning. It was not until the Word *became flesh* that He was Jesus. The Son of God is not the Word — the Son of God is "the Word made flesh." The passage quoted above tells us that only after the Word became flesh did we behold the glory of the Son, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The truth is just this — In the beginning was the Word — and there was no Son of God **until the Word became flesh.** People talk about the "eternal" Son of God. The Bible speaks of no such thing. The Word is eternal, not the Son. Of the Son the Father says, "Thou art my Son, **this day** have I BEGOTTEN THEE." Nowhere do we read that on a certain day the Word was begotten. No! The Word was "in the beginning." But when the Word becomes flesh — then you have the Son! The Son is the Word, yes, but the Son is more than the Word — the Son is the Word in another form — made flesh! John speaks of the eternal Word of God and then shows how the Word became flesh. From that moment on he never speaks again of the Word, he calls Him Jesus. Isn't that amazing? Before Bethlehem He was the Word, He was God; but when He came to Bethlehem and took upon Him flesh He became Jesus, the Son of God. This is precisely the message the angel gave to Mary that blessed day in Nazareth, "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called **the Son of the Highest...**" (Lk. 1:31-32).

Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Also He said, "My Father worketh hitherto (has always been working) and I work." He and the Father were working long before Bethlehem! As we have already pointed out, He was working in the very first verse of Genesis. The prophet Micah prophesied that the Christ would come forth from Bethlehem but that "His goings forth have been **from of old, from everlasting.**" His footprints were manifested in this world through long millenniums before the prints were made in His hands. Not only is Christ referred to in the first verse of Genesis, but there are also many evidences of His presence throughout the Old Testament.

There is a remarkable statement occurring in the record of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden: "And they heard the *voice of the Lord God walking* in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the *presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden*" (Gen. 3:8). The expression for God is rather unusual — "The voice of the Lord God." Then, to add to the strangeness of the verse, it is stated that "the voice of the Lord God *walked* in the garden." Now, it is very unusual to have a voice walking! It reminds us of the old play on words, "Did you ever see a board walk or did you ever see a horse fly?" However this statement is not so unusual when we discover that the One who *is the Living Word of God* identified Himself as the "alphabet of God." He said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (of the alphabet)" (Rev. 21:6). Four times in the book of Revelation Christ so identifies Himself as the complete alphabet of God! No wonder John was able to say of the One riding the white horse of conquest, "...and His name is called *The Word of God!*" As you know, words are formed from the alphabet. Every word in human language is formed from the letters of the alphabet. The voice is the word made articulate. The alphabet is translated into a word, and the word is energized into a voice. Christ is thus the *voice of the Lord God*. Time after time throughout the Old Testament we read the prophets saying, "And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying..." They were hearing the Christ!

Have you not noticed how we often connect the word *word* with certain people? For example, the boss is the person who has the what? The final *word*. The news reporter is the person we ask, "What's the latest *word*? We introduce a world-famous designer by saying something like, "Here's the woman with the *word* about fashion." To connect someone with the word *word* is to suggest that such a person has expertise and, therefore, authority. We pay careful attention to

people with expertise and authority. Now the scripture goes one step further. John, both in his epistles and in the Revelation, reveals the great truth that our Lord not only *has* the Word, but that He *is* the Word. That's a giant step! But that's exactly what the Holy Spirit would make real within our hearts. In the Old Testament the prophets heard the Word, received the Word, *had* the Word. But Jesus didn't merely have the Word — He *is* the Word! He *is* the Truth! He *is* the Life! He always has been. He always will be.

Our hearts respond with reverence when we read John's first encounter with Christ in his visions on Patmos. "And I turned to see *the voice* that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man" (Rev. 1:12-13). There was a voice walking in the garden of Eden, and John turned to see a voice on the Isle of Patmos. The voice of the Lord God in the Garden, which Adam saw, and the voice on Patmos, which John saw, are identical. The steps of *The Word of God, the Christ*, can be followed through the scripture record all the way between Genesis and Revelation. In Genesis, chapter eighteen, Abraham served dinner to the Lord who came and *talked* with him. Jacob wrestled with a Stranger at night, but at dawn he found out that it was Someone more than just a man. When the wrestling was over and after he had been blessed (through words) by this Being, notice what Jacob said: "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God *face to face*, and my life is preserved." It is a deep mystery, but Jacob wrestled with God, He touched God, he saw God, and he talked with God face to face! It was Christ, the Word, who from the bush on mount Horeb spoke to Moses, saying, "I AM THAT I AM...thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

It is a glorious tribute to our Lord Jesus Christ to measure the time of our calendar from His birth in Bethlehem, but actually the expression "Before Christ" is blatantly inaccurate! You cannot get *before Christ* in time! He stood on the threshold when time began as "The Ancient of Days," and now He is revealed as who He is — THE WORD OF GOD that *liveth* and *abideth* forever! Yet, it is not enough to know that Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God. Even the devils know that, and tremble! We also have the word *logos* used in I Peter 1:23, "*Being born again by the Word of God...*" As sons we are not born of the Son, we are born of the Word who became the Son. Can you not see the mystery? Just as the Word became flesh to become Jesus the Son, so the Word must become flesh *within us*, that is, become substance — reality, concreteness, solidity, form — thereby revealing *our sonship*! To be born of the Word, we shall speak and emanate truth because we have become truth. That is His name because that is WHAT HE IS!

You see, my beloved, you came into this world out of the bosom of the Father. Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, just as He didn't know the Word as Jesus of Nazareth until the Word became flesh. He knew you as *spirit*. Paul states it so clearly when He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath *chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...*having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself*" (Eph. 1:3-5). Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have known you, loved you, chose you in Christ, and predestinated you to sonship *before the foundation of the world* is that you truly existed in and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! The question follows — If we were chosen "in Christ" before the foundation of the world — whom or what were we chosen in? Who was He then? "In the beginning was *the Word*, and the Word was *with God*, and the Word was *God*." The truth is just this: If we were chosen in Christ before the world began, then we were chosen IN THE WORD! To be "born of the Word" is to be a *word* out of *The Word*!

Oh, yes! GOD IS BRINGING FORTH A WORD COMPANY, and He will perfect that which concerneth them, bringing it to a successful conclusion at His appointed time. His elect, His chosen, His sons are to be a certain kind of firstfruits of Himself. God is causing His Word to become flesh, substantial, to take form, to be real and powerful within us so that we do not merely speak the words of God, but that our name, as His name, should be called **The Word of God!** He will finish the WORD, He will complete and fulfill His WORD by bringing forth a WORD COMPANY, a seed through whom all the world shall be blessed. Ray Prinzing often said, "The message and the messenger must become one." It is not just a word which he speaks, it is WHAT HE IS. And when we become a manifestation of the Logos, it is because from this Word we are born.

Ah, this is why HE who IS the Word of God comes riding out of the heavens of God's Spirit upon a white horse in righteousness to judge and make war — and the armies which were in heaven follow Him, they also ride upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Those comprising this glorious army HAVE THEMSELVES BECOME THE WORD OF GOD. They are the Word Company! God fights His battles by His Word! Not just a verbal declaration, but a Living Company who were chosen "in the Word" before the foundation of the world! Yet they do speak out of their state of being! Oh, the mystery of it!

God is equipping His elect sons by revealing the power of words — the Word. Thus saith the scripture: "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? THE WORD IS NIGH THEE, EVEN IN THY MOUTH, AND IN THY HEART..." What word? "The word of *faith* which we preach" (Rom. 10:6-8). It is the word of power, the word of salvation, the word of the kingdom, the word of life over death. When you realize how powerful words are, by virtue of believing words that are God in you, and which can change and transform you, then you will understand just how "at hand" the kingdom of God really is. You see, the Logos — the speaking — **is God**. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word **was God**." And the Word still is God! So when Jesus appeared on earth all He had to do was say, "Be made whole," and the power of the word worked, for His word was God in expression and manifestation.

The essence of divine words is God. This is not so difficult to understand when you realize that everything in life is moved by words. There isn't anything that isn't done by words. The method of educating our children is with numbers and letters. With numbers and letters, configured in various forms, you raise the educational and functional level of a human being from *nothing* at the time of birth, to become a surgeon, a politician, an architect, a nuclear physicist, or accomplishment in a vast number of fields. We have surgeons that perform heart transplants. They are people just like you and me. The only difference is the words of letters and numbers that are ingrained within their thinking. The combinations of that learning, the disciplines of those sciences of mathematics, medicine, politics, etc., have given to them a different personality and potentiality. They have a consciousness that enables them to open you up and change out the organs of your body. Let me ask you something — would you let *me* open up your rib cage and take your heart out? Of course not — and I wouldn't ask you to! And you know why — you know the knowledge contained in those words and letters which produce that skill are not in me! The words and letters used in medical school have not trained me to be a doctor.

The greatest doctor started out as a baby with no knowledge, no ability, no accomplishment, no skill. He started out with nothing in his head — just like you and me! The only difference is that someone took the time and expended the energy to instruct him and put the knowledge of

medical science into that person who by the assimilation and experience of that knowledge became that reality. You see, Jesus said that the kingdom of God is no more a mystery than a man planting seed in soil. He said that if you would plant the seed in the ground and water it, while the sun shines upon it, it will produce a plant that you can neither understand nor explain. He said, "So is the kingdom of God." If you will just take the time and effort to plant the Word of God in your mind and heart, and water it with the Spirit by exposing yourself to His presence, and give it the light of inspiration, it will grow of itself and make you something you weren't! You will grow up into the WORD COMPANY!

Brother Carl Schwing expressed this same beautiful truth when he wrote: "The knowledge of the truth, brings forth the reality. To behold the truth, is to become the truth. To become the truth, is to establish the truth. WE MUST LIVE BY EVERY WORD OF GOD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LIVING GOD! And those words are not just words for the speaking...they give life...they are life...they create life. The Word of God is the continual progression of God...leading ever into the fullness of Himself. Even as He has no beginning or end, so it is with His Word...ever progressing, ever expanding, ever increasing...and it is, my brothers and sisters...the incorruptible seed which fell into the fertile ground of our quickened spirits, to blossom forth as the sons of God...that they might become the Living Expression of His Word...the Word that will give life to all that was, and is, and is to come. Speak, O Spirit of the Mighty God, and bring the 'many membered' Word together...breathe upon them till they rise up as a mighty Son-Company unto Thee. Give birth, Thou Eternal One, to the Everlasting Gospel...that Thy Sons might stand in the presence of Thy person and proclaim that Gospel ages without end. Hallelujah!"

Are you living in the past?  
Remembering what Christ said...  
To disciples 'way back then...  
Is this your Daily Bread?  
Does God's word come at "second hand,"  
That He's said to another...  
And has His word just filtered down  
From brother on to brother?  
You think God's mute...forgotten how  
To speak to folks today?  
And all He says, is what He's said  
'Has nothing more to say?  
God's speaking now! He speaks the same  
As first His word was heard,  
In fact, "King James" is not His name;  
His name's "THE LIVING WORD."  
Who has an eye, then let them read  
Things that the Bible said.  
But let him hear, who has an ear —  
Hear God! For He's not dead.  
God's not just book, of ink and paper,  
A version or translation  
Of history — but greater;  
He's "right now" revelation.  
Yes, read the scriptures, they are fine...

Heavenly words — anybody's version.  
He's more than chapter, verse, and line,  
Our Lord's a "real live" person!  
By Bob Robin

# Chapter 212

## Spiritual Warfare (continued)

"And the *armies which were in heaven* followed Him upon *white horses*, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14).

Bear in mind — the Revelation is not a re-viewing of history, nor is it a preview of future world events. Rather, it is just what it claims to be — THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST — signifying that it is a super-view of the unfolding of the spiritual life of every son of God and of every man! The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible, not because it is the end of any revelation from God, but because it carries us into the revelation process as far as any outer scripture can. After this, it becomes one's own unfoldment and one's inner knowing and hearing of the Father's voice that becomes his scripture. The Bible is actually a book about the inner scripture, it is like a schoolmaster to bring us to the life and power of the Christ within, and this is as far as any book or teacher can bring us: to the realization that the revelation of Jesus Christ is a process taking place within us! Let us then reverently take our places beside the astonished prophet and watch as the Christ and His heavenly armies ride into the world of men!

No interpretation of the white horses in this chapter can be correct which does not recognize the connection between the similar vision in chapter six, though the two are not identical. The difference is that the white horse of chapter six portrays the **beginning** or **commencement** of Christ's warfare as He rides forth in the individual lives of His called and chosen elect to subdue all things within our personal earth. He is both the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning of the process and the ending of it! In chapter six there is one horse and one Rider — He appears as "the Alpha," that is, "the first," riding out of the inner sanctum of the spirit of each of us, conquering and to conquer. In chapter nineteen, on the other hand, the vision shows us the **end** or **consummation** of Christ's warfare, He appears as "the Omega," completing His redemptive and restorative work, as both He and all the perfected sons of God ride forth to subdue all things everywhere to their reign; all those "firstfruits" whom He has conquered now ride with Him, so we see the Rider on the white horse followed by armies of heaven on white horses, going forth to subdue the nations and all things unto God and His Christ. Isn't it wonderful!

My heart's desire is that all who read these truths may be filled with the divine conviction that God our Father is preparing a people to share the manifest image of Christ and reign with Him in His kingdom. Herein is to be found the *real meaning*, yea, the *vital difference* between the Rider on the white horse in chapter six and the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen. The Rider on the white horse in chapter six is a *solitary* Rider, crowned with a *single* victor's crown, whereas the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen is crowned with *many crowns* and is accompanied by immense and powerful *armies* astride a host of horses out of the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. It should not be difficult for any to understand that the solitary Rider wearing the single crown is none other than the forerunner, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His singular victory over sin, death, and hell — riding forth as the glorious Captain of *our salvation* to extend that victory into the consciousness and experience of each member of His elect body, the sons of God. He must complete His conquest within *our* mind, heart, and life before we, in Him, can press the battle onward to the rest of creation!

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in chapter nineteen He does not come alone. Long millenniums ago Enoch prophesied of this appearing of the promised One, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS (or, holy myriads of Himself) to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all..." (Jude 14,15). John with wonder beheld the scene and wrote, "The armies, the ones in heaven, were following Him upon white horses." Christ Jesus is the Head and the Leader as He goes before; His holy ones follow in His train, for as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons* of God; and these are they which *follow the Lamb* whithersoever He goeth. Can you not see the mystery? They are represented as armies! They come forth as a body of Warriors! He has many under His command! The armies of the heavenlies are His, and He does battle with them, by them, through them, and *as them*, even "the called, the chosen, and faithful." There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all the horses are white, signifying that every one who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignities, for He rides as "King of *kings*, and Lord of *lords!*" He is the Leader, yet as He is, *so are we!* It is the corporate Christ! It is one new man, one glorious Head and body! It is not Christ *and us* — it is simply *Christ!* "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are *one body: so also is Christ*" (I Cor. 12:12). Moreover, they have no weapons, except the sharp two-edged sword that proceeds out of HIS MOUTH, which is the Living Word of God! His Word is our Word, and we have no Word except that which *He is* and which *we are!* This is no earthly warfare, as the carnal-minded literalists purport. Oh, no! With the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, one can wage only SPIRITUAL WARFARE! Oh, the mystery of it!

In both cases the color of the horses is white, an emblem of Christ's purity and divine holiness. Every other place throughout the visions of John it stands for righteousness and purity. And in Zechariah 14:20 this purity is connected to horses. "In that day shall the bells of the horses (that is the strength of all) ring out, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD." White also bespeaks of light — illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn Son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the seven churches, the out-called, challenging them to *overcome*, we read, "I counsel thee to buy of me...white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed" (Rev. 3:18). This is naught but the *transfiguring glory of Christ*, as it is written, "And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was **white as the light**" (Mat. 17:2). The light is the robe of divine majesty, the incorruptible life of God in the spirit emanating from the nature of absolute holiness that illuminates and quickens spirit, soul, and body. This is the Spirit by which Jesus was raised from the dead, even the *spirit of holiness* (Rom. 1:4). It shines out through these vessels of clay and transforms us into the incorruptible nature of the indwelling spirit! In this very hour every one who is called to sonship to God is beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and we are being *changed, transformed, transfigured, metamorphosed into the same image, even as by the spirit of the Lord!* (II Cor. 4:18).

This great army of perfected and mature sons of God in this new kingdom day who, in the fullness of time, shall take the kingdom and rise up in the power and demonstration of the Spirit to destroy the rule of the flesh, and the glory of Babylon, and the power of sin, sorrow, and death, is even now, at the time of this writing, being prepared to march forth and bring to pass this glorious victory. That all who are to be in this army may be awakened to the urgency of the hour the prophet Joel calls upon those who see and hear this word of the Lord to sound an alarm, saying, "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain (kingdom): let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and gloominess (for the natural man), a day of clouds and of thick darkness (for the carnal mind), as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not ever been the like, neither shall there be any more after it, even to the years of*

*many generations. A fire devoureth before them (God's Word is a fire); and behind them a flame burneth: the land (of the flesh) is as a garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. **AND THE LORD SHALL UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY: FOR HIS CAMP IS VERY GREAT:** for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible (for the systems of man); and who can abide it?" (Joel 2:1-3,11).*

God is preparing such an army! We now want to present this army. "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain...and the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great...*" The trumpet blows in Zion — mount Zion. The army of the Lord is in Zion! So much of the book of Revelation is rooted in the prophecies of the Old Testament. The people who hear this trumpet and are called to battle by it are seen by John. "*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads*" (Rev. 14:1).

This company of 144,000 stands upon mount Zion in all the nature, glory, and majesty of their Redeemer. Mount Zion, the highest hill in Jerusalem, represents the very highest position attainable in God's kingdom. Such are the ruling class in the capital city of the kingdom of our Lord, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by king David of old who dwelt on the natural mount Zion in the earthly Jerusalem. It was upon mount Zion that David built his citadel and royal residence. From there he reigned. Mount Zion was thus the center of government for the whole nation of Israel! This company, standing on the heavenly and spiritual mount Zion, followers of the Lamb, can represent nothing other than those who have followed Jesus all the way from mount Calvary to mount Zion, who suffered with Him even unto death (to self), and shall now reign with Him upon His throne forevermore! They are overcomers. Before coming to the throne, like king David, they have engaged in warfare, fought many battles, gained the victory, and possessed the kingdom. They are "*the armies which are in heaven*" which follow Him who sits upon the white horse, and they too ride "*upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white.*"

What a scene! The horse is an animal that men ride. It is like a car — it's a vehicle. The horse in scripture is a symbol of speed and strength in war. In its spiritual meaning it speaks of the Word of God coming through His sons with STRENGTH AND SWIFTNESS IN BATTLE. It stands for THE BRINGING OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN WARFARE. The Lord is described as the Word of God emblematically riding on a white horse; it is the image of aggressive action, of a prosperous conquest over all His foes. It means victory!

On the negative side, whenever the word horse is used in relationship with fleshly humanity it signifies *human strength*. Isaiah 31:1-3 informs us, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on *horses* and trust in *chariots* (that is, human strength and human ability), because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong...they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!." Again, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are fleshly (strength), and not spirit." "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses (human strength) and confound the riders on the horses (those who trust in human ability)" (Hag. 2:22; Zech. 10:5).

On the positive side, whenever the word horse is used with righteousness, or divinity, or the Lord, or things heavenly, it means *heavenly, divine, or spiritual strength*. In Habakkuk 3:14-15 the prophet, reminiscing about Israel's deliverance from Egypt, extols the triumph of Yahweh, exclaiming, "You pierced with his own arrows the head of the enemy's hordes...You have trodden the sea (*masses of humanity, warriors*) with Your horses, beside the heap of great and surging waters." The meaning is clear — You have trodden the sea IN YOUR DIVINE

STRENGTH! Egypt had abundance of horses, swift and strong, but God had horses out of the ***spirit world!*** Not literal horses, of course; they represented the STRENGTH AND MIGHT OF GOD IN BATTLE! They signify the almighty POWER OF THE SPIRIT in all His manifestations. With what simple words does the Holy Spirit teach us that the strength of the Spirit *always* exceeds and excels over the strength of the flesh! Thus, horses are symbols given to us that denote the nature and work of the *anointing* that rests upon the sons of God. Horses are figures of overcoming, invincible strength and power, signifying that wherever these horses go, WHATEVER IS IN THEIR WAY IS OVERCOME BY THEM! That is the power of God in ***spiritual warfare!***

I do not wonder sometimes that those who only read my writing think that I am a hard and vindictive man, especially as I warn men of the error and abominable apostasy of the nominal church systems. But if you only knew, I am one of the most peaceable and gentle men in the world. I am a very quiet man (except in the pulpit), and believe that I am merciful and compassionate toward every sinner. I have only been a fighter because I have had to fight. Was Jesus Christ not a great fighter? Is He not a great fighter still? And is He not the Prince of Peace? Sometimes the greatest fighters win the greatest peace! Is Christ not God's Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah? And is He not the Lamb of God? God's Lion is a Lamb! God's Lamb is a Lion! I call God to witness and you to witness that when I have been called upon to fight — for whom have I fought? I fought for God. I fought for Truth. I fought for Reality. I fought against the false shepherds who were taking away the key of knowledge, who entered not into the kingdom themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered. I fought them who withstood the right ways of the Lord, deceiving the people and holding them in bondage to slavish forms of empty religion and superstitious conceptions of God.

Stephen fought the devils in the Jewish system to their very faces although he knew he would die for it. He saw his Master in the heavens. Do you see your Master in the heavens? Do you see that the only Reality is that which emanates from the Christ-Spirit? Do you know Him within, in the depths of your being? Do you hear His voice? Have you proven His power within yourself? Do you know what He wants you to do? He wants you to follow in His steps, to ***become His salvation*** unto the ends of the earth! He wants you to be a warrior, to learn the powers of spiritual warfare; He wants you to grasp hold of *Life*, to experience it fully within yourself, and then go forth to deliver His creation from sin, sorrow, death, and hell and the demonic power which curses this world. The peace of God means war with sin and death! War with the carnal mind! War with the insipid platitudes of religion! War with fear, unbelief, selfishness, rebellion, pride, lust, ignorance, bigotry, and deceptions of every kind! War with sickness, disease, sorrow, pain, and death! He that is a friend of evil is the enemy of God. This is the kind of peace Jesus left. He made warriors of men. They went forth to fight the world and the devil, in Greece and Rome, with thirty thousand gods. They marched up the acropolis; they marched upon the Parthenon; they marched up the steps of Caesar's palace; they threw down the altars of the *boni dei*; they threw down the altars of Venus; they destroyed the altars of Jove; they demolished the altars of Mercury and Zeus and Diana and a thousand more. They overthrew them without arrows or swords or guns or bombs; riding the white horse of God's righteousness and strength they smashed them *by the Spirit's power, with the sword of Truth they trampled upon them*; they triumphed and brought in a new dimension of the kingdom of God!

Oh, that is such a sublime verse where Jesus said, "ALL AUTHORITY is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ***Go ye therefore and teach all nations...and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age***" (Mat. 28:18-19). Do you see that? There is a tremendous power in that "Therefore," I am with you. I will back you. Every angel in the heavens if needful will come forth

and surround you. Fight! What does it matter, the puny governments and armies and courts of THIS WORLD? *All authority* is given to the Christ of God, and we are the members of God's Christ! That is the great and eternal truth the Holy Spirit would burn indelibly into your mind and heart and will this day. God is calling you, apprehending you, teaching you, training you to ride with Christ the Warrior out of the heavens of God's Spirit! Oh, yes! The hosts of God will troop over all the skies, ten thousand times ten thousand millions, if need be. Embrace TRUTH! Speak TRUTH! Live TRUTH! "***I command...*** Go ye therefore, you poor fishermen, and tax-gatherers and discredited rabbis, go, I am with you!" If only we realized what power there is behind us!

God is raising up a ***sonship company of warriors*** that will go for the devil's fortresses, to batter him, shatter him, and break up his kingdom. God is even now preparing an army of overcoming ones, transformed in the spirit of their mind, triumphing within themselves over sin, error, limitation, and death, who shall go forth in the power of the Spirit to pull down the strongholds of creed and ritual and religious foolishness and ignorance and set the captives free; who will beat down the prison-houses of mis-conceptions, mis-information, mis-understanding, and of sin and death, and let the prisoners go free! Satan is not a God like unto the Lord my God. He does *not* interfere with God's purposes nor frustrate God's plans. ALL AUTHORITY is given to the Christ of God — in heaven and in earth! How much authority is "ALL" authority? Oh, how men patronize and glorify the devil by attributing to him at least *some* of that "ALL" authority! Those who fear the devil, struggle with the devil, warn men about the devil's power are *devil worshippers*. They give reverence and homage before the altar of his supposed power! They thus deny that ALL AUTHORITY is now given to God's Christ! ALL of it! ALL of it in the heavens! ALL of it in the earth! And in that authority He is with us always, even unto the end of the age! Is He not with us today in His authority and power! That is what He is teaching every son, and demanding we experience and prove the truth of it within ourselves in every situation of our lives, as we train in His army to judge and make war and smite the nations with the sword of our mouth and rule them with a rod of iron!

I shall fight that battle against the lies of religion and for the supremacy of the Christ while there is a drop of blood in my body. I shall claim that every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth and under the earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man *for His pleasure — to rejoice in!* He tasted death for every man, and therefore, every foot of the earth, and every man on the earth and under the earth belongs to Christ my Lord. They are His by right of creation and they are His by right of redemption. No devil anywhere has any claim on even one of them, and no devil anywhere can gainsay that fact. I claim for my God this great and eternal kingdom! The church has forgotten that Christ came to establish a kingdom and that it must break in pieces and ***consume*** (take into itself) every other kingdom including the devil's kingdom. The church has forgotten that God has given His Christ the *keys of death and hell*; and with the veil of tradition and carnal-minded reasoning over their darkened minds they are unable to comprehend even the simplest of truths — that the Saviour of men will *never* use those keys to lock men up in either sin or death or hell, but He *will* use them to lead all men out of the prison-house! Aren't you glad!

The gospel which Christ preached was the gospel of the kingdom of God. The hope and aim of all His work was the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth and in all realms everywhere. When the end of His great work is come, He shall deliver up the kingdom of God, even the Father, and in it will be everything God created, for God will be ALL-IN-ALL! We who preach this gospel of the all-inclusive and all-victorious redemption of Christ preach not a gospel of limited atonement, nor of a partially victorious kingdom, nor of a Christ who was a failure — dying for men He was unable to save, nor of an almost all-powerful devil who wins the battle for

souls and possesses the souls of untold billions throughout an endless eternity. Oh, no! Such a doctrine would be *blasphemy!* We preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, of the supremacy and omnipotence of Christ its King, and of the triumph of that kingdom in all the earth and unto the unbounded heavens. We command every man upon this God's earth, and under the earth, and in heaven and hell and throughout the universe wherever they may be, to bow the knee and glorify God by calling Jesus Lord and serving and obeying Him with a willing heart, as it is written: "*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER*" (Phil. 2:10-11). God shall grant it. If it takes ages upon ages, God shall grant it!

We must have it! We shall fight it out to the end, and we will win. The omnipotent Christ within us shall win. Sin shall be abolished. Disease, pain, sorrow, death, and hell shall pass away. This victory must be fully accomplished in the *firstfruits* of His redemption first. The Day is at hand. Then, O Christ, and then alone, wilt Thou see the travail of Thy soul, and be satisfied. Then, O Christ, and then alone, can we be satisfied; when the last rebel has bowed at Thy feet, and the last blasphemer has confessed Thy lovely name, and there is no more fight; for there is no more devil anywhere. Hallelujah! God shall reign forever, the reality of creation! It is a living hope; this hope, that at last, every poor sinner will have heard the glad sound, and that at last every proud spirit in earth and heaven and hell will humbly bow before the Christ, and will own His sway, and there shall be harmony and peace and unity and unbounded joy and rejoicing everywhere, for God shall be ALL-IN-ALL! That is my hope.

The *spirit of might* ((Isa. 11:2) that rests upon the Rider on the white horse, and which shall rest upon all of God's sons who ride with Him, is not the same kind of might known by the people of this world; it is not the might of force, of marching armies, of clanging swords, of tanks and guns and bursting bombs, for these exist only in the realm of *carnal might*. The might of God and of God's Christ is *spiritual might!* If our eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God we will see that the nature of all our work in the army of the Lord is spiritual! The power of the kingdom is *spiritual power*, its citizens are a spiritual people, its ministry is a spiritual ministry, its authority is spiritual authority, its conquests are spiritual conquests, its dominion is spiritual dominion, its laws are spiritual laws, its weapons are spiritual weapons, its priesthood is a spiritual priesthood, its sovereignty is spiritual sovereignty. If you understand the truths I have just written, you understand things that have been hidden from the eyes of nearly all the religionists of the whole world! Many of the Lord's precious people are no further advanced in their understanding than were the fleshly-minded Jews of Jesus' day who looked for the Messiah to come and deliver them from Rome — as if being free from Rome would make them free from their real enemies — carnality, selfhood, sin, and death! The work of the kingdom is the work of rescuing men out of the power of darkness and the bondage of the flesh and the carnal mind that they may be gained for God. It is the work of imparting unto men the very life, mind, nature, and spirit of the Lord that men may be gained even more and more by God until He truly becomes ALL-IN-ALL. Thus shall the whole creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

The cry of the hour is that we *become* that for which we have been apprehended. We are giving notice to heaven and earth that this is not just another teaching or beautiful revelation given to thrill our hearts, but this message is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as a witness to God's elect that we are a "chosen generation," a "royal priesthood," "kings to reign," and we are also called to form the "army of the Lord" in the earth. We are not just passing through this world, but are sent by God at a specific time, at the very hour of the very day of the very month of the very year of the very century when the army of God is destined to arise in the earth to fight

the final battles for the possession of our inheritance in the kingdom of God! We shall bring to this world the unveiled glory of the Son, in an open display of a manifestation in the sons of God. For this we cry, that we would be the forthshinning of the Son, His express image, the demonstration and power of His sonship glory and dominion, upon which the nations will gaze, upon which all the philosophies and religions of the world will stare in astonishment, and be confounded, and be changed by the glory of His countenance. Oh, yes, the army of the Lord shall “*shine forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners!*”

By this army shall creation be set free from the prison of corruption, to see a new heaven and a new earth, to see sin and unrighteousness banished from the hearts of men, to see death destroyed from off God’s creation, to see the end of all sickness, sorrow, and pain, to see safety, peace, and happiness come to every man, woman, and child, to see (New) Jerusalem established as a praise in all the earth, to see kings reigning gloriously from mount Zion, to see every man and every nation walking in the Light of the City of God. If you don’t believe or don’t understand this testimony, then just consider — following this great battle in chapter nineteen of the Revelation — read the next and final three chapters of the book and see if the very conditions I have just described are not *precisely what you see!* Taken in context and sequence it cannot be denied that the glory of the Lord filling the earth as the waters cover the sea, with righteousness abounding everywhere, is the blessed and glorious **result** of the conquests of THE ARMY OF THE LORD! Oh, the wonder of it!

Praise God for the exalted road that leads to Zion, no ravenous beast shall tread the path that the vultures eye hath not seen. These are glorious days indeed for the army of God, a great people, there has not even been the like thereof unto the years of many generations. We have for many years been struggling in God’s great “boot camp” training for this spiritual warfare, but there is now a mighty stirring in the spirit as the army of the Lord musters for battle. Truly the white horse has been galloping triumphantly through *our land*, conquering every enemy within, and announcing to us that He reigns in a voice of thunder from His throne on high. May He reign and speak *through us* even as He reigns and speaks *within us* in the great Day of the Lord! The weapon of Him who rides through *our land* is the bow of His word sending Truth into our minds and hearts; the weapon of the army of God, however, is the sword of the Spirit, the sharp two-edged sword of the Living Word of God — a sword to smite the nations, not with the carnal force of merciless slaughter, but with the life-changing properties of TRUTH AND LIFE. The battle fought by the Christ of God is a spiritual warfare, combat between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death, between the customs and ways of this world and the principles of the kingdom of God. Ride on, O Horseman! Ride on, O Horsemen!

In the midst of all the confusion and darkness of this hour the Spirit of God is calling out a people for His name. He is training them in the school of obedience and refining them in the furnace of affliction. He is stripping them of self-interest, draining them of self-will, plucking from their hearts *all* the deceptive ways of Babylon, causing them to abhor the vain efforts of the flesh. These are putting on the whole armor of God, these are dwelling in heavenly places, seated with Christ; these are the *armies from heaven* that follow the Word of God into battle. To understand what I say you will have to *come out of* all former tradition. Many think of the “armies from heaven” as being those saints who have passed on to the other side of the veil, who are then joined with those sons on earth, the armies from both sides fighting as one. The truth is, however, that there is no mention of “armies which were on earth,” — *all* those who ride with Jesus constitute “the armies which were in heaven.” It is not that these are dead saints returning, but *all* who make up this company, be they alive in the flesh or on the other side in

the spirit, **all** are out of those “heavenly places in Christ Jesus” where **we are seated** with Him! It is not a matter of being dead or alive, it is a matter of finding our life, our position, our very reality in the exalted sphere of HIS LIFE! From within, out of the innermost being, is arising a strong and mighty Word, the *absolute truth about God and all things*, beyond the superstitions, myths, folklore, fairy tales, and traditions of religion, and by which every adversary shall be silenced. “He cast out the *spirits* WITH HIS WORD” (Mat. 8:16). God’s Christ shall ultimately cast out *all the spirits* that plague and dominate the whole world of mankind! He shall do it this time just as He did when He was here in the flesh — He shall cast out *all the spirits* WITH HIS WORD! That’s what this “battle” is all about! This sin-weary world shall yet be governed by a glorious company of sons of God, every one in the image of Christ, every one a brother of Jesus Christ, every one infused with His life and invested with His authority, every one a son given **“power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy!”** The whole earth, as Eden was, shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it!

Although God “so loved the *world*,” still there is a special sense in which Christ “loved *us*” and gave Himself for *us* — those He is making kings and priests unto God, that we might reign over the earth. “Unto Him that loved *us*, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made *us* **kings and priests** unto God and His Father” (Rev. 1:5-6). The book of Revelation is written to kings and priests! “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast *made us* unto our God **kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth**” (Rev. 5:9-10).

Some time ago, in Bill and Elaine Cook’s paper, Monty Williamson shared the following beautiful testimony which speaks so powerfully of Christ’s love for His called and separated elect. “A while ago I had an experience with the Lord Jesus Christ that I would like to share. As I was waiting on the Lord in prayer, I was part of a scene that I will try to describe. I was with the Lord’s army traveling across the sky, headed for earth. We were all riding on beautiful white horses flying towards the Lord’s enemies to do battle. As I took in the scene, I realized I was in the front line of the Lord’s army. I took in the view and felt honored that I was allowed to be at the front where I could see the vistas of the earth beneath and know that I would be one of the *first* to join in this great battle.

“As my eyes moved to the left, I realized that I was riding *beside Jesus*. He smiled at me and I felt so loved and understood. I was overwhelmed that I was at His right hand as He rode into battle. I felt so loved and honored! I was shocked that I was beside Him, and questioned in my mind why I was allowed to ride there. In return, He just loved me and let me know that it was *right* that I was beside Him. I felt humbled and greatly loved. I savored the moment and it was one of the greatest feelings I have ever had — to be riding on a white horse with Jesus heading into battle! After a bit I began to wonder about the others who were riding with us and I felt a little sad that I was at the front with Jesus and that others were not. I was thinking that maybe I should rotate my place with others so that my brothers and sisters could share the joy of riding beside Jesus. I felt Him whisper that it was “Okay” and that I should look around.

“As I looked back, I saw the most incredible picture. I saw the rest of the army — as I looked at each one, I noted that they were all looking to the person on their left. **On their left was Jesus riding beside them!** As I looked closer, I realized that from each person’s perspective, each one was riding beside Jesus and saw themselves at the front of the army, riding on His right side. The same picture that I had at the first, where I saw myself at the front of the army and at His right hand, was the same vision that everyone else had. We all thought that we were riding

at the front of the army beside Jesus! For everyone, Jesus was beside them having intimate fellowship with each one at the same time. My love and awe for Jesus soared! It is just like Him to be able to make each one of us feel *the most loved at the same time*. He is the Head and we are the body. Does any part of the body feel neglected by the head? It is the same with Jesus, our Head. He is able to make each of us feel intimately loved all at the same time. It is something very hard for the finite mind to wrap around, but *it is possible with God. His love for us knows no bounds!*" — end quote.

The army of the Lord is at this very moment in careful preparation. The mountains are full of horses and chariots of fire, which the King mustereth for the battle. His great command is, "FOLLOW ME!" He rides the white horse of universal conquest. He goes on from conquering to conquer. Follow the King from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph in your own life; then you, who constitute the King's hosts, will move forward to press the same victory everywhere. During World War II, due to the urgency of the times, officers were trained in a ninety-day course. These were called "ninety-day wonders" by the enlisted men, who resented them because they were *ruling*, but had never been *ruled over*. There will be no "ninety-day" wonders in the army of the Lord! He is presently preparing "officers" to participate with Him in the closing out of the church age and the establishment of the new age of the kingdom of God. There are no short cuts — God will deal and deal with each member of His army until each stands tall and strong and swift in the wisdom and might of Jesus Christ!

You who have not yet surrendered all to Him as King of kings, you who know Him as Saviour but have not crowned Him Lord of all within, don't you hear His trumpet pealing in your ears, sounding down through all the chambers of your soul's castle? You who have tried to be a good Christian, involved in the religious activities of the man-made church systems, but have not hitherto heard the call to "come out of her" and come up higher into the high calling of God in Christ Jesus — why do you stand out longer? Why not draw in your colors this day, and invite HIM to the supreme place in your heart and life, and enroll yourself among His followers from henceforth, to follow Him to the heights of mount Zion; and then, when He celebrates His last victory, be among those who come with songs and everlasting joy to *share* the fruits of His victory and chant His praises forevermore. Amen!

# Chapter 213

## Spiritual Warfare(continued)

"And *out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations:* and He shall rule them with a rod of iron..." (Rev. 19:15).

At first glance such a scene may seem fanciful and to the natural reasoning it certainly appears incredible. All kinds of ridiculous notions have been promoted from this picture! But as we approach it from the *spiritual viewpoint* we discover the truth presented is most beautiful and significant. The Holy Spirit always illuminates the symbols, and in this instant He brings to mind another scripture that throws light on this one. The book of Hebrews is a book that explores the glories of Christ's sonship, kingship, and priesthood. It is written to show His superiority over all prophets, priests, and kings who went before Him. It is my conviction that the passage in the fourth chapter specifically has reference to Him, when it says, "*the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*" (Heb. 4:12). The title "the Word of God" is the title ascribed to Jesus by John in the vision now under consideration. As I was in meditation upon this beautiful truth it became clear to me that the writer of the book of Hebrews is referring to Christ Himself as "*the Living Word of God,*" and not to the written word, the scriptures, but to that quickening, energizing Word that lies *beyond* the sacred page. He says, "*The Word of God is LIVING AND POWERFUL, sharper than any two-edged sword.*" Then he immediately goes on to say, "*neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*" (Heb. 4:13). Obviously the "him" in this verse refers to the Living Word of God just spoken of, signifying that this Living Word is *not a book* — it is a Person!

A further description is given of this Word of God, revealing the great truth that not only is it *living*, but it is also a *sharp two-edged sword!* This adds to the picture of the Christ coming to judge and make war. Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, which according to Revelation 1:6 is a "sharp two-edged sword," and in our text is used to smite the nations and bring them under His righteous rule. The Greek word here for "sword" is *hromphaia* which indicates a long Thracian sword or one unusually large and longer than most swords. The same word is sometimes used to describe a javelin, a sword sufficiently light and long to be thrown as a spear. Here the word is used symbolically to represent a sharp instrument of war with which Christ will smite the nations and establish His absolute rule.

The key word here is *mouth*. "*Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword...*" How meaningful this is! It is a sword, yes — but a kind of sword that comes forth out of the mouth. The sword that goes forth from the mouth of Christ is without doubt the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God! His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. He is the LOGOS. "*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made*" (Ps. 33:6). This is He who was in the beginning. "*In the beginning was the Word*" (Jn. 1:1). This is the Word that was God. "...*the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (Jn. 1:1). In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "*He sent His Word, and healed them.*" This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In this vision of John this One is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, indicating that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth — truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapon of Truth! Christ does not come to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His words smite all who hear them! As someone has said, it will smite them with conviction and bless them with conversion.

The apostle Paul says, "Take the sword of the Spirit which *is* the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). When the legionnaires of Caesar girded on their belts and fastened their breastplates in position and took upon themselves their helmets and picked up their shields and swords, they were going forth conquering as a conqueror, to travel across the face of Europe for Imperial Rome, and to conquer all that came before them. How does the Christ conquer? By His WORD!

When I speak, or write, I manifest spiritual influences, and the force of these influences is proportionate to the inner power, and their effect is proportionate to the state of reception of my hearers. Words are thus seen to be representatives of spiritual forces, but not merely representatives, but also *vehicles* of spiritual powers! It is truly amazing! Many times as I write there is a powerful anointing that permeates my being. Even this week as I have given myself to penning these messages, that divine unction has been awesome, at times almost overwhelming, as though I was caught up into another dimension of consciousness and being. The words that I write are in a computer, then transferred to paper, sent through the mail, and read by thousands of the Lord's people. Then we receive letters, and precious ones write of the effect of those words, how as they read understanding dawned in their spiritual minds, encouragement and strength poured into their hearts, some write of an uncontrollable laughter or weeping with tears of thanksgiving and joy — for in some strange, mysterious way the very words which were written out of the anointing actually become *vehicles* of the life and power of the Living Word — there is a transference of the anointing, of divine life and glory *through the words* which are words of God. Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! The action of spirit on spirit is appreciable by the senses, and could we look behind the veil of nature we would see that the influence exerted through words is as real and actual as muscular force. From this we learn that words are not mere sounds or forms, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they **are spirit, and they are life**" (Jn. 6:63).

The Lord's speech is the manifestation and influence of His inner life poured forth upon those to whom He speaks. An incident in the life of Jesus, recorded in Luke, chapter seven, provides a picture in which may be discerned the POWER OF THE WORDS OF GOD. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. Moved with compassion for the sorrowing woman He bade her dry her tears. The astounded crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier. "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The power of the speech of the Prince of Life pierced the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. The tender Christ delivered him to his mother, and made effective His command, "Weep not!" Her son was not only brought back from the gates of the tomb, but was restored to her as a gift from the Lord BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD.

On another occasion Jesus had come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast. As He reached the city He came to the Pool of Bethesda and He looked into the pool. There were five porches around that pool. He passed through the porches, and at the last came to a poor man, sick for thirty-eight years, who had been pushed away from the sacred spring. The man was startled as he heard the Voice. "Wilt thou be made whole?" He looked up into the face of a Man who was looking down at him, asking that strange question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" There went right down into his heart a strange sensation, his whole being vibrated like a harp when every string is touched by a master hand. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Gently he explained that he had no man to help him into the pool, but that others, when he was coming, step down before him. Then he waited with his eyes fixed upon the Man who had so strangely appealed to his will. He got ready, for the very next moment he heard the voice of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life say, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!" And in a moment there came into his body with that Word, power; and he rose, took up that bed, rolled it up and walked home, set free from the bonds of Satan who had bound him for thirty-eight years. Oh! The power of the flaming sword of the Living Word of God that proceeds out of His mouth!

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the sword that goes out of His mouth. The word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that word

flows forth as the sound of many waters. There are not to be two swords nor an hundred and forty-four thousand swords — not one out of the mouth of the Lord, and the others out of the mouths of His ministers. There is one sword, and it is HIS. Our quotation of scripture, our knowledge of the Bible, and our understanding of truth is not the sword of the Lord! The sword of the Lord is that word which proceedeth only out of HIS MOUTH, and out of ours as we are **made one in Him**. The sword out of His mouth is the Word of God, His very own Word, of sovereign authority and power that whether spoken to the angels, or to devils, or to the winds, or to the waves of the sea, or to the dead who are in their graves, or proclaims the present and approaching purposes and plans of God, is heard by those unto whom it is sent and commands obedience (Ps. 29:1-11). The sword of the Lord bespeaks of a purified people, holding forth the word of Life in the power of the Holy Spirit, and how we praise God for this company!

The Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that **clear word of the Lord** which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to naught. It was said of our Lord and Elder Brother, "Never man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:46). "What thing is this, what new doctrine is this? FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him!" (Mk. 1:27). "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Mat. 8:27). That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered-brethren-company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab the king, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, **but according to my word**" (I Kings 17:1). And that word was fulfilled!

God's elect has at this time received the "firstfruits" of the Spirit, the "pledge" and "down payment" of that fullness revealed in the firstborn Son of God. We have witnessed the movings and miracles of God on a certain level as the sick have been healed and wonders done in the name of Jesus. Oh, yes! I have seen these things with my own eyes, and miracles have on occasion been wrought through even my word, and the laying on of hands. But it has not been consistent nor constant nor perpetual, only a little here, and a little there, from time to time according to men's faith and the seasonal movings of the Spirit. All we have experienced up to this time is but a taste, a foretaste, an appetizer, a firstfruit, a small sample of the glory that is coming upon the sons of God! When our hearts are fully prepared for it, the pure and powerful Word of God shall cause His ministers to ride victoriously. Naught shall be able to stand before God's army of sons bearing the two-edged sword of **HIS WORD!** Not demons, not sickness, not sorrow, not limitation, not death, not the elements, not nature, not religion, not rulers, not governments, not armies, not organizations, not philosophies, not science falsely so called, not *anything!* How phenomenal, how glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company of warriors with the sword going out of their mouth!

This is not some carnal battle fought with carnal means, but the utterance of the Living Word of Truth and Power which no man shall be able to disannul. Ah, how fleshly have been the swords by which the religious systems of man have conquered! These "Christian" countries have even gone to war with one another, and with other powers of earth. These "Christian" armies have sent millions into a fast hell. Through long centuries the "Christian" nations have been on fire with brawls, party against party, faction against faction. These "Christian" nations have deceit and fraud, oppression and wrong, robbery and murder, in their streets. The "Christian" families are torn asunder with envy, jealousy, anger, domestic disputes and abuse, separation and divorce, without number and without end. And what is most dreadful, most to be lamented of all, are those "Christian" churches! Those churches that bear the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, yet wage continual war with each other. Throughout the church age this church has attempted to convert sinners at the point of a sword and sometimes by burning men alive. As it has sought to "purify" itself and maintain its so-called "orthodoxy" by ridding itself of those it perceived as heretics, this church has murdered untold millions throughout the earth and become drunk with the blood of saints and of martyrs. It has brought praise only to Satan. It is a

false church, a false Christ, a false sword, a false word! This false sword, this spurious gospel, is waging its carnal warfare throughout the nations!

True revival and true worship have all but fled from the harlot systems and can be found only in the hearts of the small remnant who love God and to whom the word of the Lord is precious. All who have studied the history of the so-called church know of the abominations committed by this wanton and worldly system. They have conquered by sorcery, intrigue, murder, war, and torture. They have made all nations drink of the wine of their fornication. And in this "enlightened" hour the lewd harlot of false Christianity stalks the earth still, pontificating about morality and spirituality. False revivals abound. The false sword is wielded. The false gospel is proclaimed from the pulpits, from the printing presses, and over the air-waves. False prophets, false teachers, false shepherds, false apostles, false evangelists, false healers, false miracle workers, and false Christs abound together with all the marvelous works of trickery, deceit, and deception, insomuch that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.

We have heard many so-called Gospels. The world is full of poor deluded souls who are trying to establish their own particular creed of imaginings and mistakes. We try to go to the world, we try to tell them the message, by using all the world's own methods, to advertise, to appeal to their emotions, to entertain them with music and programs, and if that fails to try to scare them into salvation with threats of judgment, doom, and hell-fire. It only proves our impotence, that we have not left the world very far behind if we can return and employ the world's ways so easily.

Today, everyone with a little bit of preacher's "itch" is attempting to get themselves a little congregation, a little following, to build a little kingdom. These all imagine that somehow they are going to go out and storm the world and "take the world" for Christ. But a new day is dawning, a day when the pure and unadulterated *gospel of the kingdom* must go forth to the whole world. Religionists have tried in vain to lift the world out of its darkness and shame by their ambitious programs and preaching their own ideas and doctrines. It simply would not work. Sin, immorality, sorrow, fear, violence, and spiritual ignorance are abounding more and more and the world has grown steadily worse! The lofty phrases, and text-book prayers, and apologetic platitudes, and time-honored traditions, and powerless preaching, and carnal, man-made programs and drives and crusades of all kinds have utterly failed. Now a new company is to go forth with a burning message of truth direct from the throne, out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord, and in the fullness of power reserved for this day. The anointing of the manifest sons of God shall be an anointing WITHOUT MEASURE, the fullness of Christ's SONSHIP MINISTRY, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the ineffectual absurdities that have been preached throughout the years. Religionists have side-stepped, and mollycoddled, and back-slapped too long. Their day is done!

The sun is sinking in the western sky of this age of the "in part" realm. A new day is dawning for those who have been quickened from above. A new army is being prepared for this new day, an army of the sons of God perfected in His image, matured in His life, refined in His righteousness, filled with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus, radiating the effulgence of His glory, demonstrating the omnipotence of His power, and equipped with the sword of His Spirit which is the Living, Creative Word of God. And there shall be an exultant victory! For now the day is fastly approaching when "A-L-L nations shall come and worship before Thee" (Rev. 15:4). "And...all the nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES" (Zech. 14:16). That word clearly predicts a **new day!** It cannot be denied by any that throughout this age all the peoples and all the nations that have come to worship the Lord have worshipped exclusively and only in the *feasts of Passover and Pentecost!* Not one nation has ever come to worship the Lord in the FEAST OF TABERNACLES. Not one! But there is a day, O glorious day! when all the peoples and all the nations of earth shall know the Lord and feast with Him in a new order and a new glory — in the blessing and provision and power of TABERNACLES! Only the manifest sons of God can usher in such a day!

In this hour God is moving by His Spirit among those who are being drawn by the Spirit of the living God into the unseen and eternal realms where they hear what the Spirit is saying. The words that these are hearing in the Spirit are the teaching of the Holy Ghost, and the teaching is for the training and equipping of the army of the Lord. God is making His sons aware and causing them to become familiar with the instruments of war they must use in this spiritual and heavenly warfare. He is especially training us in the use of our sword — the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God! We have spent years reading and studying the Written Word, and we still do. We also gathered with the saints to hear the preaching of the word and the utterances of the prophetic word. Nearly seventy years have passed since the Lord began to "call out" those who He would lead into higher realms and deeper depths of His purposes. Yet there are brethren who still argue over the scriptures and try to bind God between the covers of the Holy Book. There is the Written Word of God which we hold precious and sacred. As we have discovered in our present study of the book of Revelation, we know that deep beneath the surface of the Written Word there is a gold mine of divine, living truth. And we know that there are not enough books in the whole world to contain the thoughts and ways and works of our Father! We must ever remember that there is the Word that was *with* God in the beginning. And there is the Word that was *God* in the beginning. That Word was *before* the Sacred Page, and He is also *beyond* the Sacred Page. There is the Word which is God, whom we know and love and serve. Only the Spirit of God can divide the two — then take THE WORD and reveal HIM to us!

My beloved, we once knew Him who is the Word in that long ago before the beginning when we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. We knew Him as one brought up with Him, and we rejoiced always before Him. Then, being lowered into this gross material realm, we had to be brought to know Him again, and were first introduced to Him *by* the Written Word, the Sacred Page. But now we seek to know Him again *beyond* the Sacred Page, for that is where we find our destiny and our inheritance in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Word which *is God*, is the Word which the sons of God shall shout from atop the holy mountain of the Lord! This is the Word, even the sword, which shall smite the nations. This is the Word that shall set creation free. This is the Word that shall bring forth the New Creation, the New Heavens and the New Earth. This is the Word which shall fill all things with Himself. It is through this Word that we have life for the ages!

All this shall be accomplished by the sword of Him that rideth on the white horse, because the Word of God is LIVING, AND POWERFUL, AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD! "*These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges...*" (Rev. 2:12). Do you know what it means that it is a **two-edged** sword? In the first century there were three primary swords that armies used when they went into combat. There was one sword that was a big, heavy, cumbersome thing, you could only use it with two hands, and you usually rested it on your shoulders, for it was that heavy. You went into combat and you would swing at the enemy with that sword with both hands, you could almost club them to death with it, it was so heavy, and it would cut right through the metal of their armor. The problem with that was, in the first place, it was so heavy that it got you tired; secondly, if you took a swipe at somebody and missed, you were very vulnerable to a counter attack.

There was a second kind of sword, the kind we usually think of, a sword with a point at the front and one side of it had a sharp edge. You would take that into battle and try to whack the enemy with that one side, pull it back, and try to strike them again. Then someone thought of the idea of sharpening both sides — it was as revolutionary in the days of Rome as the atomic bomb was for us. When a legion went into combat with a sword that had a blade on both sides they had an incredible advantage — the soldier could cut from all directions, forward and backward. Now that's what the writer to the Hebrews had in mind when He wrote about the Word of God being *living*, and *powerful*, and *sharper* than any two-edged sword of man. The Word of God is **alive!** The Word of God is **powerful!** The Word of God is **sharp!** How effective it is! Without the Word of the Lord man is like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there.

Man's sword is a sword of death. It kills. But God's sword is ***living*** — it cuts away and kills what needs to be killed in order to ***make alive***. It is a living sword — yea, a ***life-giving*** sword! Isn't it wonderful!

Let us now consider something further about the word of the Lord. There is a significant statement about the word in Psalm 105:8. "*He hath remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.*" "Word" in this passage is from the Hebrew word *dabar*, the meaning of which indicates "an arrangement of words." It speaks of words that are set forth in order, not merely a conglomeration of words, nor any single word or group of words having no structure, message, or purpose. *Dabar* denotes an arrangement of words set in order that declare a message having substance, which can be understood and appropriated. It is significant to note that this word *dabar* is translated "promise" later on in the same Psalm. "*For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant.*" What is a promise? It's a word! When a man makes a promise he gives his word. Therefore this word which God remembers and which He commanded to a thousand generations is HIS WORD OF PROMISE!

Hebrew is an extremely fascinating language. I studied Hebrew for a couple years and then made an effort to study Greek, but in my love of language I am partial to Hebrew. I would love to speak it fluently! I learned some interesting things about the Hebrew language. Early in my studies I purchased a Hebrew clock which I hung over my desk in my office. The "numbers" on the clock are letters of the Hebrew alphabet beginning with "*aleph*", or "A," then "*beth*," which is "B," and so on. I couldn't understand it, and not yet being familiar with the Hebrew letters of the alphabet, I could still tell time by this clock because I knew where one o'clock, or three o'clock, or any other hour is on the face of a clock. What I couldn't understand was why they didn't have numbers on the clock — one, two, three, and so on. Soon I learned that Hebrew, like Greek, and Latin, and many other languages, is a *numeric language*. In a numeric language they don't use numbers! We all know what Roman numerals are. In a numeric language a value is ascribed to each letter of the alphabet, therefore "numbers" as we know them are unnecessary, they simply use the letters of the alphabet as numbers. Hebrew is like that, so when I learned that "*aleph*," which is the letter "A" in the Hebrew alphabet, is "one" I then understood why "*aleph*" was where the "one" would be on the clock. Knowing the numerical value of the Hebrew characters enabled me to be able to actually read the clock, not just tell time by my previous knowledge of telling time.

There is another truth beyond this of far greater significance. Not only does each letter of the Hebrew alphabet have a numeric value, but each possesses within it a *spiritual connotation*. In other words, there is a *spiritual value* ascribed to each letter of the alphabet in addition to the numeric value. One letter will carry a value such as righteousness, another bears the value of faithfulness, another carries the value of the self-existent One, the One who *is*, etc.. Thus, when one speaks or writes in Hebrew the letters in each word that he speaks or writes contain within them the essence of the spiritual qualities which characterize the meaning of that word. This truth is referred to by the Psalmist when speaking of the Lord, he said, "*He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names, great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite*" (Ps. 147:4-5). The "number" of the stars denotes the numerical value; their "names" denote their spiritual value, for the name signifies the nature. In Isaiah 40:25-26, God said, "*To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by numbers; He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might.*" What a mighty God we serve who can conceal within the name of every created thing the spiritual essence, nature, and destiny of that thing! Truly He IS infinite and of great might!

In the opening verse of the Bible we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now God chose the Hebrew language to record that! The Jewish scholars believe that Hebrew was the original language, the divine language, before any other language existed. I don't know whether that is true, but I do believe that in His omniscient wisdom and by divine

design and purpose God arranged to have the original scriptures of the Old Testament recorded in Hebrew and the New Testament books written in Greek. For this reason I am a believer in what is called the “verbal inspiration” of the scriptures. That means simply that God inspired the Bible writers *word by word*, He ordered the precise arrangement of every word and every sentence to reveal within them not only the surface meaning of the words, but within their divinely ordered arrangement may be searched out His hidden or secret wisdom. Within His word God has given us a power. We could get hung up, as the fundamentalists do, on the idea that God verbally inspired this word, and make a holy relic or a religious idol out of the Bible. That’s not the purpose of God at all! In fact, the fundamentalists who challenge the cause of “verbal inspiration” never get into the inner essence, life, and power of the word — they are stuck on the external surface meaning of the *letter* that *killeth!* The great truth the Lord is revealing to us is that when He *speaks*, contained within that word are all the characteristics of His wisdom and power which the word represents. Therefore, resident within every living word of God is all the wisdom, energy, potential, glory, and power of God necessary to ***bring that word to pass!*** That, precious friend of mine, is why the Lord can confidently assert: “*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it*” (Isa. 55:11). Notice — the Lord does not say that HE will accomplish that which He declares by His word, but IT, that is, the *word itself*, shall accomplish that whereunto He sends it! The power is *in the Word!*

On the natural level every letter of every word in the Hebrew language has a spiritual value, so that when you put those words together they have spiritual meanings according to the characters that are in those words. That is a divine and beautiful science, only designed by the mind of omniscience, but if we stop there in the external form of the “letter” of the Word, we miss the point altogether! The deeper truth is that God is pointing to a spiritual reality *beyond* the outward “science,” and when He speaks any ***living word*** to us there is contained within that living word all the energizing life, knowledge, wisdom, glory, and power to accomplish all that it promises. God Himself is ***in His Word*** to perform it! That is the mystery. The creative energy in every living word that proceeds out of His mouth is the power of His own divinity. Just as the power of life that forms the giant oak is resident in the tiny acorn which falls into the ground, so is the creative power of divine life resident within every word we hear from our heavenly Father. And that, my beloved, is the ***promise*** of God’s word! That God “remembers His promise” means infinitely more than the notion that He doesn’t “forget” His verbal assurance, pledge, or vow. The assurance that God will do all that He says lies not within the form of the words we hear, but the guarantee is found in the divine ability and power ***residing in the word***. Can you not see the mystery?

How many who read these lines have ever *questioned* a word of the Lord? Have you ever *doubted* a word of the Lord? Have you at sometime perhaps *disobeyed* a word of the Lord? The reason for this was because we did not comprehend the *power* that was in that word! Our failure to perceive the living essence that was in the word, in which essence was contained everything necessary to bring it to pass, was the root of our unbelief and weakness. Oh, yes! When the word of the Lord is quickened within our hearts by the Holy Spirit we have only to say “Amen” and proceed to walk in that word and the miracle of the living power in the word will unfold just as naturally as the budding of a plant, bringing to fruition all that the Lord has spoken. The miracles of God are the simplest things in the world! Simple trust and obedience, stepping forth in faith to embrace and walk in the promise of God, releases the power of the word to perform it. Our faith and obedience are just like supplying water and sunshine to a seed that has fallen into the ground, causing it to germinate and spring forth, releasing the power of its life within!

To every member of God’s elect there must come a time when the truth of the *power resident within the word of God to us* dawns as the morning on the meadows of our consciousness. With all confidence I tell every person who reads these lines that prophecy (prophetic utterance) is not fulfilled simply because God foreknows what is to happen. God does indeed know all things, for “known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world.” Truly He knows the end

from the beginning and nothing is hidden from Him! The grossest darkness is bright as the noonday sun to the all-seeing eye of the Lord our God. We could say that because God knows what will happen He is able to speak beforehand precisely what will come to pass and therefore *that is prophecy*. That seems altogether logical to the natural mind. But I do not hesitate to tell you that that is not the reason prophecy comes to pass! Prophecy is not fulfilled on the basis of God's foreknowledge. Prophecy comes to pass because the life of God, the ability of God, and the power of God are ***in that word*** to perform all that it speaks. Again I say that the word of God is not just a spoken foreknowledge, for the word of God is itself CREATIVE ENERGY!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANYTHING MADE THAT WAS MADE. IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN" (Jn. 1:1-4). God did not say, "Let there be light," because He knew there would be light; rather, He said, "Let there be light," so *there would be light!*" And the power that created the light was The Word. That is the difference. We stated above that there must come a time when every one of God's called and chosen elect is thoroughly possessed of the understanding of this great and eternal truth concerning ***the power resident in the living word of God***. This is unerringly true because we are called to be the proclaimers of His Word. As the sons of God go forth into spiritual warfare to smite the nations, the Living Word of God is *our sword!*

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

Immediately the scene changed. I was in the same city, but found myself in a storefront building. There was nothing in the large room where I stood except a number of folding chairs. I was aware that this building was used by certain believers who met for prayer, counsel, preparation and planning; for from this place teams of ministry were sent forth throughout the length and breadth of Russia. Suddenly I was transferred to a small room at the back of the building. The room was furnished with only a single cot with a small table at its head, upon which lay a book with a dark purple cover, and embossed across the front in gold letters was this title: THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY. The next scene was back in the larger room where several people were now congregated. I knew that a meeting was soon to begin, with prayer and a strategy session for sending out the ministry teams. In connection with this activity I was shown a massive intervention of God's power accompanied by a dramatic move of the Holy Spirit across Russia by which the whole nation would be stirred with the manifestation of the glory of God. With this electrifying knowledge planted within my consciousness, I awoke.

Immediately the interpretation of the dream flooded my spirit. It was clear that a new condition of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY was to come to the people of the Soviet Union. Remember — this was 1983! At that time Yuri Andropov was in power and Mikhail Gorbachev was unknown to the Western world. We had not yet heard the words GLASNOST and PERESTROIKA. And the

imminent collapse of the Soviet Union was the farthest thing from anybody's mind! In 1984, first at a Convention in Daytona Beach, Florida, I commenced to proclaim the word the Lord had given me; following that in meetings in El Paso, Texas and in other parts of the country. The Spirit revealed to me that *religious liberty* (typified by the pole on the vacant lot) was coming to the Russian people and that the advent of religious liberty would be followed by a *revival of religion* (represented by the parade). This we have seen come to pass! Late in 1989 as I watched the NBC Evening News, suddenly — THERE IT WAS! The reporter was giving a report from Moscow. Down the broad avenue I saw them coming — a vast throng, literally hundreds of Christian believers marching on foot...at the forefront of the crowd marched the Russian Orthodox Priests holding out the crucifixes and icons — the exact scene I had witnessed in my dream six years prior! I shouted through the house to Lorain, "Honey, come, look! That's it! There is the procession I saw in my dream!"

Exactly as the Lord said, much of what is happening spiritually in Russia today is taking place within the precincts of religious Babylon. The Russian Orthodox Church has had a dramatic influx of people and increase of priests and seminaries, and restoration of power and prestige. Thousands of new churches have opened representing many denominations and groups. The Lord has opened doors — tremendous avenues for the gospel of salvation. Teaching services in Russian churches are now diverted to evangelistic messages in deference to the masses of unbelievers (most first-time attenders) flooding the meetings. Invited by friends or attracted by a printed invitation, many Russian people come to churches seeking an answer to their great spiritual hunger. Evangelical churches are filled with new inquirers, and many newcomers are converted to Christ. Most have dramatic and emotional experiences — all are life-changing. Excitement permeates Russian churches as believers have the joy of leading unbelievers — people who have never been exposed to spirituality or prayed before in their lives — to the Lord. And there is a very significant revival in the cities, especially among the youth. But for the most part this is all an elementary move of the Spirit in the feast of Passover set within the context of the church systems of man.

The sovereign move of God in miracle working power that the Lord showed me in 1983 HAS NOT YET BLOSSOMED — but the seeds of it are planted and it looms upon the horizon. According to the word of the Lord there was to be a *revival of religion* first, then the mighty move of the Spirit of God! Since 1984 I have had a ministry to Russia in and by the Spirit and through that saw the collapse of Soviet Communism there just as the Lord had moved me to proclaim. Everything that has happened there has been according to that word of the Lord and the proclaiming of it! That is what it means to be given *power over the nations* and to *reign over them out of the heavenlies!* By prayer, by faith, and by the revelation and proclamation of the word of the Lord we have heavenly governmental power and authority to *change things!* The sons of God are beginning to reign in the heavens of God's Spirit, and earth is being impacted by their authority and dominion! When the present distress in Russia has run its course, there will be an unprecedented, sovereign move of God in that country that will bring the glory and honor and power of the kingdom of God in a new and higher dimension, and bringing multitudes into living relationship with God *beyond the religious systems of man* through the power of the Holy Spirit! I was made to understand that the book I saw — THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY — indicated that American ministries were destined to play a pivotal role in this move of the Spirit in Russia. But beyond that, America represents to the whole world the concept of LIBERTY, and God is about to PROCLAIM LIBERTY to the former captives of communist ideology, sin, darkness, ignorance, bondage, helplessness, poverty, sorrow, and death throughout Russia!

The groundwork is being laid. The preparation is in progress. The stage is being set. And regardless of what events, positive or negative, may yet transpire, the mighty God, in due time, will utter His voice from the heavens and great shall be the sound of abundance of rain. Can you comprehend, dear reader, what effect you can have upon creation by REIGNING FROM THE HEAVENLIES? There is no need to board a great airliner and fly to far-away nations with strange sounding names and quaint customs in order to bless the world. I have never set foot

on the soil of Russia, yet I do not doubt for one instant that the faith and prayer in my heart and the declarations of God's word through my mouth aided in some mysterious and divine way the amazing events that have unfolded and are unfolding in that distant land. THERE IS POWER IN THE SPOKEN WORD OF THE LORD! GOD'S SPOKEN WORD IS THE MIGHTY **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT!**

Let me tell you something. What has happened in the former Soviet Union has nothing to do with me personally any more than anything God does through you has anything to do with you. It is the work of God! Yet I ask — did God show me, and did God have me declare, the manifestation of His kingdom power in Russia because He knew it was going to happen, or did He have me declare that word SO IT COULD AND WOULD HAPPEN? Ah, He gave me a word to declare so that by the power of the Lord *in the word* would be unleashed a mighty river of life, the omnipotence of God to bring it to pass! That is the great truth the Holy Spirit would make real to your heart today. It is my deep conviction that if I had never declared it, it would *not* have happened! Granted, the Lord could have proclaimed it through someone else — the result would have been the same. For it has nothing to do with me, or you, or anyone else — it has everything to do with the POWER IN THE WORD!

God is in His Word in all His ability, omnipotence, majesty, and dominion to move upon men and nations. No word of God can fail! Here is the power of the kingdom of God! Here is the power of the sword that goes out of His mouth! It is almost possible to hear the thrill of Isaiah's voice as it comes ringing over the centuries: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING WHEREUNTO I SENT IT.* For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains (strong kingdoms) and the hills (smaller kingdoms) **shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees (peoples) of the field shall clap their hands.** Instead of the thorn (evil men) **shall come up the fir tree (fragrant ones), and instead of the briar (vicious, violent, vindictive men) shall come up the myrtle tree (peace loving, righteous ones): and it shall be to the Lord for a name(the shining forth of His nature), and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off**" (Isa. 55:8-13).

Christ and His army of sons come riding out of the heavens on white horses and they come to **judge and make war.** In the vision John saw this judgment and warfare activity limited to "the sword of their mouth." There are no other implements of war seen in the vision! In other words, this **spiritual warfare** is performed entirely by the **spoken word of God through their lips!** And it is not extreme to suppose that **only** the word of the Lord would have the power to carry out the warfare! Any individual who sought personal revenge, or a demonstration of human ability, or the effort to fight the battle by the same tired old methods of the carnal church systems or the militant nations of earth, would be powerless to perform any such supernatural activity of warfare. Anything less than the redeeming power of God's word would not have the motivation of love, and therefore the originator would not be God, and the goal would not be deliverance, salvation, blessing, and restoration. Thus it can be seen that it will be **only** through enlightened, matured, and perfected sons of God that the words of God in LOVE-JUDGMENT can be spoken! For in them alone will the nature of the Father be unmixed with the nature of man! Aren't you glad!

## TREADING THE WINEPRESS

"Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: *and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*" (Rev. 19:15).

The following quote is from brother Elwin Roach, taken from his *Pathfinder* publication, in which he has given a very inspirational insight into this process of the winepress.

**"Treading out the winepress** is similar, if not the same, as **ruling with a rod of iron**. '*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power* (Gr. *exousia, authority*) *over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers*: even as I received of my Father' (Rev. 2:26-27). The rod is used to **break people like a potter breaks his vessels**. The afflicted are pressed and broken in order to bring forth something much greater, life from the world of death. Those broken to shivers are the **marred and cracked vessels who are unusable and unfit for the glorious kingdom of God**. They are not able to hold the simple water of the Word or the wine of the Spirit. It is difficult to repair cracked vessels of clay; but it is a simple matter to break them to shivers, that is, to crush them completely, grind them to powder, cast them into the *Potter's field* to be weathered, worn, and reduced to pliable clay. When the time is right, they are then RE-FORMED in the Potter's hands, and all are made new as Revelation 21:5 says they will be.

"As it is with the re-forming of the Potter's vessels, the treading out of the winepress brings forth a higher, everlasting form of life. For instance, ripe grapes are full of sweet juices. They possess beauty and sustenance. They are pleasant to the eye and taste. A burst of energy can be had when grapes are eaten; but the true life, the higher life of the vine is not known until the inner juice is released. That releasing is due to the crushing of its fruit, and seemingly a spoiling during the fermentation process. But there is no spoiling! There are no values lost! To the contrary, much is gained! The life of the vine in that fruit is released and manifested in that process of bruising and dying. There is a marvelous transformation and resurrection. Abundant life comes out of death. Now we know why *wine* is called *spirits*. The inner spirit/life has been released as the essence of the fruit is transformed. Many may appear as though they are rich and full of life, like plumb, religious grapes, yet they will never drink of the **new wine of the kingdom** without the **treading out of the winepress**, or **being vessels broken to shivers and re-formed**.

"We should note that neither the treading out of the winepress nor the breaking of vessels are in vindictive vengeance. There is no anger of any sort, and neither is it a cold, uncaring, retribution to someone who 'deserves' God's harsh, legal 'justice.' By no means is this rule of iron and this treading of the winepress done in malice or without heartfelt feelings of love. Those rulers have no need to see anyone suffer, although there is often great suffering on the road to correction and change" — end quote.

To this beautiful word I would add only this comment. Most commentators view the entire scene of the riders on the white horses as wrathful, vindictive judgment upon the world. It is not! It is corrective, redemptive judgment. The great purpose of Christ's conquest is to bring the nations, all of them, and all of the people who have ever been, or are now in them, under the righteous rule of the Lord and His kingdom. He doesn't come to *destroy the nations* — He comes to RULE THE NATIONS! What a difference! And that rule brings with it judgment unto victory. He comes, not in anger, with a murderous, destructive spirit to destroy men, but He comes **in righteousness** to judge and make war! It is **His righteousness** in manifestation to produce righteousness in the men of earth. Oh, how wonderful it is!

He breaks the nations to shivers. The beauty of it is that the prophet Jeremiah tells us that when the vessel is marred in the hands of the potter, he then smashes that vessel and *makes it again another vessel* as it seems good to the potter to make it (Jer. 18:1-6). This is re-demption, re-

conciliation, re-generation, re-creation, re-birth, re-surrection! And then, finally, the winepress. The treading of the winepress is described as “the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” Sounds awesome, fearsome, violent, and savage, does it not? Yet — why do men tread out the grapes in the winepress? Not to destroy them, certainly, but to crush them in order to release the inner life. And it *takes* determination, relentlessness, fierceness, passion, and yes, violence to fully crush the grapes and shed forth the juice! The word for “wrath” in the Greek text simply means *passion*. Oh, yes! God is absolutely passionate, relentless, determined, even violent when He moves in judgment to break and redeem and remake men into His image! What a mighty God we serve! He will not turn from His work of judgment until He truly RULES in the heart and life of every man and every nation on earth! Blessed be His name!

# Chapter 214

## Spiritual Warfare (continued)

*“And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16).*

Can we not see that this remarkable vision, blazing and shining with its scintillating glory of power and truth, points directly to our Lord Jesus Christ who is King of kings and Lord of lords, ruling the universe and guiding the spheres. The reference to the solitary Rider on the white horse is clearly not to the entire Christ body, but to the Head of that body. The body of which He is the Head is characterized by the “armies which were in heaven” that “followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” But the One on the *lead horse* is the *Head*, the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS! He is King of kings because He is King of all those who rule with Him as kings! This same book of Revelation, as I have previously pointed out, distinctly and markedly identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings. “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten from the dead, and THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 1:5). The word “prince” in this verse is translated from the Greek *archon* which means “a *first in rank* or power, prince, ruler.” So Jesus is the FIRST IN RANK of the kings of the earth! He is the PRINCE of the kings of the earth! He is the RULER of the kings of the earth! Yes! He is the KING of the kings of the earth! This reference is not specifically to all the present carnal rulers of the earth-realm, but to those who are destined to be the true kings who reign *with Christ*. I would solemnly admonish all who read these lines, DON’T TRY TO PULL RANK ON JESUS! You can never elevate yourself by trying to diminish Him. Now and forever “HE is the Head of the body...who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things HE MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE” (Col. 1:18).

Jesus is Lord of lords because all others who rule with Him as lords have completely and lovingly submitted themselves to His supreme Lordship. No one can rule with Christ in the kingdom of God who has not, first of all, subjected himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ — for the whole objective of the kingdom of God is to ultimately bring to pass this wonderful end: “Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Jesus is the great King of kings and Lord of lords! He is not the *soon coming King* as the citizens of religious Babylon are trained to say, denying by the very words that Christ has any kingdom on earth at this present time. Such ignorant statements always leave me cold! What could be further from the truth, which truth teaches us that Christ *now* sits with His Father in His throne in the heavens of God’s Spirit and that all power *is given* unto Him in heaven *and* in earth! We are already citizens of that kingdom and have already been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. *Already* it has taken place, already Christ has a kingdom and is its King! From the barrenness of Patmos John wrote that he was our brother, and companion in tribulation, and *in the kingdom* and patience of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9). And if Christ is *in you* this day, and if He is *now* King of your life, then He is *not* by any stretch of the imagination your “soon coming King”! Oh, yes, He shall yet come in marvelous unfoldings of Himself, but He is not coming to *be* your King. HE IS KING!

Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible! Through the ages He has revealed His

Kingship on different levels and through various instruments, and He shall yet arise in power and glory in a new and marvelous expression of His Kingship through the MANIFEST SONS OF GOD, revealing Himself as the great and conquering King, bringing deliverance to every man and all creation, reconciling all things unto Himself, on earth and throughout all the unbounded heavens. Every son of God is finding his place in this great Day of the Lord and the hour of manifestation is nigh at hand!

He who rides on the white horse is the King of kings. Those who follow Him on white horses are the *kings* that Jesus is King over. The promises of God are vast and varied. Some of them, like forgiveness of sins, the supplying of our needs, and healing, are free and unconditional and may be obtained very easily. That is why so many receive them! But if you would be a king in God's great kingdom and receive power to rule over, bless, and deliver creation; if you would learn the life, authority, and governmental power to reign with Christ, then that is a different matter altogether! You must become a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It takes patience to attain any worthy goal. It takes endurance too! No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Even in this hour some do look back to the former church orders of the church systems that God has brought them through, and clinging to a lesser realm disqualify themselves for God's fullness. We do not attain sonship by a single bound. Neither do we qualify for kingship in a moment of time. It is not an experience we can receive one night at the altar, nor can it be conferred on us by the laying on of hands. We cannot claim it and seize it today by faith. We have need of patience. We must through faith and patience grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! There must be raised up within us a kingly spirit, a kingly nature, a kingly heart. As we grow up into the maturity of the Christ we become spiritually skilled ones through experience. Only such as ride the white horse of HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH, and expertly wield the sword of HIS LIVING WORD can serve as kings in the great government of God!

The following historical sketch came across my desk. It was the time of the French Revolution in 1793. They had beheaded the king and then the queen. The crown prince was left orphaned. Somebody said, "Behead the little prince." But then the devilish suggestion was made, "Don't behead him; you'll only send his soul to heaven; that's too good for royalty! I say turn him over to old Meg; she'll teach him the vile, filthy words and ways of the street. Then he'll end up going to hell." So, as the story goes, he was turned over to this wicked woman of the streets, who tried to get him to repeat these ugly, profane words and commit vile, filthy acts. But, he would stamp his feet, clench his fists, and his little golden curls would shake on his velvet shoulders, and he would say with determination, "I will not say it; I will not do it; I was born to be a king, and I will not do it!" I say to every person reading these lines today, you were born to be a prince, you were born to be a king with Christ upon His righteous throne and His Father's throne, and therefore you **will** be an overcomer!

Ah, yes, my beloved, many have failed in the in-part realm and have been disqualified and fallen by the wayside, debased by the flesh, deceived by human reasoning, corrupted by the carnal methods and systems of religion, leaving heartbreak, tragedy, and disaster in the body of Christ. Ern Baxter, who worked and ministered with William Branham and the great healing revivals of the 1940's and 1950's was once asked to share how he later faced the change in his relationship with William Branham and the whole healing movement. He said, "In the ministry with William Branham, I saw a dimension of the supernatural that had in it such seeds of spiritual life and other good fruits that my excitement was hard to contain. But then I saw carnality start to invade the movement — exaggeration, misrepresentation, metaphysics, and eventually the breakdown of many of the healers in critical areas of their lives because they couldn't handle the crowds, the popularity, or the money — I had to withdraw from it. That was one of the most traumatic times in my life. I did a lot of praying at that time, a lot of groaning. In fact, I did a lot of screaming because I was close to an emotional breakdown. A tremendous move of God had been sold out so cheaply; it was difficult to handle. If I hadn't had an experience with God, if I hadn't had a consciousness of His sovereignty, if I hadn't had a relationship with God based on process, if it were not for my *knowing* God, I don't know what I would have done...but in the end

it wasn't a matter of the healers, it was a matter of the most important person in this, and that was GOD. I knew God, and I knew where God was" — end quote. Of a certainty I know that it ***shall not be thus in the kingly ministry of the manifest sons of God!*** Oh, no! Those who come with the Christ, *in righteousness* judging and making war, subduing the nations, restoring all things and delivering creation from the bondage of corruption shall themselves *be incorruptible*, having been *called*, and *chosen*, and *faithful*, tested in the furnace of affliction, proven under pressure, purged, refined, purified, molded and fashioned into the very nature and character of Christ, riding *white* horses, and clothed in fine linen, *white* and *clean*. These shall reign with Christ over all things because they have first reigned with Him *within themselves!*

As I have pointed out many times before, the journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The kingdom of God is *within you*. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from galaxy to galaxy, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the universe, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to prepare for kingship! This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than all heavens. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a kingdom of Life and Light, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, mind of His mind, nature of His nature, heart of His heart, wisdom of His wisdom, power of His power, authority of His authority, and life of His life!

These are the days in which God is preparing a people to reign in the kingdom of God over all things. These will have to be those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. They will be those who have been filled with all the fullness of God. They will be those who have learned to be led only and always by the Spirit. They will be those who have kept His word and walked according to His will. This company of people will be one with God in mind, heart, and purpose. They will have put on the mind of Christ and their own will shall have given way to His will in all things. The people whom God shall use to reign over the nations and the universe, bringing God's kingdom to pass in all realms, will be a strong people. They will be a holy people. They will be a compassionate and loving people. They will be those who live in the presence of God and breathe in union with Jesus Christ.

Those who reign with Christ cannot be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, nor deceived by every great sounding theory of man that poses as a good scheme of ministry or as deep revelation. They will not be moved by smooth-tongued orators or fast-talking deceivers. They will perceive the hearts and motivations of men and understand the true nature of all things. God is not interested so much in what is going on today within the church systems of men. God does not want just anybody to go out and do signs, wonders, and miracles. He is preparing an incorruptible order of people to do these things on a level never seen before. There are many miracles and good works done in the name of Jesus by men whom the Father has not sent. But these men receive at least a portion of the glory, and use their power over men to suck them into their own little kingdom. God is very selective in this hour of those He chooses to manifest His power in the earth. Not just anybody is suitable. God trains and chooses in many ways. Moses was in the backside of the desert for forty years. David went through many years of battles and trials and testings to be eligible for the throne to which God elevated him.

God is shaping our lives with a view to the future. What is happening to each son of God today has a bearing on what his role will be in the kingdom of God throughout the ages to come. Our present travail will be easier to bear when we understand this truth. A crown prince cannot live like other people. When the crown prince of Great Britain is born, he is a marked child from the day of his birth. He is different from other children. His education, his way of dress, what he is taught in the home, his associations, his activities, where he goes and when and how, his leisure time — everything about his life is planned to prepare him to be a king! The man or woman

called to sonship cannot be like other people or other of God's children any longer. God has a special plan for this one! The truth is that a son of God marches to a different tune than his contemporaries. He hears the band playing the march of victory. He stays in line with those enChristed ones who march with him. He keeps in step with his leader, Jesus Christ. He marches to the music of the celestials. He marches in the procession of Christ. His music is the music of the kingdom. Because this is a different kind of marching from that of those in the carnal church systems of man, he is often out of step with them. They are *not* all marching to the same place! Most Christians are marching to a place in the sky with golden streets, palm branches and harps, and spacious mansions over the hill-top, to sing and dance and play and frolic for eternity. Sons do not have time for such frivolity, for they are marching to the throne of the universe, to a position of eminence, power, authority, responsibility, and eternal glory as lords and kings and priests and creators after the likeness of their eternal Father. Their business is not dancing over the hillsides of glory, but bringing the Kingdom of God to pass throughout the infinity of God's vast universe!

The great artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds, once painted a picture of Lord Holland, a prominent Englishman. The artist asked a large sum for his work, which he had completed in only a few hours' time. Lord Holland said to him, "You get money very quickly. It did not take you much time. How long were you in painting this picture?" Reynolds replied, "All my life." The artist meant that the talents which had been developing all his life had entered into the picture and had made possible its production in a few hours. And he was correct. No great picture is painted in an hour! Life with its years of toil and experience in back of it. And kings are not made in the day of their coronation. Oh, no! The willingness to submit to God's dealings and the work of conformation into the image of God's Christ is not reached in a moment. It is the outcome of an upward process by which we are transformed *from glory to glory* into the likeness of God. Kingship is the outcome of breakings, purgings, experience, growth, and development in the spirit throughout long years. God gives us a lifetime to build the character of a king, and that is generally how long it takes! It is the flowering out of the Life which has been nurtured in our experience and testings day after day after day. It is not attained by one grand leap into a spiritual experience!

The sons of God are reality. This company of divine-human beings is even now reaching completion. These will become what Jesus is and have what He has as their very own reality. God will be in them and through them in all His unutterable plenitude. What He is they will be also. They are the express image of their Father in Jesus Christ. This is the revelation of God and the staggering message of the Bible! The sons of God are destined to inherit all things on earth and throughout all the vastnesses of infinity, for they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus, who is the heir of *all things* (Heb. 1:1-2). Few Christians comprehend the immensity and implications of our inheritance and destiny in Christ Jesus! The sons of God are destined to be the blessers, deliverers, quickeners, and transformers of all the created realms. Thus creation groans with expectant birth pangs, longing for their arrival!

From the lowest darkness of demons and devils to the inhabitants of the farthest galaxy of light, the universe stretches in anticipation of the glorious unveiling of God's sons (Rom. 8:18-25). They will be the full and complete expression of God in all the attributes of His deity. Like a super-nova the sons will burst into everlasting splendor, streaming glory and power for all creation to behold. These noble beings will conquer and restore all things to God on earth and throughout all worlds of the unbounded heavens. As priestly shepherd-kings they will lead the creation, dispensing judgment unto righteousness. As saviours they will loose the bands of Adam's curse from this world, and the darkness from all worlds in all realms. The sinful will be redeemed and changed, the ignorant will be taught of God, those in the man-made church systems will be delivered from their delusions and guided into the pure truth of God. The angelic realms will behold the birth of God's manchild and arrive to honor God's sons. All creation will marvel at the splendor of a race of beings who are the offspring of God matured up into the fullness of all He is. The reins of creation will be surrendered to them, and all created beings everywhere will be committed to their loving and skillful care. These divine sons of the

omnipotent and loving heavenly Father are the only answer to creation's lack and problems. They have been ordained of God as the power that shall deliver creation from the bondage of corruption.

These sons are the anointed sovereigns, the appointed rulers of all things. Today they stand in the wings, at this very moment they fine-tune the instruments which they are, but suddenly shall they enter upon the stage of history, strike their majestic chord, and all flesh shall hear the word of the Lord and see the salvation of God. Then a mighty power shall arise from the earth, as a stream of expanding light it will race through the galaxies, spreading out and penetrating all things with the life of God. Every creature on earth and in distant worlds will see the wonder of God. Every kingdom will be subdued, changed, instructed, and brought into harmony with the Father of lights. Throughout the endless eons to come, the sons of God will govern the creation in righteousness, infusing all things with the dynamic of His life.

In closing this thought of the "kings" who ride with the "King," let us notice where this illustrious name — KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS — is written. "*And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS*" (Rev. 19:20). All John's first readers, Jewish, Greek, or Roman, would have readily understood the signification — the **thigh** was the place where the sword hung (Ex. 32:27; Judges 3:16, 21; Ps. 45:3; S. of S. 3:8). Generals carried their swords upon their thighs; it was their badge of authority. Here, in place of a sword, is a name, and this name is the badge of His authority and carries the might of heaven with it, for it is by the conquest of His mighty sword that He *becomes King of kings and Lord of lords!* But why was the title written also upon His **garment**? Surely for exactly the same reason — the garment, **soaked** as it was in **blood**, is the symbol of that victory which He had already won within the lives of His Conquerors, His Overcoming Company, the many-membered body of sons who accompany Him in this great warfare, the armies of the heavenlies who now ride with Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean! He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords and the kings and the lords over whom He reigns come with Him in His very own power and glory! They are clothed in fine linen white and clean, for by His conquest of them they have been *purified*. His garment, on the other hand, is stained with blood, the symbol of *their Adamic lives* which He has slain within them. Therefore, on His blood-soaked garment is the name He has won for Himself: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

In chapter nineteen of the Revelation the Lord Jesus is revealed with seven distinct names — Faithful, True, Righteous, Judge, Word of God, Almighty, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Concerning His names there are two striking things — He has an *inner* name and an *outer* name. This is a significant point which many students of the book overlook. Notice that in verse twelve He has a name that *no man knows but He Himself* — that is His *inner* name. Then in verse sixteen we are told that He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KING, AND LORD OF LORDS. That is His *outer* name. The inner name no one knows but he that has it. The *Word of God* is His inner name — this the world does not see, hear, comprehend, or believe. He is the *logos*, the Living Word of God by which all things were created, are redeemed, and shall be restored. It has three elements in it. It is a creative word, a redeeming word, and a restoring word! The world will see and know Him by the outer name; it is on the banner, it is on the thigh, indicating the sheath of His sword, and on His vesture in the sight of all — but His many brethren who ride with Him know Him chiefly by His inner name!

Those who recognize His inner name are overcomers and to these are given "a little white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth save he who receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). That is the hidden name of Christ, The Word of God! They kept the Word and, by it they were kept. The Psalmist put it right, "Thy Word have I *hid* in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." It is a Living Word, a Living Power, that transforms you into His image and reveals to you your true heritage in Christ! It is simply DIVINE REVELATION! That is the inner name within yourself! The Lord Jesus has an outer name, and so will His overcoming ones

have an outer name, and it will be in harmony with His inner one just as His is. Revelation 3:12 reveals much about the names of the overcomer!

## THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together *unto the supper of the great God*; that ye may eat the *flesh* of kings, and the *flesh* of captains, and the *flesh* of mighty men, and the *flesh* or horses, and of them that sit on them, and the *flesh of all men*, both free and bond, both small and great" (Rev. 19:17-18).

There are two scenes in the chapter and they are strikingly contrasted. It is a painting on a single canvas of *two suppers*, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the Great Supper of God. A heavenly light, wonderful, mystic, shines on the former; the latter is deeply shadowed in gloom and grotesqueness. The attendants at the former are the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and a great multitude robed in garments of white; the guests at the latter are all the carrion-eating and scavenger birds that fly in the lower heaven. There is music at the first supper, the singing of the heavenly choir, hallelujah songs with the power of harmony like the sound of many waters; at the second there is no music, no choir, no singing, only wails and groanings with the sounds of tearing flesh and crunching bones.

Songs are appreciated most when the words of the song are heard and understood. Listen to the words of the wedding song they sing at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb: "*Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand! Hallelujah! Amen! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready!*" Three major notes of joy are struck in the song. One exalts the Lord God, ascribing to Him worthiness, honor, and praise. Another is inspired by the triumph of the bride who has been chosen, and has made herself ready for union with the Bridegroom. And the other is prompted by the righteous judgments that have fallen on religious Babylon, avenging the blood of the saints on the corrupted harlot of uncleanness.

The second scene, in contrast to the first, is the Great Supper of God. Nothing is said about a marriage or any rejoicing. It is a strange, weird feast that follows the great war initiated by the Rider on the white horse and His armies that follow Him. Be very careful as you view the scene, do not hurry past. There is something here for every child of God and, indeed, for every man to consider and meditate upon! The guests at this supper are carrion-eating, scavenger birds. There is no gourmet meal prepared by master chefs at this supper! Rather, the guests gorge themselves with the dead flesh of despotic kings, military captains, mighty warriors, army horses, armored riders; and finally they are shown picking the bones of *all men*, small and great! Need we pause to interpret the vision? I will only add, God has prepared a feast for the fowls of the air and that feast is *the flesh of ALL MEN*, both small and great. God is saying that ALL FLESH must go! Those who understand the Revelation in the Spirit and by the Spirit, will readily "get" what the Spirit is saying!

John sees heaven opened, and the Christ of God and His armies riding forth. These are certainly scenes set at the consummation of the church age, when God's purpose in His elect is fully formed, matured, and consummated. Christ and His armies of overcomers ride forth; the sword out of His mouth searches out individuals and nations, and cuts to the center of all the institutions, organizations, governments, military establishments, educational systems, business enterprises, and all the pride, wealth, and power of fleshly men. He wears not the colors of any nation of earth. His uniform is white, pure white, sprinkled with blood. An innumerable host of white-clad soldiers follow Him on white horses. These are the armies of heaven!

Much play has been made by commentators who use the term “Armageddon” to describe this battle against the two agents, the beast and the false prophet, but in fact the name “Armageddon” does not occur in this chapter at all. Indeed, the *only place* in the whole Bible where the name “Armageddon” occurs is in Revelation 16:16 where it is a part of the events related to the pouring out of the sixth vial. There are probably few subjects in Bible prophecy which have been subjected to such maltreatment as that of the so-called “Battle of Armageddon.” The simple truth is, first of all, that it has *nothing* to do with the vision of chapter nineteen; and secondly, few Christians realize that “Armageddon” is mentioned only once in all of scripture — the much speaking about it and the graphic explanations concerning it would lead one to believe that it is surely one of the *major themes* of the prophetic portions of the Bible! Frightful descriptions have been offered on every hand to show the involvement of the Jewish people in this “battle” supposed to take place in the plain of Esdraelon to the north of Palestine where Deborah and Barak overthrew the army of Sisera, and, centuries later, where good king Josiah lost his life warring against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt.

The fantasies woven around this “battle” by Biblical theorists were a number of years ago brought to the last degree of absurdity by a pamphlet, emanating I believe from Canada, telling us that at that time there had appeared in the valley of Megiddo in Palestine “a new breed of vultures, a breed never seen before, multiplying at three times the normal rate.” They then quote an authority who said that buzzards normally lay one egg at a time, but these apocalyptic buzzards are laying *four* eggs at a time, and that swarms of them are surprising the people in northern Israel. Then they go on and on promoting their idea that these vultures have been created by God in preparation for this Great Supper of God, so there will be enough birds to take care of the vast number of corpses slain in this great battle. How trivial are these wild guesses (in recent years we have not heard anything more about the increase of vultures in Israel) compared with the deep *spiritual meaning* of the Revelation! Had the writer of this pamphlet only looked at the preceding chapter he would have found feathered fowl enough to expose the folly of his literal interpretation and his wild guesses to boot. He would have read these meaningful words: *“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird”* (Rev. 18:2). There the unclean, scavenger birds are related to devils and unclean spirits, signifying the *false doctrines* and *religious spirits* within the religious systems of Babylon the Great! Our Canadian friend therefore errors on two primary facts of John’s vision. First, he concludes that the birds in the vision are *one new breed of vulture*, whereas he overlooks the plain statement of the passage that not one variety of predatory birds assembles for the feast on the battlefield, but *“all the fowls which fly in the midst of heaven.”* Second, he fails to see the connection between the “unclean birds” of chapter eighteen, which are *spiritual entities*, and the deep *spiritual meaning* of the *spiritual warfare* which slays and consumes the “flesh” of the carnal man!

The fallacious nature of these far-fetched and sensational expectations concerning the conflict on this fearful field, is exposed immediately by the verses we have studied already from chapter nineteen, which almost all Bible students overlook. The battle is not an earthly battle at all! It is a *spiritual battle* fought with the *spiritual weapon* of the *Living Word of God!* The horses are *symbols*, the white garments are *symbols*, the blood splattered on Christ’s garment is a *symbol*, the sword out of Christ’s mouth is a *symbol*, the winepress is a *symbol* — therefore, can we not see that the angel standing in the sun is likewise a *symbol*, the scavenger birds of heaven are *symbols*, and the flesh of all the men they consume is also a *symbol*!

So how does the battle end? With the wings of vision John leaps across the centuries — how fast he has traveled down the vistas of time and the unfolding purposes of God, he does not know — but standing at the consummation of the age, he sees “The Great Supper of God,” where the beast, the beast “out of the sea,” the whole world system of man, and the false prophet, the “beast out of the earth,” the entire religious systems of man, are brought to their final end. The very “flesh,” that is, the “flesh nature” of the old Adamic man, the carnal mind, with all his inventions, pride, and power, is totally consumed. The last battle for the deliverance and transformation of humanity has been fought. The struggle is over. The victory is won. Just

across the hill is the dawn of a new and glorious day for the whole world! There are a few more scenes, in chapter twenty, elaborating on this destruction of the old, and then the glorious city of God shines its glory for all the nations to walk in light, and *all things are made new!* This, my beloved, IS ***the revelation of Jesus Christ!***

Another thought about this great supper. When God prepares a supper He always invites guests. “*Blessed* are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” An angel from heaven voices that, and an angel standing in the scorching sun issues this: “Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.” Every man is accepting one or the other of these invitations! So is every church, every community, every state or province, and every nation! All will be guests at one or the other of these two suppers. Those who respond to the invitation to the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” will be *blessed* and will be glad and rejoice, and will give honor unto Him. Those who reject it go ultimately to the “Great Supper of God” and are saved “*though as by fire*” (I Cor. 3:15). For you see, the “supper” of the Lamb is the result of a *union*, whereas the “supper” of the great God is the result of a *deadly warfare!*

In scripture, the word *flesh* has more than one meaning. For example, in Genesis 6:12 it denotes *humanity*; in Job 19:25 and Ephesians 5:28-29 it refers to the *physical body*; and in I Corinthians 3:1-3 it refers to the *self-life* along with all the desires, passions, and lusts of the carnal nature. When we speak of the flesh in this message, it is used in this last sense. The distinction between the self-life (flesh) and the life of the spirit can be found in the epistle to the Romans where Paul writes, “Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot; and those who live in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:5-8). Let us note that the mind of the flesh not only refuses to submit to God but it also opposes Him. The flesh is both self-willed and self-centered. It has to have its own way! And that way is the way of sin and death!

You will understand a great mystery when you understand that many have already attended one or the other of these suppers! You see, beloved, these are *spiritual realities, spiritual experiences* — not merely dates on the calendar! But what does it say to us? First, that Christ is continually judging and making war in righteousness. He repeatedly does this as His dealings come into men’s lives. And secondly, we can see the result of His judgment and warfare — DEAD FLESH! And He then calls in the flesh-eaters of the heavens, out of a spiritual dimension where they always fly, and they come to pick the bones clean until there is NO MORE FLESH! We know from the Old Testament, to give one’s flesh to the birds of heaven for meat is expressive of the most complete defeat and shameful subjection of the enemy possible. So here, the Lord is to have the victory, complete and final victory! The “flesh” of the Adamic man will be done away, and only the man of “spirit” in the image of God will remain! The flesh of *all men* will be consumed! These birds, these vultures will keep eating away at your fleshliness. In everything that creeps up in your life, these vultures will keep after you and will never leave you alone until there is no more flesh left upon your spiritual bones. That is both the worse thing and the best thing! Oh, what a wonder — what a victory! And we are told in verse twenty-one that “all the fowls were filled with their flesh,” implying that there will come an end to the need for these flesh-consumers.

Let us see how this is! There was a man in the church at Corinth in the days of the early apostles who was a fornicator, not an ordinary fornicator, but was living in open sin by carrying on an incestuous relationship with his unbelieving step-mother, and justifying himself in it. He was puffed up in his sin and would not repent, but sought to contaminate all the saints with his uncleanness in the flesh. After rebuking the Corinthians for tolerating this man’s flagrant behavior, the apostle Paul sent this man to the Great Supper of God! Oh, yes, he did! He commanded the saints, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan **for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved...**” (I Cor. 5:1-5). Ah, when this man

got onto Satan's territory the unclean fowls, the carrion-eating birds **consumed his flesh** so that the Spirit of the Lord could then deal with his spirit **unto salvation!** That is the mystery.

Satan, taking advantage of the weakness of the flesh, had enticed this man to sin. So God would now *use Satan* for the salvation or release of his spirit by allowing Satan to destroy his flesh! Since God's love is a love that seeks the salvation of all men, divine judgment is never vindictive, but always *remedial*. Paul spoke of it this way, "The grace of God has appeared *for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions,, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*" (Titus 2:11-12). The apostle Peter, informed by Jesus that Satan had desired him in order to sift him as wheat, the Lord added, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter refused to heed the warning by insisting, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!" But he was told, "Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you three times deny that you even know me." Let us note that Jesus did not pray that Peter be spared, but that his faith would not fail. Handed over to Satan, he was tried, but as a result of that sifting the *arrogance and self-confidence of his flesh was destroyed*, after which he was used by the Lord in greater and greater measures for the blessing of multitudes. As one who had experienced the destruction of his flesh and the salvation or release of his spirit, Peter writes, "Whoever has suffered in the flesh (self-life) has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of his time in the flesh (body) no longer in the lusts of men but by the will of God" (I Pet. 4:1-2).

Jesus declared, "The *thief* cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). Out of God's own mouth proceeds the assertion, "*I have created the waster to destroy*" (Isa. 54:16). We gather from this passage that Satan is a created entity with a definite purpose. That purpose is revealed in the opening words of the above quoted verse: "*I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument* for his work." That instrument is for the work of destruction, for the waster was created *to destroy!* The "smith" that "bloweth upon the fire" is also the one that heats the furnace seven times hotter! "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the *fiery trial* which is to *try you*, as though some strange thing had happened unto you" (I Pet. 4:12). Our trials and testings are associated in the word of God with the ministry of Satan. You never thought of Satan having a *ministry?* "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be *tempted (tested) of the devil*. And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Mat. 4:1-3). "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, *that ye may be tried...be thou faithful...and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. 2:10). "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, *Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:* but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Lk. 22:31-32). "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary (sparring partner, opponent) the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, *seeking whom he may devour:* whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same *afflictions* are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Pet. 5:8-9). We flounder a bit in our understanding of these things, but as time passes by and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that **God created Satan; He created him for a purpose; and that God is involved when Satan desires to have us to test us, and it is God Himself who turns us over into Satan's hands for that testing; and the result of the testing and the furnace of affliction is our strengthening, maturity, and victory!** That, my beloved, is the God-ordained work or *ministry* of Satan!

Armed with this understanding, in the light that the Spirit brings we can discern the true meaning of the momentary processing of God in our lives, and the glory that follows. As our friend, Connie Asbill, has written, "God is constructing a temple, made of living stones, through which to manifest Himself throughout the ages to come, and Satan was created as a chisel and hammer to be used in the construction of this building. The living stones that are even now being placed in this temple have been chosen, says the Lord, in the 'furnace of affliction' (Isa. 48:10). God, however, is mercy; God is love; God is compassion. He is a healer, not a destroyer. It was,

nonetheless, necessary that an oven be heated in which to purify the gold — a furnace in which the wood, the hay, and the stubble were to be burned — but God, in His nature of love, could not Himself perform the necessary affliction. It was for this reason that He created *an instrument* that was capable of performing this essential action in the lives of men, for in Satan God literally created a *chastening rod*. If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes’ (Ps. 119:7). Praise God! When we begin to see the *good* that comes from the assaults of Satan on our lives, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind. He is truly a God of might and power, and *all things* are in His hand — even the adversary whom we call the devil!”

Did you notice how strangely both Matthew and Mark speak of Christ’s temptation? “And immediately the Spirit drove *Him* into the wilderness to *be tempted of the devil*.” What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God literally *drives* the sinless Son of God into the wilderness for the express purpose of being tempted or tested by Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the firstborn Son to be *proven*, to be *strong*, to demonstrate His ability to *overcome* in these realms before entering into His glorious ministry and before facing the death of the cross. Truly God creates evil and uses it, too, for His purpose and glory! “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. *I the Lord do all these things*” (Isa. 45:7).

The apostle Paul fully understood this great truth and practiced it himself. We have already noted how he instructed the saints in Corinth to gather in the power of the Holy Spirit and turn a certain one over to Satan *for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved*. He also declares in his letter to the evangelist Timothy that he himself had delivered certain brethren unto Satan “that they may learn not to blaspheme” (I Tim. 1:20). But the apostle had experienced something of this kind of discipline in his own life also, for he says, “Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, *the messenger of Satan to buffet me*, lest I should be exalted above measure” (II Cor. 12:7). I don’t think the average Christian today is even aware that such passages are in the Bible! All this clearly shows that Satan is a force created by God, and controlled by God, for a specific purpose and work, and even that work shall result in blessing for God’s children and redound to the glory of God!

Using typical, mystical language, John is describing the *end of all flesh*. This is not a vision of the savage destruction of all the rebellious sinners in the world, as the carnal-minded “theologians” would have us believe! This is a description of the destruction of the Adamic flesh with all its propensity for sin and its powers of death. It is the flesh, or the carnal, sinful, Adamic nature, the “natural man” within all of us that is being destroyed here! This is not a prophecy of the destruction of all the evil men in the world, for God has already promised the salvation of all mankind! Therefore, all wicked people will not be destroyed, but all *flesh*, that is, all the evil, all the wickedness, and all the carnality *in every man* will be destroyed! That is the event John saw in *symbol* in his vision of the Christ’s warfare. Each one of us are two people within ourselves. We are flesh and we are spirit! One “man” in us is flesh, a natural man, the son of Adam. The other “Man” in us is spirit, a spiritual man, the offspring of God! Throughout the scriptures we find many typical representations of the destruction of the man of flesh, or the fleshly part of every man that is under judgment.

Those who now come to Christ and walk in the spirit are enabled to “put off” the old man with His deeds. We reckon ourselves indeed to be “dead” unto sin and “alive” unto God! The sword of the Spirit works a mighty deliverance in us by faith! As we saw above in the experience of the fornicator in the Corinthian church, not all believers yield to the control of the life of Christ within. The question follows — what happens to the believer who persists in walking after the flesh? This is a most natural question and one which can be answered easily both from scripture and from experience. If a believer refuses to yield to the Christ life within, the two-edged sword of

the Lord *cuts deep*. It is a sharp sword and leaves the soul sore when it cuts. There is a chastisement that the scripture speaks of, and a chastisement we are all familiar with because of refusing to yield to His regal authority! He rebukes and chastens because He loves, and because He has chosen us for higher things in Him. He will proceed to the most desperate actions against body and soul in order to raise up the spirit. It is better that our flesh should smart than that our spirit should never be released to live its life! He does these things not to destroy but to save, and to bring the one whom He loves to the highest and holiest place. It is true that we do not always look at chastisement in that way. But it is blessed when we do! Like the Psalmist we shall find that even the rod is a comforting instrument!

Some years ago a brother shared a vision the Lord gave him and I will quote only the latter part of it. He wrote, "And then, not the very last, but one of the last things that I saw was a **HUGE DOOR**. It was high; I could not tell how high it reached. It was a huge door and the door was overlaid with gold. And in the door it had a design; and I thought that the design was like a vine; and on the vine I thought there were grapes or some kind of fruit growing, and these were gold.

"The door wasn't closed, but was opened only a little. Out of the opening were coming beams or rays of light — I knew that it was Heaven. I knew it was God's glory, and I could hear the angels, at least I thought it was the angels I heard singing. It could have been the saints and the angels both singing, but I could hear the most beautiful music that was coming through that door. At first it was awesome to see something so marvelous and glorious! You know, I just rejoiced in my heart after seeing all the other things that I saw, and I thought, 'Well, this is marvelous!' But suddenly it hit me! I said, 'Why is the door only opened that far? A body can't get through the opening. The only way to get through that would be *in the spirit*!' Then it dawned on me! 'Why is the door opened only that much (about eight or ten inches)? How would I get through? How could anyone get through?' You cannot! Flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God! This is the day of '**the end of all flesh**' (Gen. 6:13). The flesh is not going to be spared! Nothing about the natural man is going to be spared! 'No flesh shall glory in His presence.' So we will not be able to enter in through that door, friends, except ***in the spirit***. We have to be CHANGED!" — end quote.

But the rest of mankind, the "sinners" of the world, who have not through the spirit "put off" the old man, nor have they experienced the chastisements of the Lord, will have that old man of flesh *slain* through Christ's mighty warfare, and their flesh will be consumed away from them on the battlefield of God! Whether through "putting off" or by "warfare," one day we shall all — every man — be eternally FREE of this sinful "man" of the flesh that lurks within us working all unrighteousness. Then, all will live a New Life, which is the fullness of the Life of Christ, in the new earth, and under the new heavens, which are to come! Isn't it wonderful!

The banquet to which the fowls are called is indeed a banquet of *flesh*. The word "flesh" is repeated five times in the eighteenth verse! This repetition of the word flesh occurring five times over — flesh, *flesh*, **flesh**, **FLESH**, **F-L-E-S-H** — is truly revealing and instructive! All men have walked in carnal enmity against God, living and walking after the flesh, and now the day of God's dealing is at hand. The Holy Spirit included this vision of John in the last book of written scripture to remind us how revolting and nauseating to Him are the deeds of the flesh! Dead, rotting, stinking meat! Men who live in the flesh will have their flesh destroyed! This is an invitation to the carrion-eating fowls to a banquet on earth where they will have blue ribbon flesh to eat!

All this is the glorious *result* of the great battle when the Corporate Christ rides out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord upon the white horses of spiritual conquest! A similar scene is seen in the prophecies of Zechariah where he describes the Lord coming to fight against the nations and His feet stand upon the mount of Olives. There are many precious and beautiful truths here, but no time to explore them at present. There is never time nor space to consider these blessed truths as we would love to consider them! But it may be clearly seen that when the Lord's "feet" (the "feet company" of His body) stand upon the symbolic "mount of Olives" (the *Anointed Kingdom*), it is also a day of battle, for in the same hour WAR BREAKS OUT! "Then

shall the Lord go forth and ***fight*** against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And ***His feet*** shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints (holy ones, sons of God) with Thee" (Zech. 14:3-5).

The apocalyptic description of the Christ setting His feet on the mount of Olives and engaging in fierce warfare with all the nations that have come against Jerusalem, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. How utterly uncharacteristic of our precious Saviour that would be! "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; ***their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth***" (Zech. 14:12). Sounds ominous, doesn't it? Atomic war, perhaps? NO! There are deep mysteries and profound realities in these significant words which the veil of the carnal mind has hidden from our eyes. When the Spirit of God draws aside the curtain of human tradition and carnal-minded interpretation and shines His light of inspiration and revelation into the dark recesses of the understanding, all is made clear.

Three beautiful spiritual principles emerge from the letter of the Word: (1) their ***flesh*** shall consume away (2) their ***eyes*** shall consume away (3) their ***tongues*** shall consume away. When the truth of this dawns like a ray of sunlight in the heart, it is a life-changing concept and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that shall come to every man who is the enemy of God that blessed experience in which HIS FLESH (self-life, carnal nature) consumes away before the blazing countenance of God's Christ; his EYES (human understanding, carnal vision) dissolve away as he leaps for wonder at the revelation that bursts upon his consciousness from the presence of the Lord; and his TONGUE (speech, confession, outward expression of the inner nature and religious belief) melts within him as the Living Word is implanted in his heart by the regenerating power of the Spirit, and from that moment grows and develops until its life consumes his old self completely and he can literally say in absolute truth, "It is not I, but Christ." Thus does God's Christ do battle! Aren't you glad!

"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be ***no rain***...this shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the nations that come not up to keep the ***feast of tabernacles***" (Zech. 14:17-18). There should be no question in the mind of anyone as to what the "rain" signifies. The prophet Hosea declared, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE shall come unto us as THE RAIN, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth" (Hos. 6:3). There is a strange and foolish tendency in man to interpret the words of God with the carnal understanding. If you will take time to meditate upon this with the spiritual mind it will become clear that the "rain" in both passages quoted above is the VERY SAME RAIN. It is not the natural rain from the sky that is withheld from those nations or peoples which fail to follow on to know the Lord in His fullness in the ***feast of Tabernacles***, but the glorious RAIN OF HIS SPIRIT — the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God! And in this new order of the kingdom the rain of God is no longer found in the feast of Passover, nor in the feast of Pentecost, but *only* in the ***feast of Tabernacles!*** In that day no one will take pride in being a "Fundamentalist," or an "Evangelical," or a "Pentecostal," or a "Charismatic"! Those who will not enter on in to this feast, the feast of Tabernacles — upon them shall be NO RAIN, for the blessings and benefits of the kingdom realm of God can only be experienced in this final feast of HIS FULLNESS! What a word that is!

You will never know the full import of this prophecy until you know that the Jerusalem to which the nations are called is not the natural and earthly Jerusalem over in the nation of Israel, but the Jerusalem which is above, even that NEW JERUSALEM that descends out of God from heaven. The earthly Jerusalem is done away. All the prophets prophesied that God would raise up in the earth a New Jerusalem, a city of praise, a fully redeemed people for the Lord. We are looking forward with great anticipation to God's kingdom dealings with all the nations and peoples of earth! Humanity is thirsting for that rain which *He is*, for these living waters from heaven! Let us not sell creation short. The rain of the kingdom can come only from the feast of

Tabernacles and from the New Jerusalem! God is calling a people in this day to move into this new place in Him, to **be** His *feast* and His *city*. Arise, saints of God, and come away with the enChristed to the holy Mount of God, the Kingdom of the Anointing, the FULLNESS OF GOD! The glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed by this overcoming company. Sin, sickness, limitation, and death shall have no more claim on them. They shall be **even as** their Lord and Master when He walked the earth and ministered among men. Only more! For they shall arise in the power of *His resurrection!* We can easily understand, therefore, how the glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed in power and great glory throughout the whole earth. There will not be a country, city, village, or hamlet anywhere on earth that will be closed to the manifest sons of God or to this *gospel of the kingdom*. Aren't you glad!

# Chapter 215

## Spiritual Warfare (continued)

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them which worshipped his image. These *both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*" (Rev. 19:19-20).

As we walk through the wilderness of the world there are two entities that we meet — two adversaries that confront us on every hand — the *beast* and the *false prophet*. We first meet them in chapter thirteen of the Revelation. Individually and inwardly, the *beast* is the bestial nature of the natural man of flesh. Corporately, the *beast* is the monster out of the sea of humanity with its ten horns and seven heads — the whole bestial world system of man, invented and produced out of the bestial nature of man. This includes all human governments and institutions of every kind, commercial, educational, philosophical, medical, social, military, etc. It is the dragon in man who gives the beast out of the sea of humanity his seat and great authority!

The *false prophet* is the same as the second beast in chapter thirteen of the Revelation, who comes up out of the earth and *deceives* them that dwell in the earth-realm. Therefore we understand that the second beast is also called — ***the false prophet!*** The first beast comes out of the sea of all humanity, whereas the second beast comes up out of the *earth* of man's soulical powers, who has two horns as a lamb, but speaks like a dragon — the innate soulical religious nature of man expressed through the carnal church systems of man. Individually and inwardly, the *false prophet* is man's own soulical powers which usurp the place, life, and voice of the spirit. Corporately, it is the soulish man-made church system which has the appearance of the Lamb of God, but speaks with the worldly voice, methods, and ways of the dragon.

What is a prophet? We must banish from our minds the popular conception that a prophet is chiefly a person who foretells the future. True, a prophet may also foretell the future, but the prophetic ministry is much broader than that. A prophet is, according to scripture, one who speaks for someone else. Aaron is called the "prophet" of Moses when they two go together before Pharaoh, and Aaron delivers the message to Pharaoh on behalf of Moses the stutterer. And that is why all the prophets of God have prefaced their prophecies with the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord!" They are men who speak *for God*, delivering His message to the people, appealing to the minds and hearts of men on behalf of God and His purposes. They speak and teach and reveal the will of God and draw men to embrace that which is the mind of the Lord.

So this second beast is also a prophet! He speaks for someone else. His purpose is to influence the minds of men, to persuade them, to rally them to the cause on behalf of which he speaks. But he is a *false prophet!* That does not mean that everything he says is a lie — not all that the serpent told mother Eve in the garden was a lie — but it was truth laced with just enough error to deceive, and that deception was deadly! That is the purpose of the words of a false prophet — deception! And if we consider this in relation to this second beast, we shall find that this in reality is his character. In the first place, his very appearance is deceiving. He has two horns like a lamb; He looks like a lamb; and one would receive the impression, therefore, that every word he speaks is the word of the only lamb that appears in the book of Revelation, the Lamb of God! But when he opens his mouth, lo, and behold, he speaks like the dragon, that is, the message he bears has some truth in it, but it is not in the final analysis the *gospel*, the *good news* of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; who has reconciled the world unto Himself; who is *not willing* that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance;

who has promised to draw *all men* unto Himself; who came not to condemn the world, but that *the world* through Him might be saved, and who is in very fact THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD! But this beautiful gospel, this good news, is laced with the continual drumbeat of *bad news* of threats, intimidation, fear, condemnation, coercion, judgment, hell, and eternal damnation of the vast majority of mankind!

What beast is this that appears as a lamb, but speaks like a dragon? Ah, this refers to the false church, one that outwardly looks like the church of Christ, but His voice is not the voice of the Lamb, but that of the dragon. Today, in the church systems of man the dragon's voice can be heard out of the mouths of multitudes of pastors, evangelists, and church leaders of all kinds! They carry Bibles, they have pictures of Jesus, they sing songs of worship, they speak of Jesus and the gospel, they have "church" written on their signs and their buildings, they perform religious forms, rituals, ceremonies, and sacraments, and they do good works — it looks just like the Lamb! Yet as one listens there is discernible another sound, it is "another voice," the dragon's voice, and it is scary, frightening, filling men's hearts with consternation, condemnation, dread, and gloom. It makes men afraid of the God of all grace, mercy, and love. It fills their hearts with fear and condemnation. It leads millions into obedience to man-made rules and regulations, and subservience to the domination and control of the religious system, out of *fear* of God's displeasure, judgment, or eternal hell-fire and damnation. It is much more difficult for most Christians to trust God's love, mercy, grace, and His longing to bless, than it is for them to fear His condemnation, wrath, judgment, and damnation! The people are possessed by false ideas about God, distorted understandings of God's will, His ways, and His word, sinking them into apprehension, anxiety, condemnation, and horrible religious bondage and slavery. Oh, yes! This beast purports to speak for Christ, but because of its worldly means, vain traditions, empty forms and rituals, powerless ceremonies and sacraments, and multiplied false doctrines — it is a *false prophet!*

I am certain that by now my reader will have made the connection between the *false prophet* and *Mystery Babylon the Great*. It should be obvious to every thinking mind that they are one and the same, presented under different symbols with different significations. Mystery Babylon, on the one hand, represents the carnal church system as a *city* — an organized, powerful and influential **political institution**. The false prophet, on the other hand, represents the false church system as a **religious organism** — a voice speaking for God. The system is to be brought to its end in both respects! The destruction of Mystery Babylon, the city, is accomplished under the figures of utterly burning her with fire and casting her into the depths of the sea, never to be seen again. It denotes nothing more than her complete and eternal ruin — absolute, irreversible destruction!

The end of the false prophet, however, comes about in a little different manner. He is cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. The terminology is very precise, of which we will speak more later. But these two prophetic pictures reveal the great truth that the **church system** will be **destroyed**, it will no longer exist as a **religious organism** nor appear in the earth as the **mouthpiece of God** — from that role it will vanish from the face of the earth! But the *living* people, the *ministries* of those who truly loved God and sought to serve Him with a pure heart, the *spiritual* voice that did in some measure speak within the system will be cast into the refining fires of God to be PURGED, PURIFIED, and REFINED! That is the difference. As a worldly political institution in league with the human governments of man the church system will be utterly burned with fire and cast into the depths of the sea, never to rise any more. But as a *living organism* it will cleansed, corrected, delivered, purified, and refined as gold is refined in the furnace!

Let us consider with care the order of events we see in this portion of the Revelation. This is all so very vital to our understanding of the purpose and working of God in these days! In chapters seventeen and eighteen of the Revelation we are shown the destruction of Mystery Babylon the Great. Immediately following that, in the first verses of chapter nineteen, we see the virgin bride of the Lamb displayed at her wedding, entering into her ultimate union and glory with Christ the

Lord. Babylon is gone, and the true bride is joined fully to the Lord. But the beast of world government still exists as well as the false prophet — the spiritual ministries that previously were in Babylon. In the chapters before us God deals with the nations and the nations are saved and made to walk in the light of the city of God — which is the bride of the Lamb and the sons of God as GOD'S GOVERNMENT REVEALED ON EARTH. Before the New Jerusalem can be revealed in all its glory, and before the nations can be saved to walk in the light of it, something wonderful must happen! God must deal with both *human government* and the *false prophet!* So, what does He do? The answer is not far to be found! It's right here in our text. "*And the beast (of human government) was taken, and with him the false prophet (the church as a religious organism) that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. THESE BOTH WERE CAST ALIVE INTO A LAKE OF FIRE BURNING WITH BRIMSTONE.*" Oh, the mystery of it! Can you not see by these words that God will judge, purge, refine, purify, and transform both the governments of the world and the church which dwelt in Babylon! Neither of these are "burnt up" in the fire as Babylon was — rather, they are cast **alive** into the fire until the work of elimination of all the dross — the impurities, the contamination, the pollution, the adulteration, the uncleanness, the unchasteness, the worldliness, and the deception — is complete and an entirely new order is brought forth! What a plan!

Thus we come to consider that awe-inspiring term — "the lake of fire." It will prove helpful to our understanding of this great truth for us to look again for a moment at the work of fire throughout the book of Revelation. In the very first chapter we find the glorious Christ standing in the midst of the churches and "His eyes are as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14). The Christ's eyes of fire, and the eyes of fire of every son of God who shares His glory, are eyes of the very same fire that is revealed throughout the Revelation. There are not two or five or ten different fires! There are His eyes of fire, and there is gold that is tried (refined) in the fire (Rev. 3:18), and it is the *same* fire, the fire of God! The fire of the golden altar which is cast into the earth is the same holy, refining fire of God and when it is cast into the earth mighty commotions take place! The fire of the golden altar is, of course, taken from the fire on the brazen altar, and this is the fire that was kindled by God Himself — it is *His divine fire*, the consuming fire which *He is!* By that fire all carnality is consumed from the sons of men, that God may be glorified in the earth-realm even as He is in the heavenlies! There are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God (Rev. 4:5), so we know that this is the same divine fire. These seven spirits (lamps of fire) of God are also "sent forth into *all the earth*." Is it not clear that the work of the seven lamps of fire sent into "all the earth" is but another picture of the fire from the altar that is "cast into the earth"? It is the same fire! And as a lamp of fire, on this occasion it brings *spiritual illumination* by consuming the veil that lies over men's minds and hearts. The Lamb has seven eyes and the seven eyes are the seven-fold spirit of God, thus they are likewise the eyes of fire which are also the seven lamps burning before the throne! (Rev. 5:6).

You see, it is all the same fire of God in different administrations! There is a sea of glass mingled with fire (Rev. 15:12), a people who have become within themselves an untroubled sea of tranquility, peace, and transparency, made so by the processing fire of God. All the restlessness and agitation of the carnal mind and the flesh have been burned out of them! There is fire that is cast out of the heavens of God's Spirit upon the earth and burns up the trees that grow out of the earth (Rev. 8:7), consuming the carnal manifestations and works that grow out of the earthly, fleshly nature. There is a fire that destroys the worldly organization and sham of Mystery Babylon (Rev. 18:8), not consuming the people or any true ministry, but destroying the apostate system that enslaves them.

Then we are shown a great lake of fire for all the adversaries of God — death, hell, the beastly fleshly nature, and the world system it creates; the soulical powers of man, and the religious systems (false prophet) it spawns; and all who are incorrigible in iniquity (Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10-15). What are we meant to understand by this lake which burns with fire and brimstone? We know only too well the use the church systems have made of this conception through the ages! It has been given some horrific connotations and has been employed to create a distorted view

of the character and purpose of God. The crude idea that an all-wise, all-knowing, all-righteous, and all-loving Creator would create men whom He knew before hand would follow the paths of sin and death, and before hand decree endless torture in unending flames for all of His creatures who are deceived and become captives of sin and self, does dishonor to the name and glory of our precious Lord Jesus Christ; and it is incredible that the compassionate Saviour of mankind could ever have intended for us to read into His words the macabre notion that He will use that wonderful Holy Ghost fire of His glorious Person to torture billions of souls throughout endless eternity!

The consuming fire of God is as eternal as God Himself — it is, because *He is!* “Our God IS a consuming fire.” It is that which was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Our Father dwells in the light that no man can approach unto. *No man!* That is, no *carnal, fleshly, Adamic nature or being!* Who shall stand when He appeareth, for He is like a *refiner's fire!* Oh, if there be one thing for which we ought to rejoice and praise God without ceasing, it is that eternal fire which will burn up all the foulness and rottenness, all the wickedness and cruelty, all the deception, shame, and wrong from which our souls have ever suffered. It is not evil which will have the last word, but righteousness; not sorrow, but joy; not hate, but love; not death, but life; not damnation, but salvation! When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, heaven is there. When any other spirit is dominant, hell is there. It is not God who changes when we pass from one to the other, it is we who are changed by the eternal fire! When all that has held us captive in chains of darkness is consumed by the fire of His love and holiness, we see Him as He is and reality breaks forth!

God has created everything with which our senses make us familiar with a far deeper purpose than merely their recognition by those senses. These are but the external court; for their real meaning one must enter the Sanctuary itself; let the divine light that shines there teach us. All nature is a book of parables! From sun, moon, and stars, down to the smallest creeping thing, all have a voice to an ear that is opened to hear, and all witness to invisible, spiritual, eternal verities. Our blessed Saviour, in the days of His sojourn here, dealt much with this book of nature, and taught most precious lessons from it.

So here in our text the figure is used of a Lake of Fire. Why a Lake? The idea in the word is repression, confinement; and, like that Dead Sea, that seems so strangely, yet perfectly to figure it, *there is no outlet!* What flows in there is brought to the end of its journey, it cannot go any further. Whatever is going to happen to it, happens *there*. It cannot happen any place else or by any other operation. Only one thing *can* happen to it! As the water of that great Sea evaporates, is lifted into the heavens, kissed and drawn by the eternal rays of the fiery, blazing sun which alone has the power to lift it, it *leaves behind* in the Sea of Death every impurity and contaminant it possessed. What comes forth from that mystical process is *pure, distilled water*. It is a similar process to the refining of silver and gold and other precious metals. It signifies in its symbolism the process of PURIFICATION. And that, my beloved, is the Lake!

Away back in the 1600's John Everard, an anointed vessel of the Lord in London, England, spoke the following beautiful and instructive words of truth:

“My beloved, now that you are here gathered together in this place, I beseech you hearken diligently to what shall now be spoken. I will use no other preface than a word or two from that saying of our Saviour in the parallel place to this, Luke 14:35, from which He makes this conclusion: *he that has ears to hear, let him hear!* Let him now hear the word of Him by whom he shall be judged in that great day. Let him now hearken to that word which shall certainly one day, either sooner or later, rise up in judgment against him. Let him hearken to the word of Him who spoke as *never man spoke*; for His words are like the wine He made at Cana — there are no words like His words — for the best words that ever man spoke had somewhat of self and carnal ends in them. But in *His* words there is no tincture, no concourse of the creature, no allays of human weakness, but they are all words of grace, and peace, the words of spirit and life; insomuch that all who heard Him wondered at *the gracious words that proceeded from His*

*lips; who, in all His words never sought Himself, nor His own glory (as men do), but the glory of Him that sent Him.*

"No, hearken I pray you, to His word that could have spoken far beyond all that ever He has spoken, had He but had auditors fit to have heard and understood Him. I beseech you therefore, silence yourselves for a while, I mean your own wit and reason, and your own blind religious understandings, *and let there be silence in heaven for half an hour*, that all things may be still and quiet within you, that you may learn to know what it is to have salt in yourselves, that you may have salt in you, that you be not spit out of God's mouth as unsavory and loathsome to His stomach. It were far better you never heard, than that those words should be unprofitable to you.

*"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: for it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith shall ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another"* (Mk. 9:47-50).

"The things that I intend to open to you and answer, are these three questions: (1) What is salt? (2) What is it to have salt? (3) What is it to have salt in ourselves?

"What is salt? Christ says in my text, that everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. We must first find out what fire is, and then we shall know what salt is. This fire without any doubt is Christ Himself and that very properly, as you may see He is so called, '*The light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His holy one for a flame: and it shall burn and devour His thorns and His briars in one day*' (Isa. 10:17). In these words He, the holy one of Israel, is fire in three regards: (1) of burning (2) of heat (3) of light.

"First, the nature of fire is to burn. Fire cannot burn itself — take note of that — fire cannot burn fire, but all things else it will burn and consume. So does Christ! He is that fire that burns up all our works, all whatsoever that is of man's building, and whatsoever is not of Himself and His own work **in us**. All else He consumes and annihilates. '*The light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His holy one for a flame: and it shall burn and devour His thorns and His briars in one day*' Know this, the more sin and carnality, the more fire, the greater the burning; the more sin and carnality the more fuel, the more matter for this fire; the more sin and carnality the more treasuring up of wrath against that day, when the wrath of God shall be revealed by fire. '*Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap*' (Mal. 3:2). Then Christ **is** this fire! And let me tell you, this burning and consuming is for your good; it is, that out of the ashes of the old man, which must be burnt up, you may have a new life, a divine resurrection!

"Examine yourself, has this fire burnt up all your works, not only gross and external wickedness, but has it burnt up all your secret sins, all your beloved and darling desires? Has it cut off your hands and feet, and plucked out your eye? Has it consumed your young men, your own strength and zeal, as the prophet speaks? Ah, has it burnt up the *old heavens* and the *old earth*, so that you may enjoy a *new heaven* and a *new earth*? (II Pet. 3:10-13). Nay, further, let me ask you, have you thrown out all your gods into the fire? Has it burnt up all your idols? If it has, I tell you, this burning is not unto death, but unto life. But be sure, that as the Lord Jesus Christ burns up and destroys, so He remakes and raises up again; and as He wounds, so He heals and makes alive again!

"Secondly, the work of fire is to heat. So Christ, after he has destroyed and burnt up all our actions, as they are ours and not His, then He breathes into us a gentle warmth and heat of His own Spirit to cherish and revive us again, so that we may no longer live our own lives, or live to ourselves, but live the life of Christ, to raise up His grace and glory in us.

"Thirdly, the nature of fire is to give light. When that day once dawns to us, that Christ comes into the soul, we shall find that He brings light with Him, and this in scripture is called *Christ's*

Day, and this is a wonderful day indeed, a day of rejoicing even unto eternity. Our first day is our own day, man's day, and when Christ comes to burn up our day it seems to us as a day of darkness, a day of gloominess and thick clouds (Joel 2:11). Indeed to flesh and blood the Day of the Lord is a terrible day, our flesh trembles for fear of Him; for who shall abide the day of His coming, or stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire! When Christ comes into the soul, He comes not only with light to discover, but like fire to burn up all that building that we have made to ourselves, that which we have raised by our own power, and then breathes warmly and gently by His Spirit His own life, until by degrees He brings a glorious light into the soul. He then turns us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:10).

"Yes, He shines such a light of grace and glory, as makes '*the light of the moon as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven times brighter*' (Isa. 30:26). As our own lives extinguish, so Christ's life increases, just as the prophet Elisha did when he raised the Shunammite's child. 'He lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm...and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes...' (II Kings 4:34-35). In the same manner we receive warmth from Christ, and are raised to life again, and are made *partakers of His divine nature*, even as a graft in a crab tree stock changes the whole nature of the old tree, both sap, leaves, bark, and fruit; so does Christ in union with our soul change our nature — He changes them into His own!

"And thus you see in brief what *fire* is! '*Our God is a consuming fire*' (Heb. 12:29). Christ is the fire! But now, what is the *salt*? I know it is taken and expounded in divers ways. Some take it to be wisdom and discretion in speech, and for proof they cite that place of the apostle where he says, '*Let your speech be always seasoned with salt*' (Col. 4:6). For so Solomon says, '*A wise man may hold up his head before princes*' (Prov. 16:13; Eccl. 8:1). They give this reason, as salt preserves and keeps things from stinking, so does wisdom so salt, and season a man's words, that they may not be unsavory to wise men, so that he is not laughed to scorn. We cannot deny that.

"Others take salt to mean holiness and sincerity in life as our Saviour says, '*Ye are the salt of the earth*' (Mat. 5:13). That is, they say, when by their living, and their speaking the truth in their words, and dealing justly and uprightly with men, and expressing holiness in all their actions towards God, this seasons their lives, this makes them savory before God and men, the salt of the earth seasoning all. So they interpret the words of our Saviour, '*Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men*' (Mat. 5:13). When men live not as they profess, they are unsavory, and men tread and trample such men's profession as dirty and loathsome. To make a show of that which is not, is hateful to God and men, but sincerity and integrity are savory to both; and therefore, say they, He admonishes them to strive for sound doctrine, integrity of life, constancy in suffering; for these things honor their profession, and this seasons them with salt, and makes them savory to God and men. Their interpretation is good, I reject it not.

"But to be short, that we may come to the matter at hand, the fire and the salt are both one, '**...for everyone shall be SALTED WITH FIRE.**' Christ Himself is *the fire*, as we have shown already, so therefore He is also the *salt*. Since every man shall be *salted with fire* Christ has to be both the salt and the fire! So Jesus Christ is the fire that salts every man; yea, HE IS BOTH!

"Yet I confess that the apostles were also called salt, as Christ also said, '*Ye are the salt of the earth.*' Not that they were salt within themselves or the salt indeed, but were those who lived the Christ-life, the life of Him who is salt. They were those which uttered the salt and lived the salt, which is Christ. Therefore they were not themselves the salt, but they were the instruments or ministers which Christ used to convey and impart to us the *true salt* which is Christ, and in no other regard were they *the salt of the earth*.

"And again, Christ says (in the same sense), '*Ye are the light of the world*' (Mat. 5:14). Yet John tells us plainly that '*HE is the true light, which lightens every man that cometh into the world,*' and Jesus Himself says, '*I am the light of the world*' (Jn. 8:12). So we are the light of the world only because *He* is the one who has lighted us and now shines through us as our light. So it is with Christ and us, we are only what He is in us and through us! He it was also who was typified in all the oblations and sacrifices under the law, and by all the relations, histories, and representations throughout the Old Testament; 'tis HE that is set forth and intended, that He might be made known unto the sons of men. He was *the true Paschal Lamb*, He was *the true sacrifice*, He was *that fire* that always burned upon the altar (Lev. 6:13). He also was *that salt* commanded for the sacrifice, for the salt was never to be wanting just as the fire must always burn upon the altar of sacrifice. And so our Lord says, '**For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.**' HE was *that salt* which must never be wanting; HE seasons every oblation (Lev. 2:13). HE is the salt of the everlasting covenant unto you and your seed for ever' (Num. 18:19). HE was *that salt* that *Elisha threw into the waters; and those many waters are many people*, as it is expressed in the book of Revelation. In sum, HE is *the substance, the mind, and the meaning* of the whole scriptures!

"As He is the fire, by reason of burning, and because of heat and light; so also He is the salt that sweetens and savors everything. As He is *the light that enlightens*, so He is *the salt that salts* every man. So when His fire purifies you and His salt sweetens and savors you, your sacrifice is **salted with fire** and salted with salt. So apart from Christ men's lives are unsavory, the Adamic man is unsavory as Job says, '*Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt?*' (Job 6:6). It is not your salt, not the best duties you can perform will make you savory, except they be salted and seasoned by the Christ within" — end quote.

If you think the kingdom of God is rosewater, or eau-de-cologne, you are mistaken. You cannot war on the devil with that! You cannot war on the carnal mind with that! You cannot war on the flesh with that! You cannot war on the world with that! You cannot war on religion with that! You have to make war with weapons that are mighty through God! You have to make war on the carnal mind and on the flesh nature and on all their offspring with fire, divine fire, that will burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and consume even the stones and lick up the very dust about. OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE! CHRIST IS A REFINING FIRE! He is man's "horse breaker" and He will break you, precious friend of mine, and bring you to the foot of the cross of Jesus no matter how hot He has to build the fire around you! He will cast you into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Even if long ages of fiery judgment and burning processing and tormenting darkness fall upon you, they will last no longer than till the Great Fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is of self has died and been reduced to ashes in the bloody sweat and all-conquering cross of the Christ, which will never give up its redeeming and transforming power until sin and sinners and self and carnality and man-made religiosity have no more a name among the creatures of God.

Who cast the beast and the false prophet into the Lake of Fire? John doesn't say. His description of the action simply states that "the beast **was taken**, and **with him** the false prophet...and **they were cast alive** into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." The battle was between the beast and the false prophet against Christ and all the holy sons of God riding upon the white horses; therefore, we may conclude that the sons of God, the armies out of heaven, are the ones who do the casting.

To the saints is given authority to baptize men with the Holy Ghost, but also to baptize them with **fire**, to cast them into the great lake of fire and brimstone which *our God is* and which *in Him we are*, to burn out of their minds, souls, and bodies the thoughts and ways and passions and wills that are contrary and hostile to the will of God. "In righteousness He doth **judge** and **make war.**" An act of that judgment is the casting of men into the lake of fire! The fire of God is His all-consuming LOVE. Out of His burning love the sons of God shall send decrees and commands coming from the Most High God and the Lamb out of Zion. The sons of God will send decrees to individuals, to rulers, to authorities, to institutions, to armies, to church systems,

to governments, to nations — we will even send commands to the elements as our Lord did when He spoke to the winds and the waves, hushing the gale and calming the waters with His word. Men rose up out of death and the grave, and even the demons cried out with loud voices and came out of many that were possessed of them. It is by THE LIVING WORD OF GOD, the One riding the lead horse, that all these things and many more shall be seen in the earth with great power and great glory!

## THE REMNANT SLAIN

"And the **remnant** were *slain* with the sword of Him that sat upon the white horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Rev. 19:21).

We have arrived once more at the end of a chapter. I will not comment on our text, but feel to share the words of Stephen Jones who has beautifully confirmed my own thoughts and convictions in regard to the "slaying" of the remnant, that is, the rest, the remaining ones, or those people or those things of flesh within any of us which had not been fully dealt with by God. He writes:

"In ancient times, God sent a literal sword upon Babylon by the hand of Medo-Persia toward the end of Daniel's life. However, the sword that is used in the book of Revelation is '*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*' (Eph. 6:17). This is made plain in Revelation 1:16, which says, '*out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.*' This is confirmed later in Revelation 19:5, which says, '*And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations...*' It is the same 'sword' that God used through His prophets in the Old Testament. '*Therefore have I hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light (understanding) that goes forth. For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings*' (Hos. 6:5-6).

"In other words, God 'slew' them and cut them in pieces with WORDS. Why? Because He preferred loyalty to Him rather than sacrifice. In other words, He did not want to literally kill them, so He did NOT use a physical sword. The sword He used was the *spiritual sword* described elsewhere in the New Testament. And this is the 'sword' by which He will slay the nations, as described in the book of Revelation. This tells us that His intent is NOT to shed blood, but to cause people to repent by the word of His mouth. And so, while the description is in physical terms of warfare, blood, and destruction, this is not really what God intends for the nations at all. The nations are God's *inheritance* — *and ours* (Ps. 2; Rev. 2:26-27) — so it would make no sense to destroy them! The only thing that God intends to destroy is oppressive government and false religion (the beast and the false prophet) that burdens the people today and deceives them into doing violence to others.

"Once again, let us not think of God as a torturer. The law does not specify torture as a proper judgment of divine law. The law, however, is pictured as a *fire* in Deuteronomy 33:2-3, saying, '*from His right hand went a fiery law for them...all His saints are in Thy hand.*' In other words, the 'fiery law' in God's hand is identified with the 'saints' in His hand. When the law is written on the hearts of the overcomers, they *become* His fiery law, and they become the administrators of divine justice and rulership in the earth. The fire of God comes from His right hand, the place of rulership, and all of His saints are in His hand. It pictures the overcomers as the manifested sons of God administering the divine law to the world according to the mind of Christ. This is the meaning of the 'fire' as God intended it from the beginning.

"I write these things in order to show the divine plan in the mind of God from the beginning. Only by knowing the divine plan from the beginning can we understand the end of the story in the book of Revelation, because that book tells us how God's plan succeeds after a long detour. Revelation 14:9-11 tells us that those who continue to worship the beast and his image will drink of the wine of God's judicial wrath, "*and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the*

*presence* (Greek: before the ‘face’) *of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.*’ Men have long interpreted this literally, as if God plans to torture sinners in front of Him like the kings of the beast systems have done to their opponents over the centuries. But God is not like them! In fact, it is because of their injustice and torture that God will remove them from their positions of authority over the earth. God will not have unjust tyrants ruling in His kingdom — not even Christian tyrants like King Saul or the Popes! The verse simply means that with the holy angels and the Lamb (and those with Him) present, these unrepentant people will be tormented by *their very presence!*” — end quote. What a word that is!

## About The Author

J. Preston Eby was born into a Mennonite family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. While still a toddler his parents received the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the witness of some Pentecostal brethren in the area. They were led of the Lord to sell their business and move to Alabama to do missionary work. In his twelfth year Preston was filled with the Spirit – and in that same year the Holy Spirit sovereignly unfolded to his understanding the wonderful truth of the reconciliation of all things and all men unto God. No one else around him – in family or church associations – embraced this revelation. Through those early years he kept this truth to himself and pondered it in his heart. Later he came into contact with, and was touched by, a mighty move of the Spirit known as the "Latter Rain", with emphasis on the body of Christ, gifts of the Spirit, laying on of hands, impartation, five-fold ministry, prophetic ministry, spiritual worship, the kingdom of God, and going on to perfection, unto fullness of sonship to God.

The Lord pressed him into a deeper walk with Him, intensifying within his heart the truths of sonship and the kingdom of God, already planted within as seed through the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain. Along the way he became associated with brother Gerald Derstine and The Gospel Crusade in Sarasota, Florida, serving as an associate minister with him for eight years, first co-pastoring and later pastoring the Revival Tabernacle in that city. His wife Lorain and he, with their family, were on the mission field in Latin America for a total of five years, with ministry in several other areas as well. For seven years, following this, he was an elder in a fellowship of believers in El Paso, Texas where they witnessed a precious move of the Spirit and a body of saints flowing together in the liberty and life of the Spirit.

Eventually the Lord changed even that order, and in 1976 led him into a full-time writing ministry directed to those who are called and chosen as elect of God to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ as sons of God. The writing ministry includes a monthly message titled KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES as well as a number of booklets on various subjects. This ministry is greatly expanding throughout the world and our sincere hope and earnest prayer is that this course shall redound to HIS GLORY in encouragement, strengthening, edification and blessing to unnumbered thousands of God's elect sons everywhere – that creation may at last witness the true manifestation of the sons of God, setting all creation free from the bondage of corruption, restoring all things to God, and bringing to pass the glory of the kingdom of God throughout the whole earth and unto the unbounded heavens.

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES are sent free to anyone upon request. God's Word is always free to all. God's way is, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Mat. 10:8).