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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Book Nine

The 144,000 The Angels and Plagues

By J. Preston Eby

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Chapter 159

The 144,000 On Mount Zion

There is no part of the Revelation that is more bountiful in rewards for those who pursue the high calling of God in Christ Jesus than the opening scenes of chapter fourteen. It is a garden of fruits and nuts and flowers, a display case of wondrous jewelry. It is a vast and imposing landscape, filled with beauty and grandeur, the horizon of which is fringed with the bright dawning glories of God's kingdom Day.

Here, in a manner surpassing all others, we can see the real scope and magnificence of the purpose of sonship to God. Here we can trace God's plans for His called and chosen elect to their ultimate consummation, and learn the real majesty of our destiny as sons of our Father. At every step there is something to encourage and challenge us under the trials and testings of our journey; something to confirm our faith and to fill us with glorious anticipations!

The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Revelation were designed to set before us the three great adversaries of God's apprehended ones. We have been told of the dragon, the principle and root of all evil, whether inward or outward — the carnal mind and the flesh nature — which persistently dogs all of our steps. We have been further told of the first beast, rising out of the sea of humanity, that bestial world system to whom the dragon has committed his authority and power. He is the second adversary. Lastly, we have been told of the second beast, rising out of the earth of the soulical nature, that false spirit of religion which unites itself to the world system, and which, even more cunningly opposed than the world itself to the life of the spirit, brings multitudes of the Lord's people into an even greater bondage than they might otherwise have been.

The picture thus presented, were it to stand alone, would in a most powerful way be discouraging and depressing! How we praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory that the Revelation does not end with chapter thirteen! We have only to read carefully and prayerfully the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of the Revelation to see the close and inspired connection between them. They are constructed on the same lines. They run parallel in their emphasis.

Consider some of the similarities and contrasts. "I saw a beast coming up out of the sea." "I saw a Lamb standing on mount Zion." The worshippers of the beast celebrated his greatness in a hymn of praise: "Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to make war with him?" And over against this earthly song there is an heavenly: "And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters...and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song...and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Rev. 14:2-3). It is clear that in the fourteenth chapter the Holy Spirit is drawing a companion, yet contrasting, picture to the events of the thirteenth. He sets the two companies — the followers of the beast and the followers of the Lamb — in strong and vivid contrast. The book of Revelation is full of wonderful and striking contrasts which cannot but excite the spirit of all who have ears to hear and eyes to see!

The Revelation deals with the mightiest contrast that ever existed — the contrast between Christ and Adam, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between spirituality and carnality, between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, and between God and the devil. We meet, furthermore, with the contrast between the company of the overcomers and the carnal church systems of man, between the two witnesses and the beast, between the manchild and the dragon, between the Lamb and the beastly system, between God's Christ and the kings of the earth,

between the saints and the world, and between Mystery Babylon and the holy city, New Jerusalem. Again and again this mighty contrast is painted for us in brilliant hues and vivid scenes of divine revelation! It was a dark day that John painted for the church in chapter thirteen. But follow him into the fourteenth chapter. With true dramatic inspiration he quickly shifts the scene. The shadows flee, the light of a new day rims the sky, and the glory of a new order breaks upon the horizon.

Let us note that in chapter fourteen we have a *continuation* of the symbolism begun in chapter thirteen. The fact that this has been generally overlooked has led to many dreadful errors in the interpretation of the scenes of this portion. Void of spiritual understanding the natural mind takes mount Zion in the literal sense of the word and concludes that at the end of the age, in the days of the supposed great “antichrist,” Jesus will appear on the earthly mount Zion as the defender of His people, the fleshly Israel, and will gather about Him 144,000 *flaming Jewish evangelists* in order to save Israel from the vengeance of the beast. Truly there is an *impassible gulf* between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, for the spiritual mind understands all things which concern the *things of God* and the things that pertain to the world of the spirit, whereas the fleshly mind understands only those things of the *physical realm* and interprets all things as pertaining to the outer, natural world. It must be clear to us, therefore, that John is viewing heavenly, spiritual realities and speaks of these as he sees them by the spirit — in highly symbolical language.

After the dark vision of the beast and his kingdom John now receives a bright vision of the Lamb and those who are with Him in the splendor of His glory and exaltation. And all is symbolism! Christ is denoted as the Lamb, which, however familiar, is nevertheless symbolical language. No one ever mistook the Lamb of God for a woolly, four-legged barnyard animal! Those who stand with Him are described as 144,000, as those who are not defiled with women; for they are virgins. And a wonderful song is heard out of the heavens of the spirit, which they alone can learn. The contrast is very evident. In chapter thirteen we have the picture of the beast lording it over all the earth-dwellers. Here we have the vision of the Lamb upon the dizzying heights of mount Zion, along with a great company who stand with Him in His majesty. There we have the vision of the multitudes of carnal-minded church goers who pay homage to the beast and his image; here we have the picture of the 144,000 who have gained the victory over the beast and who belong to the Lamb alone. There we found the followers of the beast and his worshippers receiving his sign on their right hands or in their foreheads; here we find that also the Lamb company has a sign — the *name of the Father* written in their foreheads! The Greek text actually reads, **“His name and His Father’s name.”** This is the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to the overcomer back in chapter three, verse twelve, **“I will write upon him the name of my God... and my new name.”** The name speaks of the nature and character, HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER raised up within us; His love, holiness, wisdom, truth — all of this is inscribed in the forehead, becoming the function of our MIND. All that we think, all that we desire, all that we manifest is the outraying of Himself — for we bear His name. **“I will put my laws (will and purpose) in their MIND, and write them in their HEARTS”** (Heb. 8:10). That is the contrast!

MOUNT ZION

“And 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). The scene of John’s vision is “the mount Zion,” that Zion so often spoken of in both the Old and the New Testament as God’s special dwelling place and the seat of His authority and rule. It is described as being beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. It is the Zion in which God “dwells,” the mount Zion which He “chose,” and which He “loved,” and “out of which salvation comes and the law of the Lord goes forth.” It is that “holy hill of Zion” upon which God set the firstborn Son as King when He said to Him, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” It is that Zion, too, to which “the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.” Finally, it is that dwelling place of which the inspired apostle, writing to the Hebrews, says, “Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of

angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:22-24)

Mountain peaks have often been used as a scaffold, lifting high many glorious experiences between God and man. On mount Moriah God met with Abraham in the greatest revelation of his life. On mount Sinai God appeared and gave the law to Moses. Mount Carmel was the scene of God’s power sending fire to consume Elijah’s sacrifice and judging the prophets of Baal. On the heights of mount Hermon the firstborn Son of God was transfigured, and from mount Olivet He ascended. In the Song of Solomon the Shulamite was called by her Beloved to come away with him to mount Bether, the mount of separation. There are numbers of other mountain-top experiences. The last to be mentioned in the scriptures is John’s vision of mount Zion. On this ultimate elevation God paints the symbol of a lamb and one hundred forty-four thousand companions, with the Father’s name in their foreheads. There have been a lot of “mountain-top experiences,” but there is no mountain that can compare with THIS MOUNTAIN, for it is a STATE OF BEING, a condition IN CHRIST. As Peter discovered on mount Hermon, the Lord never intended for us to build tabernacles and camp on any of these other mountains. We are not to settle for anything less than HIS DIVINE PERFECTIONS and HIS ULTIMATE PURPOSE. We are to be conformed to the image of His Son, we are to share His glory and sit with Him in His throne, and He brings us to that mountain. Truly this is the highest and ultimate mountain-top experience!

There are some conclusions which the Holy Spirit would mark indelibly upon our minds. One of these is the fact that the mount Zion of John’s vision is *not* the literal, physical, earthly mount Zion. Look to the Middle East, to the mount Zion in the *earthly Jerusalem*. Do we see the glorified Lamb of God standing there? Has He ever been seen standing there at any time during the past two thousand years? Absolutely not! Nor is the Lamb of God going to stand visibly again in flesh on that earthly mount Zion. Why should He? *“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched...but ye are come unto mount Zion...the heavenly Jerusalem”* (Heb. 12:18,22). Jesus Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone in the spiritual house of God raised up upon the heavenly mount Zion! *“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay IN ZION a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded”* (I Pet. 2:6). And again, *“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I declare the decree: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee”* (Ps. 2:1-7; Acts 4:25-28). To this heavenly and spiritual mount Zion come the 144,000 who “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.” Can we not see by this that the mount Zion that John saw in his vision was a “sign.” It signified, symbolized, the invisible heavenly mount Zion; and that is where the firstborn Son of God has been laid as the chief cornerstone! And it is there upon the heavenly, spiritual mount Zion that the 144,000 overcomers follow the Lamb!

How appropriate that our Lord Jesus should be standing on the heavenly, spiritual mount Zion! Why should this be? Because his forefather, King David, captured the earthly mount Zion, and the citadel upon it came to be called “the city of David” (II Sam. 5:4-9). The earthly is but the picture, the type, the shadow of the heavenly! His *standing* there indicates that He has begun to reign, that the king has taken His power. And now John beholds 144,000 following the Lamb to the summit of the heavenly, spiritual mount Zion! Fail not to observe that it is not simply “mount Zion,” but rather “*the* mount Zion,” signifying the spiritual, even the heavenly — the unique, abiding, eternal mount of the Lord. The literal, earthly mount Zion is still in the earthly Jerusalem in the land of Israel, but it is merely a type. The mount Zion of the Revelation is a ***spiritual mountain!*** This *Zion realm* IS NOT A CERTAIN GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION. But it *is in* certain geographical locations! A place *doesn’t make Zion* — Zion makes the place itself — ZION! The “place” of Zion is within a people, in

the spirit. Man doesn't create Zion, Zion is the Christ manifested in all His fullness! The new creation man has come to mount Zion. Mount Zion represents a spiritual reality and attainment that is available to us right now in the realm of the spirit! It's a spiritual place, a spiritual identity, a spiritual administration, and a spiritual state of being. Aren't you glad!

To correctly unlock the great revelation and reality of this mount Zion we need to go back and look at the shadow. Zion is a special place with distinctive associations. It was that part of Jerusalem which was considered impregnable and was held anciently by the Jebusites. After the death of Saul all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron where "King David made a covenant with them" (II Sam. 5:1-3). Following this, David and his men went to Jerusalem where "David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David" (II Sam. 5:7). It was with the deepest satisfaction that David acquired mount Zion, for it was a most strategic fortress. Immediately he built thereon a palace and many public buildings, his joy in Zion increasing with the progress of the work. David ordered that the ark of the covenant be brought to Zion from the house of Obed-Edom; and with much ceremony the ark was brought up to mount Zion and deposited in the beautiful silken tent which David had prepared for its reception, and where it remained until the building of the temple. God's presence, God's glory, God's king, God's governmental people were all concentrated on mount Zion. The Psalms of David are rich in expressions of joy and pleasure in Zion, not only on David's part, but more importantly on God's part. "*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge...let mount Zion rejoice...walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof...for this God is our God for ever and ever*" (Ps. 48). The magnificent vistas presented on all sides; the beauty of Jerusalem on the opposite hill across the valley, and beyond on the east side of Jerusalem the mount of Olives. However, Zion was more than a geographical locality, it was a combination of divinely designed ingredients which made it not only the city of David, but truly the "city of God" (Ps. 87:3).

Israel was God's land, the whole nation of His people. In Israel there was the city of Jerusalem, the capital city, the seat of government comprising all the ruling classes of various kinds and degrees. Yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, and closest associates, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king! Mount Zion is the highest mount in Jerusalem, and David the king established his throne there. His was the highest pinnacle of glory attainable. Mount Zion was the site where the power and authority of God was recognized, experienced, and manifested. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true mount Zion to which we are come in the Spirit. David was king over natural Israel. Christ is king over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells on the spiritual mount Zion. And this spiritual Zion is composed of those who in union with Christ the Head have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in the heavenly Jerusalem, those who have followed the Lord all the way to His throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). The company of 144,000 standing with their Lord upon the mount Zion can represent nothing other than those who have followed the Lamb all the way from death on mount Calvary to the glory and exaltation of mount Zion. God has but one throne, and those who are called to share that throne share it in the heights of the spiritual mount Zion. "The Lord shall reign over them in Zion, from henceforth even forever" (Mic. 4:7; Isa. 24:23). "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains (Zion), and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations" (Isa. 2:23-4). Out of Zion, out of God's Zion people, shall go forth the principles and power of God's kingdom! Not a law of external rules and regulations as Moses' law, but God's holy, righteous law, that is, His divine nature, His incorruptible law of life, even the *law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus!* Oh, the wonder of it! Jerusalem is built upon seven mountains and mount Zion is the highest of them all. The sun kisses the hill of Zion first every morning. Those who dwell on mount Zion see the light of God's *new day* before any others. When a new day dawns in God's kingdom those standing on mount Zion are the first ones to greet it. I declare to you today that a new day is now dawning.

Is it dawning in your understanding? Is it dawning in your consciousness? Is it dawning in your experience? Is it dawning in your state of being? Or is your awareness still beclouded and your vision obscured by the darkness? All who are dwelling in the high and holy realm of Zion, are hearing the voice of the Son of God! Good tidings of great things, of full salvation, of perfection of holiness and power, the reign of Christ, and the peace of the kingdom of God, are now being declared in Zion. “For the Lord hath *chosen* Zion; He hath *desired* it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Ps. 132:13-14). Ray Prinzing commented on this passage, “The word ‘chosen’ literally means TO CHOOSE AFTER TESTING. No wonder He caused us to be plowed so deeply, He would lay bare every secret within us, to test and try us, to prove us — and then, having been duly brought up to His specifications, qualified to meet His approval, He *chooses us* to be His own. All through our dark night HE HAS BEEN THERE, participating in the processings, and using it all to do a **whole work on Zion**, until He could bring us to the border of light, even to this mountain. Full well He knows all of our down-sitting and our up-rising, our going out and coming in. His choosing is based upon a full knowledge of His people, and the work which He has wrought in them. *‘Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, A TRIED STONE, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation’* (Isa. 28:16). *“When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory”* (Ps. 102:16). The Lord is FOUNDING ZION, BUILDING UP Zion, and therefore ‘Zion shall be redeemed with judgment...’ (Isa. 1:27). Redeemed — here the Hebrew word is *padah* meaning TO FREE, redeem. Freedom from all the bondage of vanity comes with judgment. These very correctional processings of God are the means of loosing us, freeing us from this gross materialism into the freedom of spirit. *‘When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream’* (Ps. 126:1). Almost too good to be true, it’s like a dream. Ah, now it does seem that this travail is the reality, and the glory is a dream, but then shall the glory become the everlasting reality, and our present travail will seem as but a dream in the night when it passeth away. He will wipe away the many tears from our hearts, fill our mouth with laughter and our tongue with singing, and our joy no man shall take away. This is the vision of those who are being **processed** for Zion!

“What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion’ (Isa. 14:32). What is the word for this hour? What can we tell a groaning creation that stumbles on in the black of night? What is the hope for this sin-cursed earth? TELL THEM THAT THE LORD IS FOUNDING ZION! He is preparing a people through whom His salvation shall flow to the ends of the earth. His glory shall come, it shall return to earth again, for there shall be a people in whom He shall fully dwell. *‘Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion...how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth’* (Isa. 52:1,7). Here is the message to declare! Not that darkness reigns, not that the enemy seems to have gained control, not that we are doomed. DECLARE THAT THY GOD REIGNETH! He works all things after the counsel of His own will, His victory is secure!” — end quote.

“As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it forever. Let **mount Zion rejoice...walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, for this God is our God for ever”** (Ps. 48:11-14).

A prepared people with a holy purpose in God is a very spiritual people. God is raising up just such a people in the earth in this hour and they are the Lord’s chosen remnant today. They are spiritually motivated and are seen in the spirit marching around Zion, the highest calling in the heavens of God’s Spirit. These are exploring Zion’s intricacies, measuring Zion’s bulwarks, counting Zion’s towers, inspecting Zion’s palaces, including all the spiritual experiences and dealings, and the abundance of truths and divine inworkings in all who are called to Zion. As they walk about Zion, they are challenged by her many glorious truths and experiences, causing them to cry out to God mightily that He may finish His work. They are ever learning, growing, and changing into the likeness of Christ the king. They walk about Zion with humility, trust, and earnest expectation. They are inquisitive, pliable, and teachable in the preparatory school of God, striving to learn and grow

spiritually, conformed to the full stature of Christ. **js** These elect, who are maturing sons of God, are destined of their Father to embody within themselves all the spirit, nature, glory, and power of the mount Zion realm, to become fully manifest sons of God, radiating the life and glory of Christ. They are weaned from all the old ways of the dead, desolate, obsolete church order of the past, and are walking in the light of this new Day! When that work becomes life to us by the Spirit, the Lord then fills us with the joy, peace, holiness, and power of mount Zion. Then those qualities shall flow out of us to fill, first, the city of God, then the whole land of God's own people, and finally the whole earth and all nations. Zechariah prophesied, saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion...behold, THY KING COMETH unto thee...and He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:9-10). Christ our King reigns from the top down, from the height of His throne in the heavenlies down to the lowest valley and unto the deepest hell. That is why the prophet pointed out that the dominion of Christ is from the *river* even *unto* the ends of the earth. The dominion of mount Zion is a *flowing* dominion, flowing like a *river*, flowing from its source in the highlands of Zion, and flowing out, bringing life to all the peoples and nations of the world. Our King comes first to mount Zion, the sons of God, the 144,000 who accompany the Lamb; then to Jerusalem, the true church, the bride of Christ; next to the land of Israel, that is, all the rest of the people of God on whatever spiritual level they may be; and finally to the whole race of mankind even unto the ends of the earth. What a mighty *flowing!* These are the four elements or components in the scope and economy of the kingdom of God: mount Zion, Jerusalem, the land, and the world. Mount Zion was in Jerusalem, Jerusalem was in the land, and the land was in the world. All things in every realm are gathered up in those four areas, as typified by the natural Israel of old in the midst of the earth. In Christ's coming to Zion to be perfectly and fully formed in the sons of God, the reign of Christ is then evident in the lives of His elect. When He fully rules and reigns in our lives, the reign of Christ then progresses to spiritual Jerusalem, which is the realm of the *daughters of Zion*, the true church which is the bride of Christ. The bride then "makes herself ready." This takes in all who truly love the Lord, are baptized in the Holy Spirit, and are led by His Spirit in the measure they know, though they are not fully overcoming sons of God. From there the kingdom progresses to the whole land which is all nominal Christians who name the name of the Lord, acknowledging Him as Saviour, be they Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, or any other denomination in Christianity. All of these people of God are presently formed on various spiritual levels and stages of development all the way from little children to the fully matured sons of God. They may be classified as mount Zion (sons), Jerusalem (bride), and the land (children). From the land the reign of Christ finally spreads to the rest of mankind, to every tongue, and people, and kindred, and nation, and culture, and religion — until He fully reigns over all!

A strange and wonderful work is reserved for mount Zion — the mount Zion company. "***For saviours shall come upon mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (flesh): and the kingdom shall be the Lord's***" (Obadiah 21). The ramifications of this passage of scripture are numerous. Years ago a precious brother wrote the following: "Becoming Saviours doesn't require that we memorize more scripture verses, and make many more trips cross-country and overseas, in retreats, workshops, meetings, and ministry. Quoting from the Bible, and telling others what the Bible says about Jesus, will save some; but it will not bring to fruition God's ultimate intentions for creation. In fact, telling everyone who we are, and what our destiny is in God, will not manifest us as Saviours. If I go up on top of a house, or hang from the branch of a tree and knock my stomach, saying, 'Me Tarzan, me Tarzan,' that doesn't make me Tarzan. I can walk around telling everyone I meet that I am God, I am a son of God, or any other religious dignitary of my fancy, and it would not singe a strand of hair on anybody's head. The bottom line is simply this: Becoming a Saviour, as Obadiah 21 declares, means a lot more than announcing my identity, or acting more religious or spiritual. Becoming a Saviour is not in what I say, but in my manifestation. 'What I do' is not in order to *become* a Saviour. 'What I do' must be the fruit of the fact that I *am* a Saviour!

"These *Saviours* will be coming up on mount Zion. So let us see what Zion is. '***For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation (where He lives and acts). This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it***' (Ps. 132:13-14). The word 'Zion' means 'a monumental or guiding pillar, sign, title, or waymark. To glitter from afar, splendor. A goal, or the bright object at

a distance traveled towards.’ Now hear this! ‘*Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined*’ (Ps. 50:2). Zion is God’s desired place *in us*, and our place *in Him*, producing a state of being. It is the brightness of God’s glory which we behold, toward which we are journeying, and into which we are entering, transforming us into shining ones. Can we begin to comprehend with all saints what God is saying to us in these days of the unveiling? We can only be Saviours as we enter and abide in the realm of Zion where everyone is filled with light, and where the face of God is seen. It is there, upon mount Zion, that the mount of Esau, the kingdom of the flesh, is judged, dealt with, consumed by the fiery glory of the Lord. As this judgment is wrought in us and through us, it is then that the **kingdom becomes the Lord’s!**” — end quote. Recently I read this experience of a brother regarding mountain climbing. “In my younger years, I was a mountain climber and scaled some of the best-known mountains in the world: the Matterhorn, Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya, Mount Ranier, and others. I can tell you from those experiences that nothing is more demanding or exhausting than to keep climbing when everything within you cries out for relief and rest. I can also tell you that nothing is more devastating to the human spirit than getting all primed to go to the top of a magnificent and lofty peak, only to get stranded halfway up the mountain. Friend, God is calling us to the very peak of His holy mountain. What’s more, He is calling us to become kings and priests of His holy mountain and the city perched on its pinnacle.” Ah, yes, all of those who stand with the Lamb upon mount Zion HAVE CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN! There is no cable car nor any helicopter rides to the heights of Zion. Nor are we “raptured” away to that high and holy realm. The challenge of “following the Lamb” up the slopes of Zion is illustrated by an experience Ann Baker once related in a letter to us. She wrote, “Something you said in your paper reminded me of a precious experience. Many years ago Barry and I, with some others, climbed McBain mountain which is on an Indian Reservation in northern Ontario. An old Indian who knew the mountain guided us up the trails. We climbed, and climbed, and climbed some more. I would think surely we were at the top, but each time we reached what seemed to be the summit there was yet another trail leading ever upward.

“There were beautiful blue lakes that couldn’t be seen from the foot of the mountain. And we saw two eagles flying high in the sky. We became very thirsty and our guide, John Owl, led us to a refreshing spring of water that poured out of the rock that hot day. The higher we went the more plentiful were the blueberries that grew in abundance. We ‘ate and drank’ while climbing that mountain. And then, finally, we reached the top. I shall never forget that awesome scene. We could see fifty miles across Georgian Bay. The air up there was excellent — so pure and fresh. I looked around at my fellow climbers and everyone was standing with their hands raised high over their heads praising God! The top of that mountain was crowned with His presence. I can never describe the sense of exaltation and glory — as if we had reached the Most Holy Place — after the long, torturous climb through the great pine forests. I remember the heat, the endless trails, the ever-upward climb — but oh, the glory at the top!” — end quote. Ricky Evans, in one of his writings, has given this confirmatory exhortation. “There is a stirring going on in the midst of the church in this hour, but just being stirred is not enough. Just having a desire is not sufficient. *We must arise and go up!* It is possible to be stirred and have a desire and still sit in our present position and never come to the glory God has for us. We can see the revelation and understand it, but if we don’t get up we will never see the manifestation of such revelation. The revelation excites us and should motivate us to rise up, but unfortunately in some the excitement of the revelation has been enough. We want the expected end without having to *go through the process of getting there*. I remember a time I was talking with a friend about playing the piano and I made the statement, ‘I would love to learn to play the piano.’ No sooner had the words departed out of my mouth than the Lord spoke in my spirit and said, ‘You don’t want to learn to play the piano.’ I replied back, ‘Lord, you know I would love to be able to play the piano.’ He said, ‘No, you don’t want to learn, you just want to be able to play.’ It hit me like a ton of bricks — I didn’t want to **learn** to play the piano, I just wanted to be able to sit down and play the piano. I wasn’t willing to go through the practice it takes and the effort it requires to play, I just wanted to sit at the piano one day and effortlessly start playing! God can do that, but guess what? It hasn’t happened! I have been too lazy to sit down and learn. I have all my excuses for why I haven’t, but the desire is still there. Slothfulness will eventually kill desire. We can desire greedily all day long, but our refusal to labor will kill us. “The righteous man, on the other

hand, gives it all he has. He will pursue, he will press toward the revelation the Lord has given. He will rid himself of all that stands in the way of reaching that revelation. The glory of God has apprehended him and he is now pressing to apprehend that for which he has been apprehended (Phil. 3:12). The righteous man realizes he has not come into the fullness of what God has for him. Oh, yes, everyone will say they know they are not perfect, but have you ever noticed they never get too specific? Have you ever noticed how they justify their sin by pointing to the fact that no one else is perfect either? How long will we justify our sin by pointing to someone else's? I believe that should show us we have a desire, but don't really want to deal with the problem that stands between us and the revelation we have received. We want the glory without the process to get there!

“There is an open door in the heavens and a voice sounding out, ‘Come up here’ (Rev. 4:1). We have heard the word to overcome and now the door is open to rise up out of our present situations and overcome and enter into a new realm in God. This is not a time to get offended by a word to overcome; it is time to take that word and rise up and be set free from whatever it is that holds us down. Some people get offended by being told they aren't in the most holy place with God because of some habit they have or some attitude they hold on to. Don't get mad, take this word and realize you *can overcome* — and overcome! You say you have tried and tried and failed time and time again and now you have just given up. There you sit with your bondage or your attitude and now you change your theology to accommodate your defeated condition and somehow that is supposed to make you feel better about yourself. But it doesn't. *Get up!* Take up your bed of self-pity and walk! Shake off the dust of lies that the devil has told you and begin to climb the mountain. Don't you know that the prodigal son must have felt the same way? Don't you know that he must have felt there was no way out of the hog pen situation? Oh, but glorious day when he came to himself! He said, ‘I will arise’ (Lk. 15:17)” — end quote. Well did Paul Mueller write, “Many years ago the Lord got my attention through visions and other experiences with Him. One vision, in particular, was an urgent call to ascend the high places in God. In that vision, I saw a large mountain. It was the mount of the Lord's presence. Many people were climbing that mountain, higher and upward toward the pinnacle of His presence. But few were reaching the heights. In that vision, the mount of His presence was like the literal mountains. The higher one goes, the fewer trees there are. And the higher we go in God, the fewer believers there are at that level. As I watched the people climb that mountain, they appeared on the spiritual level where they were when they died. Some of the people climbing that mountain of the Lord's presence were loved ones and friends. One among them was a man whom I considered a man of God, a man I had known quite well. By the Spirit, I was taken up that mountain but close to the people who were on various levels ascending that mountain. As I passed by some friends and loved ones, they all cried out to me, ‘*Go higher! Don't stop now, but keep going higher and higher.*’ That vision made a profound impact on my life. I shall never forget it! By His grace and His Spirit, I intend to keep climbing higher and higher in God!

“Those who have lived and died in Christ are now in a realm where they can *see* and *understand* more clearly. The true reality is in the realm of Spirit, and they know it well now. They know what it means to walk with God toward perfection, and they appreciate it more now than when they were in this earthly realm. If the Lord would give us ears to hear the cries of those who have gone on before us, we would hear them crying unceasingly for us to ascend the very heights of the mount of the Lord. I heard them briefly. And the tone of their voices persuaded me to believe that our spiritual growth will also mean something significant and wonderful for them. Their call to keep going higher was almost a cry of desperation, but was one of hope as well. Without us they cannot be made perfect (Heb. 11:40). Therefore, the remnant of this hour must ascend in the Spirit to the heights of the mount of the Lord, where we shall be changed. And we shall also release many who died in Christ from their limited, static positions where they rest on the mount of the Lord. “As we ascend the heights of the mount of the Lord, we will find that it is a lonely walk. To take a step higher in God may mean forsaking old friends and loved ones. When Moses made his seventh and last ascent up mount Sinai, the Lord said to him, ‘*And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me **IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNT. And no man shall come up with thee...***’ (Ex. 34:2-3). Like Moses, some are invited of the Lord to ascend the mount of His presence and meet Him there. Half way up the mount will not do! Those who shall partake of

His life and the fullness of His kingdom must go all the way up. The top of the mountain was Moses' goal, and it is ours as well. And it is impossible for us to take anyone else with us. We must go alone! Spiritual progress is not based on fellowship with people, but on fellowship with God! A few others will also go alone to meet the Lord in the top of the mount, so that a remnant — all the remnant — shall ascend the mount to present themselves to Him in the top of the mount. No one member of that remnant company shall be missing, for the Lord will lead them all there by His Spirit" — end quote. I am quoting from a number of different brethren and writers and I do so because they each have something significant and vital to impart unto the Lord's elect in this hour who are following the Lamb to the heights of mount Zion. I would be remiss if I did not share also this precious word from the pen of Ray Prinzing. "There has been a glorious procession making its way to Zion — we have come with weepings, with deep travail and rendings of heart. We have passed through the fire and its purifications. We have gone through the deep, while all its waves and billows went over our heads. There have been times, as it were, we inched along on hands and knees, pressing upward over the rocks, often to fall and be broken — the descriptions and types abound, personally applied as only the Holy Spirit can inwork His purposes into us. Mount Zion — here is a mountain that can be climbed, embraced, and its victory, authority, and power be possessed! This is a mountain where we can **draw nigh unto God** even while He draws nigh unto us. *"They that trust in the Lord are as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever"* (Ps. 125:1). These words are far too potent and full of meaning to be read over carelessly or laid aside to be forgotten. These precious words reveal to us the great truth that Zion represents *stability*. In the natural, mountains and hills give us the impression that they cannot be moved. Nations may change, governments change, laws change, customs change, people change, places of position and habitation change, but when one gazes upward towards the mountains they give the impression of having always been there and of their being there ever afterwards. Their stability and immovability formed the basis for Jesus' teaching about the omnipotent power of faith — faith that can do the impossible — faith that *moves mountains!* Humanly speaking, mountains just do not move. And in such stability and steadfastness there is *strength*. Is that not the reason that mountains are used in the scriptures to signify kingdoms, government, governmental authority and power. Hence the person who trusts in the Lord is like mount Zion — he receives a kingdom that cannot be moved and he, like the mount of God, is immovable, steadfast, and stable. To reign with Christ in the kingdom one must be stable, otherwise he will be tossed about by every wind that blows and every wave that billows. His reign would not be that of an IMMOVABLE KINGDOM! Multitudes of believers are not very stable in their spiritual life. One moment they are so zealous, enthusiastic, confident, and victorious; at the next moment they are like a disaster area, confused, frustrated, questioning, discouraged, offended, torn asunder, defeated, inoperative, and void of power. They have met the Lord, but have not matured — stability is not in them. And how is it that mount Zion is singled out here as the symbol of stability? Jerusalem is built on a total of seven hills with mount Zion constituting but one of them. It is because on Zion is to be found David's palace. Zion is the place where royalty dwells. Zion is the site where the throne of David is set. Mount Zion thus symbolizes the *kingdom authority of God!* Ah, my beloved, if you confide yourself unreservedly and wholly to the Lord, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He leads, to endure and persevere every step of the way up the ascents of the mount of God, you shall be infused with a divine stability, a strength which comes from knowing the Lord in HIS KINGSHIP, as the sole and complete authority of your life. The Lord comes and dwells in you in the full measure that Zion represents, and you become as mount Zion. The throne of God is established in your mind and heart. The authority of God is recognized, honored, and expressed in all things. And whenever the authority of God is established as the law of life in anyone's heart, he becomes as stable as the mount of God — *nothing can shake, rattle, discourage, frustrate, upset, confuse, concern, depress, defeat, or move him!* There descends upon that person a regal air, a special nobility, because the throne of God is in Zion.

At the dawn of this new kingdom Day the reign of Christ has now come to Zion, to confirm and seal His reign in the lives of His elect, preparing them for power, dominion, authority, and rulership as kings and priests unto God after the order of Melchizedek, thus setting the stage for the coming of His kingdom to the other companies of His people and to all the ends of the earth. In due time the Lord shall manifest His kingdom in Jerusalem, to reign in and over all who love Him and love His

appearing. What a day it will be when all the Pentecostal and Charismatic believers in the whole world are cleansed from all their religious and denominational idols, from all the error and false doctrines that have clung to them like a death shroud, from all their carnality and fleshly methods of meetings, programs, and evangelism, and are filled with the fullness of the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom, matured in Christ Jesus, submitted to His Lordship, and put on the wisdom, knowledge, understanding, love, faith, and glory of the wonderful mind of Christ! Oh, yes! What a day! And that, precious friend of mine, will be the *next stage* in the progression and unfolding of the kingdom of God on earth. When God's spiritual Jerusalem has been brought fully under the sway of His kingdom dominion, it shall then be brought to those who make up the "land," all Christians who acknowledge Jesus as Saviour. And finally, the kingdom will come to all the kindreds and nations of the whole world who now lie completely *outside* of the territory of God's people. When the reign of Christ has fully come to those who in this hour have received the call to sonship, which is mount Zion, and to all the other truly born-again believers that make up spiritual Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ, and to all the so-called Christians of the world who dwell in some area of God's land, then He shall simply "speak peace to the heathen." When God speaks, His omnipotent and creative word brings forth that which did not previously exist. God proclaims by the power of His word, "Let there be!" and the light of Christ shines to dispel all the darkness everywhere. God speaks and the hatred, ignorance, vanity, violence, and sinfulness of man is forever crushed by the emergence of a new nature of life and transformation within. By His breath the beast in man is slain, even the dragon in the sea, and the former tyrant masters of the flesh, the world, and the devil are replaced with HIMSELF. When God speaks He sends forth His delivering, quickening, regenerating spirit of power, might, and holiness and changes everything. We have experienced this on the personal level, but as God's kingdom comes to fill all the earth it shall happen on the national, international, and universal scale. When God speaks peace to the nations, through His kings and priests upon mount Zion, all the peoples of the earth — the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Moslems, the Jews, the Communists, and all others, from the least to the greatest, shall receive a divine and supernatural revelation of the Lord, and shall cry out mightily, and bow in humble and worshipful obedience before God's Christ. Isn't it wonderful!

Everything I have just said was prophesied specifically and precisely by the prophet Micah nearly three thousand years ago! *"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain (kingdom) of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains (Zion), and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law of the Lord shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"* (Mic. 4:1-3).

The terms *Zion* and *Jerusalem* as well as *the mountain of the Lord* and *the house of the God of Jacob* speak prophetically and spiritually of *kingship* and *priesthood*. John the Revelator beheld the 144,000 sons of God standing on mount Zion having the Father's name written in their foreheads. Mount Zion, the highest hill in Jerusalem, spiritually represents the highest pinnacle attainable in God's kingdom. Such are the *ruling class* prefigured by King David of old who dwelt on the natural mount Zion in the earthly Jerusalem. From there he reigned. This company, standing upon the mount Zion, following the Lamb of the throne, can represent nothing other than those who have followed Jesus all the way, who have put on the mind of Christ and the nature of the Father, and shall now reign with Him on His throne forevermore. The house of the Lord, on the other hand, bespeaks the temple on mount Moriah in Jerusalem with its order of sacrifices and priesthood. The two together constitute God's ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, or God's KINGLY PRIESTHOOD, the *kings* and *priests* after the order of Melchizedek. Kingship and priesthood, embodied together in the ministry of *sonship*, constitute the new governmental order for the new age!

Chapter 160

The 144,000 On Mount Zion (continued)

“And 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 on their foreheads” (Rev. 14:1).

In order to understand the deep mystery of the hundred and forty-four thousand we must see beyond the veil of flesh and the mists of the earthly and literal and see right into the heart of God with the eyes of the spirit. Many novel views have been promoted as to the identity of this blessed company. We have met some through the years who felt that they and their group fulfilled this prophecy. I heard of one group who purchased property out in the desert for the “training” of the 144,000 in the “last days,” and another that purchased a large ranch in the mountains for the same purpose. Both of these failed pitifully to reach the anticipated number of members! We know of one well-known group who founded an organization with the idea that that particular organization would comprise the 144,000, and they grew so rapidly that after a while they actually exceeded this figure and were compelled to create “another calling” for the late-comers into the movement.

We first met the 144,000 in chapter seven of the Revelation where they were “sealed with the seal of the living God.” The question often arises as to whether the 144,000 in chapter seven and the 144,000 in chapter fourteen are the same group. Some have wondered whether this could be *another, separate group* of 144,000. The answer is NO! Look at verses six, eight, and nine in our present chapter. John makes differences clear: “And I saw **another** angel...” (vs. 6). In verse eight the Greek text reads, “And **another**, a **second** angel followed...” Then in verse nine the Greek says, “And **another**, a **third** angel followed them...” In contrast, John does not call this “**another** hundred forty and four thousand,” although he uses this word over and over through the book of Revelation. No, it is the same 144,000 that were “sealed” in chapter seven, and here it becomes crystal clear just what the “seal” actually is — it is THE FATHER’S NAME WRITTEN IN THEIR FOREHEADS!

These hundred and forty-four thousand are not the *whole* number of God’s redeemed people. In verse four of chapter fourteen the 144,000 is called “the firstfruits” unto God and to the Lamb. They are, therefore, the *elite* among all of God’s people — a select company, called and chosen ones, the feet which stand upon an eminence — mount Zion. Thus, the “firstfruits” are not firstfruits merely in the order of time, but of divine purpose — that ground of precedence to which Paul alludes when he says, “Every man shall rise in his own order.” The writer to the Hebrews referred to those who seek a “better resurrection.” And the Lord Jesus Himself often spoke of those who would be “greatest” in the kingdom of heaven. This theme abounds throughout all the types and prophecies of the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation!

And this is no new thing with the seer of Patmos. In chapter seven John beheld as the 144,000 were sealed with the seal of God. No sooner were they sealed than he beheld a *great multitude which no man could number*, and they were clothed in white robes and held palms in their hands, worshipping before the throne of God. One of the elders posed the question, “Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” And the answer came, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Yet even this vast and blessed company is not the *whole* of God’s redeemed people — they are only those “in front of the throne.” I think the simile which would best convey to a modern mind the idea here, would be a large assembly in a great auditorium seating many thousands of people, in which each is observing the audience through binoculars. We may think of John putting himself in the place of one of these spectators. He turns to different parts of the building. He asks, “Who are these in the side gallery?” He is told, “These are they who have got in by just a little faith in the one truth

that *Jesus Saves*.” He asks, “Who are these at the back?” He is answered, “These are they that got in at the very last minute.” He inquires, “Who are these in the center?” He is informed, “These are they who always had a foot in both worlds, and struggled between the two.” He asks again, “Who are these in the front seats — who have the closest view of what is transpiring on the platform?” He receives the reply, “These are they who loved the Lord with all of their hearts; they went forward immovable, unchangeable, who from dawn to dark lived a life of sacrifice and service; theirs was the faith that faltered not, the love that altered not, the purity that paltered not; therefore they have reserved seats in the general assembly and church of the firstborn; they are *before the throne*.”

He puts a final question: “Who are those on the platform (that is, on the throne)?” And he is told, “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth — all the way to the pinnacle of Zion. These were redeemed from among men, changed, transformed, with a new mind and a new nature, conformed to the image of the Son, themselves manifest sons of the living God, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. These are they who have the character and qualification to *reign with Him, to sit with Him upon His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne*. These are they who are chosen to occupy the most commanding position — the typical eminence of mount Zion!” I understand this to be what John later refers to as the “first resurrection,” and what the apostle Paul means when he says, “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” To both Paul and John the thought is not that of *time*, but of *merit* or *quality*; first means *foremost, paramount, leading, crowning, supreme, preeminent*. The dead in Christ are those who are hid with Christ in God, those who have buried self in love, those who have counted the loss of all things as but dung, and obliterated their own human personality with all its claims, hopes, dreams, ambitions, and purposes, that Christ alone would be their life. Therefore they have come to the front; they stand upon mount Zion! This brings us back to our original thought. These hundred and forty-four thousand are not the complete number of the redeemed. They are a special class, the possessors of a particular quality, which places them above their fellows — on mount Zion. That is the mystery.

I do not teach *exclusivism* — the notion that God loves and has chosen to redeem and bless only one specific portion of humanity, to the exclusion of all others. But I do teach *elitism* — the truth that God does not call everyone to the same calling, that there are both *least* and *greatest* in the kingdom of God. There *is* a **high calling** or **highest calling** in Christ Jesus! There *is* a **firstfruits** unto God and the Lamb! There are those who are **before** the throne, then there are those who **sit upon** the throne! There *is*, therefore, an **elitism**. Your salvation was free — the gift of God. Your baptism in the Holy Spirit was free — the gift of God. Prophecy, visions, dreams, faith, healing, miracles, blessings, word of knowledge — all are free, the gifts of God by the Holy Spirit. All the *gifts* are freely given by a gracious God. But after that — you get what you pay for! Overcoming is not a gift. There is a price to be paid! The High Calling is not a gift. The Throne is not a gift. Manifest Sonship is not a gift. Sonship is not free. You obtain it by being a virgin, undefiled with women! By following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! By being without guile and without fault! By having the Father’s name written in your forehead! And by hearing and learning and singing the new song of total and complete redemption!

The one hundred and forty-four thousand is not a head-count, but a number representing *who they are*. I am confident that out of the ages God has many more than 144,000! Can you imagine an age governed by a people filled with the mind of Christ, conformed to His image, led by His Spirit, endued with the fullness of His authority and power? Can you even comprehend what it would be like for 144,000 manifest sons of God (if it *were* a literal number), 144,000 reproductions of Jesus Christ in all the glory, wisdom, authority, and power of His resurrection, turned loose on this world to speak the words of God and to do the works of God with no limitation at all? That would be almost a thousand manifest sons of God for each nation on earth!

In interpreting scripture, one of the worst things that can be done is to take numbers and interpret them literally rather than discovering the *meaning* of the number. In other words, the key to the

understanding of a scripture with numbers is the *value* of the number. So, then, we need to ask the Lord, "What does this number 144,000 mean?" The explanation is that $144,000 = 12 \times 12 \times 1000$. Twelve in scripture is the number denoting *divine government*. We will not take time to explain that here, as we have gone into detail about it in previous studies. Now, twelve times twelve is twelve squared by itself, giving the number 144. One hundred forty-four is thus the *divine government* of God brought to its highest expression. It is *divine government* multiplied **by** *divine government* — the absolute fullest and most ultimate manifestation of the kingdom rule of God!

Further breaking down the number 144,000, we come to the word "thousand." This word in Greek is *chilides*. We meet this word various times throughout the Revelation, not least of which is the fact that the saints are to reign with Christ for *a thousand years*. One thousand is the number signifying THE DAY OF THE LORD. The apostle Peter makes this very plain in his second epistle. "***But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day***" (II Pet. 3:8). It is my conviction that this means more than the idea that every period of one thousand years is counted as one "day" with God. Beyond that it reveals the great truth that the term "thousand years" stands for THE DAY OF THE LORD. It is the LORD'S DAY! To reign with Christ for a thousand years means to rule with Christ in the power and glory of the day of the Lord. This is not a mathematical number, denoting an exact duration of earth-time, but a spiritual number revealing the reality it stands for — the unlimited, never-ending, infinite day of the Lord! The day of the Lord is the day of His illumination, of His arising and bright shining, of His revelation and unveiling, of His glory, majesty, and power! Oh, yes! And this is what manifest sonship is all about, a people formed into the full and ultimate expression of the *divine government* of God, bringing to pass in the earth the illumination, glory, and power of the eternal *day of the Lord*! It is $12 \times 12 \times 1000$. That is what it means!

THE LAMB AND THE LAMBS

"And I looked, and lo, a *Lamb* stood on the mount Zion, and with Him *an hundred forty and four thousand*..." (Rev. 14:1).

Here we find the Lamb standing on mount Zion. Having been slain in sacrifice He is rewarded with "the glory that follows" and is now highly exalted. We are told that in eastern countries where, of course, this symbolic scene is set, when sheep and goats are left to roam where they will, the goats invariably climb to the tops of the hills, while the sheep ordinarily seek the low places, the valleys. So to John it must have seemed most unusual and remarkable that a Lamb should be on mount Zion! By this is brought to light a most important truth concerning Jesus, the Lamb of God. He did not attain His high position on mount Zion by means of self-exaltation, but because, sheep-like, He had sought the "low places." He humbled Himself, and because of that His heavenly Father exalted Him. It was because Jesus permitted Himself to be led as "a lamb to the slaughter" and did not open His mouth in self-defense or seek otherwise to justify Himself before His enemies that the Father, by resurrection and ascension, highly exalted Him. He had sought the "low places," and now we find the Lamb exalted to the throne of the city of God! Our Lord does not sit enthroned in the heavens, as Ruler of the universe, because He was divine in His birth, and messianic in His office, but because He was a LAMB IN CHARACTER. It was because He "made Himself of no reputation." It was because, coming as a man, He "took the form of a servant." It was because as a bond-slave, He "learned obedience." It was because, in obedience, He went all the way, even "unto the death of the cross." "*Wherefore*, God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:5-10).

Even now, as Christ sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father, He reigns in virtue of the fact that He is a Lamb. He reigns as a Lamb-King, because God is raising up lamb-kings in the earth, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the earth to establish in each member of the *body of the Lamb* in the earth the nature, and the character, as well as the authority of Him who sits on the throne. "*He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you*" (Jn. 16:14). It is the work of the Holy

Spirit not only to impart unto His people the *power* of God, but *all* that pertains to the exalted Lamb, His very nature, and character, and life, that He might be here in the earth, incarnate in His body, to be to you and me, yea, to be *through* you and me **everything that Jesus is upon the throne**. The word used for Lamb in our text is peculiar to the book of Revelation. It is the diminutive form of the Greek word for lamb, and is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It means a young lamb, a little lamb, or a “lambkin,” weak and small. Truly this is *Mary’s Little Lamb!* It includes not only the first little lamb, but all the other lambs who follow with Him. It is a reminder that Jesus is the “firstborn” among many brethren, the “forerunner” of all who enter into that which is within the veil, and the “first begotten” from the dead. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is THE LAMB OF GOD, and joined to Him are the *members of His body, His brethren*, the younger sons of God, the lambkin company. To see this company as the body of the Lamb is not to magnify man, but to exalt Christ, for it is HIS LAMB LIFE formed in them and lived out through them, giving expression to the Lamb nature. Thus the “lambkin” as a figure of Christ is indeed complete and perfect; yet it is a type of Christ in a limited measure and at the same time in the greatest measure. How strange that sounds to our ears, how curious to our minds!

As far as our Lord Himself is concerned, He is not limited at all, but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, there is such a limitation. From the time we experience Christ as the Lamb, we follow Him and begin to progress and advance and make progress in our experience of Christ and receive of His inworking more and more. As we grow in our appreciation of Him He becomes greater and greater to us and in us. Day by day in our experience Christ is becoming greater and greater! At the stage of our experience in which the total triumph of the Lamb is achieved within, Christ is unlimited to us, He becomes all-in-all. It is His almighty strength in the heavens revealed through the weakness of our humanity on earth — the TRIUMPHANT LAMBKIN! Hallelujah!

Thus we see Him in chapter fourteen: “*A Lambkin stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand.*” It does not say, “And with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand MEN.” Oh, no! There stands a Lambkin on mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand — what? LAMBS! The Little Lamb has become many lambs! We see a similar type, only in the negative realm, in the *little serpent* in Eden which grows through Adam, and increases within men over the millennia to become in the book of Revelation a *great red dragon*. How can we know that it was the little serpent of Eden that became the great red dragon of the Revelation? John tells us so! “*And the great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan...*” (Rev. 12:9). As the subtle serpent came with stealth into the garden of Eden defiling with *selfhood* the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam’s first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion and fleshly corruption. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little serpent, but in the Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching dragon in the earth and in the sea. In Genesis Satan is an enchanting serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in the Revelation he is a “great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns,” a composite of billions of peoples, nations, institutions, religions, and governmental authorities!

In like manner, my beloved, the first Little Lamb was none other than our Lord Jesus, the Christ. The Spirit of the Lambkin was poured out upon a little company of people on the day of Pentecost, the first of a new spiritual race of men destined to fill the earth and conquer the dragon. The Lambkin has developed in the saints of God from that small and inauspicious beginning to become a vast company of lambkins upon the pinnacle of mount Zion! To see such a company that shares and ministers His life to all creation does not magnify man, nor does it detract from Jesus the Head; for they are all totally conformed to HIS IMAGE and are partakers of HIS DIVINE LAMB NATURE. HE is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and joined to Him is a lambkin company! Truly these are the kings and priests of God, a kingdom of priests to reign on the earth and restore all things into God again!

It is my deep conviction that within the Lambkin, as we see Him again and again in the Revelation, is converged the reality of the four living creatures (kingship) and the twenty-four elders (priesthood). He brings kingship and priesthood together within Himself. He is the spirit of the Lamb (priesthood) in the midst of the throne (kingship). He is the Lambkin (priesthood) standing upon the mount Zion (kingship). Can you not see the mystery? The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and the seven spirits of God are all rolled into **One** and represented now as **the Lambkin!** He is the embodiment and personification of them all! It is appropriate to refer at this point to the words of another ready writer who said, “Freely, gladly, joyfully Jesus Christ faced the hour of sacrifice, pouring out His life, that it might be diffused and spread over the whole earth. Now God’s elect are being brought to the same consecration, so that they give everything for the joy of beholding His life quicken those around them. Willing to spend and be spent, until HIS LOVE THROUGH THEM has conquered all, and creation is restored into perfect harmony with its Creator. There is a work that is totally of The Christ, finished at Calvary, which does not have to be re-enacted or duplicated. He gave His life for the world! Now, this lambkin company, can freely share it with creation” — Ray Prinzing.

“...a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and *with Him* an hundred forty and four thousand” (Rev. 14:1).

They are *with* the Lamb. This does not mean merely that they are in the same geographical place. It has a far richer meaning than that! The nearness of His followers to the Lamb is the nearness of will, of desire, of hope, of purpose, of nature, of stature, of ministry. They are *with* the Lamb. I can tell a person two thousand miles away, “I am *standing with you*,” and no one would suppose that I was there physically beside them. These have reached the place where they occupy the same road, the same quality of being, the same reality as the Lamb Himself. They are the knights around His person, and they are all stamped with the likeness of the King. They stand for all that the Lamb stands for — humility, sacrifice, victory, sovereignty; just as the followers of the beast bear the mark of the beast, and stand for all that he represents — ferocity, cruelty, brute force. The Lamb Company, whosoever they are, will not have sought out another manner of life. These are followers of Jesus. They stand with Him! They will not deny nor digress from their station and standing in Him. Having His name, nature, and character as a very part of themselves their mind, being His mind, will only seek to express the virtues of Himself. Almighty Father! Just following Him around, just being where He is, being what He is, speaking what He speaks, doing what He does...what a privilege!

THE FATHER’S NAME IN THE FOREHEAD

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

We have pictured for us the company of the firstfruits unto God. These are a company of overcomers as signified by their having the Father’s name and the name of the Lamb written on their foreheads. “*Him that **overcometh** will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him **the name of my God...and I will write upon him My new name***” (Rev. 3:12). A name in the scriptures is descriptive of the character of the one who bears that name, especially when God gives the name to that person. Names are very important and this is why God many times changed the names of some. Jacob, the deceiver, the supplanter, had his name changed to Israel the prevailer, a prince, a ruler with God. His name had to be changed because he had a change of *nature* through the dealings of God, and his old nature was no longer descriptive of him. Abram, a high father, was changed to Abraham, a father of multitudes. Abram’s wife Sarai, which means Yah is Prince, was changed to Sarah, a princess, because from her kings would be born. This firstfruits company bears the name of God and the name of the Lamb, which tells us that they have attained to the image and likeness of God, and are filled with the fullness of the Lamb’s nature. There is no doubt about it, it is a spiritual work, or else God is somewhere with a stamper stamping people’s foreheads. I don’t see God doing that! I haven’t yet seen even one

believer or one son of God with the name YAHWEH visibly stamped or inscribed on their forehead! It is not the letters of the alphabet impressed, but the very nature of God and the Lamb written, that is, genetically encoded, *within* their foreheads, not merely *on the surface* of their foreheads. It is not an outward symbol, it is an *inner transformation!* Aren't you glad!

The mark of God, the Father's name in the forehead, *is the mind of Christ*. Those who stand with the Lamb have been renewed in the spirit of their mind and have put on God's mind — they think as God thinks, understand as God understands, see as God sees in all things. They have partaken of Christ's cup. They have followed the Lamb, first, all the way to mount Calvary. They have been made conformable unto His death. Nothing is left of self-will, nothing is left of the world's lusts, nothing is left of religious Babylon's spirit and ways, but they find unspeakable joy and pleasure in this: *"I do always those things that please the Father."* The Father's name in the forehead is in distinction to those who, in Revelation 13:16, take the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The mark of the beast denotes that those who bear it have subscribed to the mind — the doctrines, ways, methods, spirit, blasphemy, idolatry — the nature of the bestial system of this world, including the carnal, man-made, religious systems. The only people who could possibly reign with Christ will be those who through death to self have become one with His mind, and are not defiled with the antichrist doctrines, philosophies, and shame. All through the ages there have been a minute few who by the grace of God have been enabled to crucify self, put off the religious mind, the worldly mindset, and become LIKE UNTO THE SON OF GOD. These can be found standing upon mount Zion!

The opening work of this new day of the kingdom is the preparation for reigning of the sons of God! The great work of the ***seal of God in the forehead*** is the ***change of our mind***, or more accurately the ***taking of another mind***. The taking of a new mind brings about the existence of a new being, and a new being brings about the existence of a new order! The work that God is doing in His sons in this present hour is not about power. It's powerful alright, but it's not *about* power. It's about ***character!*** The mark of the sons of God is in their ***mind*** and in their ***nature!*** The present mind of man is polluted and there is no denying the fact. All the appropriations of all the governments, all the laws and ordinances, all the wars and change of governmental systems, all the charity, relief, and social organizations and programs, all the rituals and promotions of religion, will do little good whatever in correcting the problems of moral pollution or any other kind of pollution, until the ***mind of man*** is cleansed and renewed. The sons of God, having the seal of the living God upon their foreheads, and the Father's name and the Lamb's name encoded within their foreheads, are the **FIRSTFRUITS OF AN ENTIRELY NEW ORDER OF MEN TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF THEIR MINDS!** What glorious hope and expectation this inspires in our hearts!

The nature of God is written in the forehead or mind of every son of God! When the nature of God is written in one's forehead, how will that one act and react in relation to the enticements of the flesh, the pressures of the world, the needs of mankind, and the snares of the devil? *They will act like God!* That is why God has no problem in turning His kingdom over to His sons to judge and rule over all things. They possess His mind and heart! The sons will not, and cannot, act any differently than the will and purpose of the Father! All the sons want is what the Father wants! That doesn't mean, as some suppose, that a son must run to his Father every hour, or every day, or every week inquiring, "Father, what do you want me to do? How should I handle this situation?" and then wait there for an answer. Oh, no! The sons have the *mind* of the Father, they inherently possess the *knowledge* of His will, ways, and purpose. Sons instinctively, spontaneously *understand* the plans of the Father! This sacred knowledge is inborn and inbred in the very constitution of the new creation man!

We used to think that in order to get a "word" from God we had to hide out in a room and pray for an hour. Now don't misunderstand what I say — I do believe in prayer and the power of prayer. It is part of the cosmic order of God. No man on earth has walked out this life of sonship more perfectly

than our elder brother, the Lord Jesus, and He prayed often, sometimes all night. But He wasn't praying to "get" something from the Father; He prayed *because He was a Son* and shared that intimacy of fellowship with the Father. It was the *Father in Him* that showed Him the works! That is plainly what He Himself said. He knew the Father's voice within Himself at all times, for the Father was in Him as His very life and reality. Oh, the wonder of it! When God dwells in His temple He speaks *out of His temple* at all times. "**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...**" (Col. 3:16). That's not talking about memorizing scripture verses or getting an occasional "word of knowledge"! It's talking about the true experience of every son — the voice of the Son of God speaking out of His habitation in our spirit by the mind of the Father within.

All that God is doing in His called and chosen ones in this hour is preparation for the manifestation of the fullness of His glory. Therefore God is teaching us His will, He is instructing us in His word, and He is making known to us His ways so that we **become** the revelation of Himself in the earth. BECOMING — that's what He's after!

The wise man has given us the order by which we mature into the full stature of the mind of Christ. "*The Lord by **wisdom** hath founded the earth; by **understanding** hath He established the heavens. By His **knowledge** the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew*" (Prov. 3:19-20). Let us note three things from this beautiful passage. One is wisdom, another is knowledge, and the third is understanding. God by wisdom, by knowledge, and by understanding accomplishes a specific work in the cosmos. We find that God by **wisdom** has founded the earth; by **understanding** he has established the heavens; and by His **knowledge** the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down dew.

I now share this great truth with you in the way the Spirit has communicated it to me. We begin with understanding, for understanding is the first principle in this framework. It is not the first thing the writer names, for he speaks first of wisdom by which the Lord founded the earth. But in the opening verse of the Bible, we find that in the beginning God created the *heavens* and the *earth*. The heavens come first, and then the earth. Scientifically, that is the correct order for the formation of the solar system. So we must begin with the establishment of the heavens, and it was by understanding that He established the heavens. This order is further confirmed by the fact that understanding is the instrument by which we discern the word of the Lord. Understanding of necessity *precedes wisdom*. One can never attain wisdom apart from understanding! Neither can you obtain knowledge until first you possess understanding. If a child in school is unable to *understand* the material he is studying, he can never gain knowledge. So understanding must come before both knowledge and wisdom!

The apostle John expresses this truth so clearly when he writes, "*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an **understanding**, that we may **know** Him that is true...*" (1 Jn. 5:20). These words teach us the sacred truth that it is only by understanding that we can truly **know** God! Not by our human understanding, but by the understanding *He gives us* — the understanding of the spirit! The first step in our journey into the fullness of God is *spiritual understanding*; we *perceive* the Lord, we *perceive* the word, the will, and the ways of the Lord. Knowledge, then, is the fruit of understanding! Have we not often had the cart before the horse? Have we not supposed that knowledge came first, followed by understanding? But such cannot be! If one does not understand a thing he cannot know it! Someone says, "Well, I know a thing but I don't understand it." I reply, "When you do understand it, then you will truly know it!" Can you not see how that works? So God first gives us an understanding, that out of that understanding may be birthed knowledge. Understanding is the conception in the womb, knowledge is the development of the organism. First we understand, then we know. And God has given us an understanding that we might **know Him!** Thus the HEAVENS OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE ARE ESTABLISHED BY UNDERSTANDING, as the wise man said! By understanding we perceive spiritual truth and reality, by knowledge that truth is made substance within us, which in turn leads us to *wisdom*. That is the order!

Webster defines wisdom as “the faculty to discern right or truth and to *judge and act accordingly*; sound judgment; common sense.” Wisdom bespeaks the correct application of knowledge. Wisdom, therefore, can never precede knowledge; yet one can possess knowledge without wisdom! One may have all the knowledge in the world, but apart from wisdom he cannot correctly apply that knowledge. The divine order of the Spirit is just this — God gives us understanding that we may know Him. He then teaches us wisdom that we may properly express and correctly apply our knowledge of Him.

These great and eternal principles are true in us because they are true in God! God has not established an order for us, His sons, that is different from the order that exists within Himself. What God is doing in this hour is taking all the principles and attributes that are true in Him and establishing them as life and reality within the experience of each of His sons. He is causing us to know Him *as He is!* That does not mean to know Him by acquaintance, but to know Him in union of life — to know Him in our very state of being until there is nothing more to know! We are coming to know how He is, to know His nature, to know how He thinks, to know how and why He acts, to comprehend His plans and purposes, His will and ways, until *nothing is hidden or withheld from us*. This is not a knowledge of something outside of ourselves, something true in a God in some far-off heaven somewhere. It is knowledge gained by His incarnation within us, in the union of life, so that all that is true in Him is raised up within us as our very own reality. Servants know God by acquaintance; sons know God by the power of His life within! Oh, the wonder of it!

I am explaining these things in some detail so that together we might clearly see how our Father operates, and therefore how the sons of God function. “*The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.*” How did God establish the heavens? He established the heavens by understanding! And by wisdom He founded the earth. And in the process of that creation how did God cause the depths to break up, and the clouds to send down rain? By knowledge He did it! If we think carelessly about these things we will miss much beautiful and significant truth.

Understanding, knowledge, wisdom. Looking at these three we notice that each of them represents a **word**. Words are the expression of thought. Thoughts are perceptions of reality. In our thinking we perceive, in our words we speak, and the words are simply the verbalization of thoughts. Understanding, knowledge, wisdom — all exist in the realm of mind. If a man has wisdom he has it in his mind. His feet possess no wisdom. His hands possess no wisdom. The wisdom of the mind is channeled through the members of the body by means of words and actions. The same is true of understanding and knowledge. All these exist *in mind*, and all three bespeak a *word* — that is the *spoken mind*. Thus, in relation to God, the *mind* of the Lord is the fountainhead of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom! In the wonderful work of creation God brought forth out of the omniscience of His mind. God understood, God possessed knowledge, and He correctly applied that knowledge by wisdom. Therefore, by understanding, knowledge, and wisdom God created all things!

With these thoughts in mind we can better understand that it was not by *power* that our almighty Father created the universe! Did you ever stop to think about that? “The Lord by *wisdom* hath founded the earth.” Yet, for many years I supposed that God founded the earth by power! “By *understanding* hath He established the heavens.” Did you not think He did so by power? “By His *knowledge* the depths are broken up, and the clouds distill the dew.” But we all imagined that such wonders were wrought by God’s omnipotent power! What awesome power God must have sent forth to do these things! But the wise man says nothing about power. He never mentions it! The deep mystery is that it was from the *mind* of the Lord, and by His *spoken mind* (word), that creation appeared. “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the WORD of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*” (Heb. 11:3). “*And God said, Let there be; and it was so*” (Gen. 1:3-26).

Many of the Lord's apprehended ones have intensely desired and have earnestly sought after God's power. In the early days of my ministry I sought for power. I fasted and prayed for signs, wonders, and miracles. And the Lord graciously blessed us with great and mighty things! God is still performing signs, wonders, and miracles at times and in places throughout the earth. I have experienced the move of God in that dimension. I have witnessed miracles that to the natural mind are incredible. In those early days great numbers of God's ministers stepped into that manifestation of divine power. Many who read these lines remember those days when the lame walked, blind received sight, deaf ears were opened, tumors fell off, huge goiters disappeared instantly like the bursting of a balloon, and things needed appeared by the creative miracle of God. Oh, yes! I have witnessed all of those things with my own eyes, and some were even wrought at the laying on my hands. We have seen batteries charged, gasoline created in the tank, and know of many other creative miracles, even fish appearing in a frying pan!

Consequently, I spent a number of years in those glorious days seeking for more and more of the power of God. I knew that the manifestation of power we were seeing was merely a foretaste, a sample, an earnest and firstfruit of the power yet to be revealed in the kingdom of God. I understood by revelation of the Holy Spirit that God would one day move in a far greater way. But I equated God's move only with *power*. I did not understand at that time, as I now understand, that should God commit to us great power — unlimited, omnipotent power — apart from understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, we would wreck the whole kingdom of God! We saw this in the move of God that came in the 1940's and 50's. Many a minister of God has made shipwreck of their lives and ministry, and done great damage to the people of God, because they received power apart from understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. They desired power, sought power, got power; they misused power, misdirected power, became arrogant with power, using the power for their own aggrandizement and selfish and fleshly ends. With their power they raised money, fleeced God's sheep, lived luxuriously, made a name, built a kingdom, and with power they did everything except bring the glory and honor of God into the earth.

During the past few decades there has come to many of the Lord's elect His word of counsel and instruction, saying, "Listen, hearken, my sons, for I will now teach you something very real. Do you want to know me? I will tell you how I am. I am a successful Creator. I made and established the whole universe unto the vastnesses of infinity. I have made both good and evil, I formed the light and created the darkness; I brought forth man and placed him in a garden with two trees and a subtle serpent. I have framed the expanse of the ages, and not only can I do all these things and millions more, but in the end I can bring it all together; every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess, every heart shall surrender, and throughout all the unbounded heavens there will be peace, joy, righteousness, divine order and glory forevermore. You will discern that in all the interplay between the good and the evil; in all the processes of my purposes, there was divine understanding, divine knowledge, and divine wisdom! I knew the end from the beginning, and by my understanding I established the heavens, by my wisdom I founded the earth, and by my knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds distill the dew."

Our great and glorious heavenly Father now makes known to His sons the great and eternal principles upon which He works in creation, redemption, and restoration. We are His sons! As He is, so are we destined to be. As He works, so shall we work in the ordering of His kingdom. Once we comprehend how He works, we are blessed with the wonderful knowledge of our own place and role as heirs of His kingdom. When the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom of the *mind of Christ* possesses us, we will comprehend the mystery that *within* that understanding, knowledge, and wisdom **lies the power**. This dimension of power is not the limited, fragmented power we have known and experienced in the past in the "in part" realm of the *gifts*. This is the whole, full, complete, unlimited, unbounded, omnipotent, creative power of the kingdom of God! This is not the "by measure" power of a prophet or an apostle, this is the "without measure" power of *manifest sons!* This is the governmental authority and power of mount Zion! Oh, yes! The sons will have power. But the only ones standing on that mount of Power are those having THE FATHER'S NAME WRITTEN IN THEIR FOREHEADS! By the mind of the Father we now know that neither God nor

His sons will ever manifest the fullness of power apart from understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, for within that divine understanding, knowledge, and wisdom is found the secret of His power. That, my beloved, is the reason God doesn't say that He established the heavens, founded the earth, and caused the skies to water the earth by power. You will never discover that kind of power until you have fully put on the ***mind of the Father***, the ***character of the Father***, and the ***nature of the Lamb!*** That is the mystery.

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Prov. 24:3-4).

What a blessed confirmation this passage is! Again the three-fold creative process of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom is presented to us. You will surely notice that the passage does not tell us that a house is built by either ability, skill, strength, or power. Oh, no! In these significant words is contained the revelation of what God is doing in, and imparting to, His called and chosen elect who are being raised up to build the kingdom of God in the earth. Every house, the writer to the Hebrews tells us, is built by some man, and He who built all things is God. God builds, establishes, and orders all things in the heavens and the earth by understanding, knowledge, and wisdom! And now, in this great day of the Lord, our wonderful and wise Father is raising up within us the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom of His own glorious mind. He is giving us *understanding* that we may fully know, perceive, discern, fathom, and apprehend HIM WITHIN OURSELVES. He is unfolding within our spirit the sacred *knowledge* of all His ways — His plans, purposes, procedures, processes, intents, means, and methods. And He is maturing in us His divine *wisdom* by which we shall go forth and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption, restoring all things into God again. Oh, sweet mystery of the ages!

Have you ever wondered, dear one, why the Lord has led you down a pathway, not of blessing, glory, and riches, but of temptation, testing, trial, purging, stripping, proving, and suffering? Let us see by revelation of the Spirit that the experiencing of all these things, and our breaking, melting, molding, transformation, and triumph in them, is the very means by which the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom of the Lord is established within our reality. Nothing God has been doing in us through the crucible of His dealings has anything to do with power. In fact, we seem to be stripped of all power, and reduced to nothingness! Ah, but it has everything to do with understanding, knowledge, and wisdom! ***“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience through the things that He suffered”*** (Heb. 5:8). These holy things are not learned by the hearing of the ear or the seeing of the eye. It is not by reading these lines that even one of God's elect will be blessed with understanding, knowledge, or wisdom. Nor do they come through study, searching, listening to sermons, attending meetings, burning the midnight oil, seeking, praying, fasting, or having hands laid on you. They cannot be gained through any self-effort of any kind. They are obtained only through the sovereign inworking of God! Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time!

The great truth that the power of God only flows and functions out of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom powerfully reveals to us how it is that the 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon mount Zion, the pinnacle of rulership and dominion in the kingdom of God, have no scepters in their hands, no crowns upon their heads, no swift horses carrying them into battle, no swords proceeding out of their mouths. All of that comes later, but the deep mystery the Spirit is unfolding to the elect of the Lord is just this — *before* we can be crowned with authority or gain the scepter of power and dominion, WE MUST HAVE THE FATHER'S NAME WRITTEN IN OUR FOREHEADS!

Chapter 161

The 144,000 On Mount Zion (continued)

“And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard *the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand* which were redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:2-3).

As John stands enthralled by the vision, he hears a voice from heaven. As often, the voice John hears is an unidentified voice. As to its sound it was as the voice of many waters, like the sound of the ocean breaking on the rocky shores of Patmos, the voice of a vast multitude, that is, the corporate voice of a great company. Furthermore, it was as the sound of a great thunder, peal upon peal, reverberating through the heavens, that is, a voice full of power and authority. Now notice! The voice does *not* come from mount Zion. It seems to be distinguished from the voice of the hundred and forty-four thousand. It comes out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! It is a voice apart from the mount Zion realm, as we shall see later on.

Then John hears the sound of a multitude of harpists playing their harps, and you will notice that it is the harpists who are singing to the music of their harps — *not* the hundred and forty-four thousand. The mount resounds with song, rich and full of meaning to those who can understand it. Yet not a song that those on earth are consciously singing, not found in any hymnal, nor flashed by any overhead projection, nor taught by any praise team, for it comes out of the eternal realm, reaching the ears and exciting the spirits of those who are called to stand with the Lamb upon mount Zion. Of this song Carl Schwing wrote, “In the countless regions of the spirit there are sounds and words never heard by mortals. There is music so glorious in its magnification of the Godhead, that all that dwell within the vastness of the heavens fall prostrate at the feet of the Creator of all things. Music so overwhelming, so quickening, that everything that has breath is carried into a higher dimension of life in the Spirit and is taken deeper into the unfathomable depths of the heart of God.”

The harps are the Greek *kitharais* or lyres. The sound of the music also comes from heaven just as the sound of the great voice did, for the music is played and sung *before* the throne, and *before* the four living creatures, and *before* the elders. It seems to be the combined voices and music of a mighty choir and orchestra. Thus is conveyed the ideas of fullness, of majesty, of sweetness. It is the song of the heavenly hosts! Oh, the magnificence and multitude of the anthem raised — the celestial song, the perfect harmony, the melody of triumph, the message of victory, the very sound of that music of long ago, “*when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!*” (Job 38:7).

Now lest we should flounder in our understanding of these things, it is significant to note that John describes the setting of this song which reveals a drama quite different from what most of us have imagined. We must point out that John tells us that “*they sung as it were a new song.*” Not really a new song, but **as it were** a new song. Now notice the word “as” that fills these verses. The song filled the air “as” the roaring of mighty waters or the waves of the ocean. The sound was not the roaring of waters, but “as” or similar to such a sound. Its majesty was also indicated by saying that it was “as” the voice of a great thunder. It was not thunder, but “as” or similar to peals of loud thunder. The King James Bible represents John as saying that he heard harpers harping, but the Revised says the voice he heard was “as” harpers harping. This must be correct, for all three clauses are in the same grammatical construction, the word “as” being in all of them. So while John did not actually hear harpists harping, the sound he heard was like the harping, meaning that it was both grand and divinely melodious.

The song being sung was “as it were” a new song. It is new, and yet it is not new! It **seems** new, yet obviously the song has been sung before, but so long ago that it has been forgotten — and now it is **as it were** a new song. It reminds me of the story I read of Helen of Troy. The writer pointed out that according to legend this beautiful queen was captured and carried away and became a victim of amnesia. She became a prostitute in the streets. She didn’t know her name or the fact that she came from royal blood. But back in her homeland, friends didn’t give up. One Greek man believed she was alive and went to look for her. He never lost faith. One day while wandering through the streets, he came to a waterfront and saw a wretched woman in tattered clothes with deep lines across her face. There was something about her that seemed familiar, so he walked up to her and said, “What is your name?” She gave a name that was meaningless to him. “May I see your hands?” he pursued. She held her hands out in front of her, and the young man gasped, “You are Helen! You are Helen! Do you remember?” She looked up at him in astonishment. “Helen!” he yelled out. Then the fog seemed to clear. There was a recognition in her face. The light came on! She discovered her lost self! She put her arms around the old friend and wept. She discarded the tattered clothes, and once more became the queen she was born to be!

Ah, my friend, God searches for all men in the same way. He uses every method possible to look for men and women and to convince them of their worth to Him — their *true value!* When His word falls upon our ear and strangely stirs our heart, something awakens within and we think it is something new that is dawning upon us, when in fact it is a REMEMBERING of a reality we knew before, in the long ago. Can we doubt that this is what John witnessed happening in the lives of the followers of the Lamb? Oh, yes! There was a time long ago, before the present universe was fashioned, or ever the sun kissed the mountains of earth, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, beholding God’s great plan of creation, redemption, and restoration. Every son of God was there that blessed day shouting for joy! And every son of God knew the song of the morning stars! And now, at the end of a long journey and travail, reaching the heights of mount Zion, suddenly, amazingly, mysteriously, wondrously THEY HEAR THAT SONG AGAIN! It seems new, but it’s not new — it’s *as it were* a new song! Hearing the strains of that melody and the lyrics of that hymn the fog begins to clear, the mists evaporate, recognition brightens the face, the light comes on, and we *remember* the realm from whence we came. The throne room looks the same! Again we take up the scepter that was ours before the ages!

There is another fact which shows beyond any doubt that this song is originating from a voice or voices which are not those of the 144,000 on mount Zion. We have previously shown that mount Zion is a symbol denoting throneship — the authority of kingship and dominion. Yet this song is not *from the throne*, but is portrayed as being sung out of a heavenly realm *before* the throne, and *before* the living creatures (kingship, sonship), and *before* the elders (priesthood). “*They sing*” refers to the harpists whose sound comes from heaven! Thus, the song is sounding forth from the “voices in heaven” and not from the Lamb and His followers on mount Zion. Can we not see by this that the song is for the *benefit* and *blessing* of God’s king-priest company, but it is not they who are at this point singing the song! Instead, they are *hearing* the song — it is as though a great orchestra and choir have been assembled to perform before God’s called and chosen elect in order to inspire, quicken, and renew within them the message and revelation contained in the song. Oh, the wonder of it!

And now comes the final proof. “*And no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*” Can you see the picture — the 144,000 are standing on mount Zion **listening** to this “as it were a new song” *in order to learn it!* And no man — no man in heaven above, no man in earth beneath, no man anywhere in all of God’s vast universe, could **learn** that song **except** the 144,000 which were redeemed from the earth! Let us now see the enormous depth that streams to us out of this sublime scene. The 144,000 have just been redeemed from the earth realm, raised up out of a natural, earthly, limited, human, carnal consciousness, identity, and state of being into the heavenly, spiritual, divine, infinite consciousness, identity, and state of being of quickened, changed, transformed Christ-men. And in this heavenly state there immediately falls upon their spiritual ears the majestic chords and powerful message of a

song which at first *seems* new to them — yet, somewhere, far away in the depths of their spirit, it stirs a chord, they have the sense that it is not really new — that indeed, somewhere, sometime, somehow THEY HAVE HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE! And now they must *learn*, actually *re-learn* it, just as in all of our spiritual experience we are being *re-deemed, re-newed, re-generated, re-surrected* — that wondrous song!

The words of Ray Prinzing are instructive here. “Volumes could be written on the qualifications of this company — this company of firstfruits which He is bringing forth have a new song. It is stated that ‘no man could learn that song, *but...*’ those of whom we have been speaking. They have to LEARN IT, but it is learned by the spirit. No man, no flesh, no carnality, no self-will can learn the song! The word ‘learn’ means: to apply by study, to experience, etc. Head-knowledge is not the ultimate of learning. So we find this word comes from a root from which we get *disciple*. A disciple is a *taught one*, one who has been trained, disciplined, chastened, developed, until the lesson is worked into their very being. There is an experiential reality which we are to share. No wonder *man* cannot teach man this song! It is a sovereign inworking of the Holy Spirit!

“Deriving our inspiration from the indwelling Christ, next we note that a song must have meaning, importance, a message that is clear, so that one can comprehend it. Some years ago a certain Communist promoter made the statement, ‘Let me write a nation’s music, and I don’t care who makes their laws.’ For he knew that if a message was clearly written into the music which the youth would sing, it would work into their thought processes, until it became the moral compass of their life, and they would follow the communistic ideology. Negative forces know this principle very well, and thus the sex and violence-oriented message in the rock and hip-hop music of the day is producing its results in tragic consequences. There are songs of suicide, and then people wonder why there is such a sharp increase in suicide among our youth!” — end quote.

As we meditate upon the verses of our text, taking note of what they *really* say rather than what we have *assumed* they say, it becomes clear that we often read over such passages lightly and carelessly, missing the true implication and import of the message! The scriptures are very clear that each of us came into this world out of the bosom of the Father. Before the Creator formed you as a vessel of clay, 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 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 own *before the foundation of the world* would be if 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 sonship. I thought the work of God began in my life nearly eighty years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with His elect began in eternity! It didn’t begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God loved me, knew me, counseled with me, picked me out for His unique purpose, and commissioned me before the foundation of the world! My origin was in God! The Lord referred to this wonderful truth when He asked Job, who was void of understanding because of the veil of flesh under which he was subjected, “*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth...when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*” (Job 38:4,7). The words of the little chorus so beautifully express the truth of this:

From out of eternity, before time began;
In the bosom of the Father, while the morning stars sang,

I shouted for joy while beholding God's great plan —
His purpose on earth, His election in man!

Each of us was born into a mortal, physical body and into a world of darkness, sin, and death. Our spiritual life was buried, covered, encased, concealed within the prison house of a natural, worldly, human consciousness just as a little child, if imprisoned in a room with no ability to relate to the world he is in, will be unable to express, expand, or function as a normal person. He will have no idea of what the world is like or what the true human experience is about. But our descent into this gross material realm was according to God's plan! It wasn't Adam that created the cunning serpent or invented the desirable tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or placed in man's path the way of death. Oh, no! It was God who planted the garden eastward in Eden and placed all these things strategically in it! But God has both a purpose and a plan!

Paul speaks of an action of God involved in that plan when he says that we are "*in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began*" (Titus 1:2). This is indeed wonderful! We were born into this world with a *promise* from God — the promise of eternal life! The promise of salvation from this dreadful travail and a return to life more abundant was given us *before the world began!* When we came here we were born with a promise! In other words, when we came into this earth realm with all its sorrows and woe, by the promise of God, given us before the world was founded, we **knew that we would get out of here alive!** We also understood the great plan, the wonderful purpose, and the glorious outcome of it all! It was then, my friend, it was there, my beloved, that the morning stars sang THE SONG, and all the sons of God shouted for joy! Oh, yes, there was joy when our heavenly Father clothed the shining suns with their brilliant garments of light, and stationed the vast constellations in their ample orbits, and filled with radiance boundless space of His illimitable universe. Yes, there was joy even when our planet was clothed with blooming garments of living green, when the air was filled with feathery songsters, and the waters with finny tribes, and the world was covered with teeming life enriching the earth for man. But all these mysteries and wonders of creation are infinitely transcended by the inexpressible *purpose* of it all!

When we were with the Father as His sons we were perfect, but innocent and unproven. Job was a perfect man, the Lord said, but at the same time he was untested, untried, and thus all that befell him was for the testing. We could have remained hidden in God, and been holy and pure but without the maturity, understanding, wisdom, and power that are developed through *experience*. We would never have been holy because we **chose** to be holy. We would have been pure as a little baby is pure — pure but innocent, weak, and helpless. We would never have **understood why** the way of sin and death is delusive, dangerous, and disastrous. We would never have possessed the **character** of one who has been tried, tested, and processed. We would have been something like an over-protected child in this world, one who is innocent of much that goes on about him, and therefore unable to cope when exposed to the pressures, problems, and negatives. God wanted sons who became mature sons in the crucible of *experience*, having experienced all the opposites of life, holiness, wisdom, power, and glory — to overcome in it, to be made strong and victorious by it; not inexperienced and undisciplined sons rich by inheritance but with no nobility of character to handle what they receive. This is why we had to come this route, and believe me, before God would turn the whole vast universe over to us as the rulers in His kingdom WE HAD TO COME THIS WAY!

We must not think that when our ministry is finished here on earth, and all men have bowed the knee and happily owned Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, when all the earth has been set free from the curse and sin, sickness, and sorrow have flown away; when the dirge music has sung its last song, and the minor chords are all gone, that the Master will then say, "Go sit on a heavenly mount, and sing yourselves away forever and ever." No way! What Bethlehem was among the thousands of Judah, this little earth is to the great Universe of God — for it is here that the glory of God has broken forth! All those stars, those worlds of light, who knows how many of them are inhabited? It is my conviction that there are regions beyond our imagination to which every son of God shall become an everlasting illumination, a living expression of the love, wisdom, and power of their Creator and God.

The creatures in those far distant worlds could not see Calvary as this world has seen it; but they shall see *it* in the redeemed that are conformed to His image. Some entertain the foolish notion that each of those worlds have their *own way* to God, but such cannot be the truth, for it is the testimony of scripture that it is *in Christ* that *all things are gathered together into one*, of things both in the *heavens* and in the *earth* (Eph. 1:10). And we were chosen *in Christ* before the foundation of the world, therefore we have a part in this great “gathering together” of all things into Him!

Truly in that day the Lord shall say to His sons who have brought the kingdom of God to pass in the earth, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.” He is to keep on doing something, you see. God’s kingdom does not stop here on this globe, and God’s revelation is not limited to mankind. Compared to the orbs of space the earth is insignificant. The celestial realm is unutterably greater and its glories grander. Men will risk all of their fortunes and their lives to seize the reins of even the smallest of earth’s governments. Yet the glory of *universal dominion* promised to the sons of God is greater than all! The man who has been a faithful and wise steward of God here, will be promoted by our heavenly Father to more eminent service in the ages to come. This shall be our heaven, not to go there and walk on golden streets waving palm branches and playing harps, but to enter upon some larger, nobler ministry for which we are preparing by the lower and more arduous service of this present time!

The Bible clearly teaches that God’s sons shall inherit *all things* (Rev. 21:7; Ps. 8:3-6; Heb. 2:8). The eighth Psalm shows clearly that this includes the stars, the galaxies, and the planets. The whole vast universe shall be theirs! Every world that floats in space shall be subject to their word and at their disposal, as they range the broad fields of the boundless heavens. Here and now we are a people in whom there is royal blood; sons of God, heirs to the throne; we are born to rule over all things, and God is preparing us for that dominion. The rule of one little world is not enough for a man born of the omnipresent God of the universe! It may be for a chipmunk. It is not for a son of God, because one born *from above* is too big in his spirit, which is his real divine self. To be a spiritual man, a heavenly man, he must reach out to the future, to infinity, to eternity, and grapple with the powers of the ages to come, and compel them to gird him with strength to fulfill the ultimate intention of our *heavenly* Father. Methinks this high knowledge is a part of the glad refrain of THAT SONG which the 144,000 hear upon mount Zion, which is “as it were” a new song, yet we now know within ourselves that we truly heard it before, when the morning stars sang, and all the sons of God shouted for joy as before the foundation of the world our heavenly Father *promised us* eternal life and universal dominion as the fruit of our being lowered into this dark realm.

Today, unregenerated, carnal man is shooting rockets to the moon and Mars, boasting that he is going to use the planets as a launching pad to soar to the universe beyond. But man is simply getting in too big a hurry! He is striving to “take over” and rule what he has not fitted himself to manage. There is that deep, innate knowledge in the subconscious of man that he is destined to explore and subjugate the universe. But man has not yet proven his ability to wisely rule this planet, much less the worlds beyond! Man with his history of greed, lust, strife, treachery, warfare, bloodshed, deceit, corruption, and perversion has now stockpiled enough atomic bombs to not only blow the earth to smithereens, but twenty more just like it! Shall God indeed commit into the hands of corrupt, depraved human nature the rulership of the universe? No way! Man is reaching out to rule that which he has not qualified himself to rule — and before it has been made lawfully his! Man is still a rebel. But what mankind does not know is, that when, through Christ, he first *qualifies* for the trust, it has been God’s intention all along to place not only the moon and Mars, but the WHOLE VAST, LIMITLESS UNIVERSE under his jurisdiction!

Oh, the wonder of it! Our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God. He has been given the dominion and the kingdom. The whole universe has been delivered into His mighty hands for He has been given *all authority and power* in heaven and in earth. He is the heir of ALL THINGS! Now He tells us that it belongs to us (Heb. 2:6-10); and we have been raised to sit together with Him

at the right hand of the Majesty on High, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto us (I Pet. 3:22). We are to sit with Him upon His throne, which is the Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). We are not only raised up to sit with Him on His throne, but He has been given a name that is above every name, and we are also to share that wonderful Name. Listen to this: "To him that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city (government) of my God, which is New Jerusalem...and I will write upon him MY NEW NAME" (Rev. 2:12).

This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. They have proven faithful over few things. Now they shall be made rulers over many...over ALL HIS POSSESSIONS (Mat. 24:45-47). He has given us His glory because we are His brethren, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, life of His life, mind of His mind. We are of common parentage, brothers by the new birth, becoming like Him in name, nature, and being. We are all "out of one" for which reason He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He has raised us up to sit with Him in the higher than heavenlies, hence we belong on His throne. And the place which He has been preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a kingdom of life, light, and love, but a position, a place of eminence at His side, ruling with Him over all the eternal endlessness of His unbounded heavens! This is the song — I have heard THIS SONG upon mount Zion! The millions of believers in the church systems of man know nothing of this song, for no man can **learn** this song except the 144,000 which are redeemed from the earth-realm! It is as if it were a new song, yet it is an old song, and we first heard it before the dawn of creation.

While we thus stand, as it were on Pisgah's heights, and view the grand prospect just before us, our hearts rejoice in the Lord's great plan, with unspeakable joy; and though we realize that God's sons are still scaling the heights of mount Zion, and that the hour of divine breakthrough has not yet fully come, yet, seeing the implications of its rapid approach, and in spirit already discerning the dawn of the New Day, we lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. Oh what fullness of blessing and cause for joy and thanksgiving the truth contains! Truly, the Lord has put a new song into our mouths. It is the grand anthem which was sung by the angelic choir at the birth of the firstborn Son of God — "Behold, I bring you *good tidings of great joy*, which shall be unto *all people*, for unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is *Christ the Lord*." Thank God, the harmonious strains of this song shall ere long fill heaven and earth with eternal melody as *a whole family of sons in His exact image and likeness and form are born — saviours on mount Zion* — and the work of universal salvation, the restitution of all things, which they come to accomplish, progresses toward its GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION!

Earlier we mentioned that God gave us a promise of eternal life before the world began. Few understand it, but in that long ago He also gave us the promise of manifest sonship! We were **predestinated at that time to be the manifest sons of God!** "For whom He did **foreknow**, He **also** did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:28-29). Not only was eternal life and manifest sonship promised, the kingdom was promised also! "Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom **prepared for you from the foundation of the world**" (Mat. 25:34). All these wonderful things happened to us, and many more too numerous to mention at this time, before we entered this world as a human being. But do you **remember** any of it? Can you remember when you were there with the Father? Can you remember Him informing you of the plan, the purpose, in sending you to earth? Can you remember what was said, what you knew, what you agreed to, and why, and what you had when you were there with the Father? Do you remember being chosen in Christ, promised eternal life, promised a kingdom to reign in, and predestined unto placement as a son of God — before the foundation of the world? Do you remember the beginning of your journey?

Ah — **YOU ARE REMEMBERING!** Do you know how you're remembering? The answer is simple — all *revelation* is but a *remembering!* Someone says, "Oh, brother Eby, the Lord showed me such

and such — I've had a revelation and I see thus and thus." Yes, you received a revelation! The reality is, however, that what you perceived as a revelation was "as it were" a new song, but it was not really new, God was simply **reminding you**; He woke you up, refreshed your memory, and caused you to *recall* a hidden, secret knowledge you once possessed before you entered this mortal state of limitation and confinement!

We should always be fervently aware that a *revelation* is an *unveiling*. That is the meaning in the Greek. To have something revealed means to have it unveiled. There have been masterpieces of art and sculpture that have had a day of unveiling. Michelangelo was famous for the unveiling of some of his great works. But you see, my beloved, the *unveiling* is not the *creation* of the thing unveiled! The unveiling is simply the *revelation* or *uncovering* of something which *already exists*! Spiritual revelation is not the impartation of either knowledge or experience that you have never known before. Not at all! Spiritual revelation is the uncovering of the secret knowledge of God within our spirit. Revelation is a remembering! The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit's moving upon us in our journey in God in this life in the flesh is to cause us to remember the realm from whence we came, who we are, what our purpose is — that we might complete the journey and fulfill that purpose! That is the mystery.

A son of God can go a long time before he is awakened to the fact of his sonship. In fact a lot of God's children are like the story of the baby eagle that was hatched out under a hen. You know that the eagle is a type of the sons of God who live and soar in the high places of the Spirit. Well, a farmer took an egg from an eagle's nest and he placed it under a hen. In due time all the eggs under the hen hatched out. The baby chicks got along fine with the mother hen but that little eagle could not figure out the clucking and scratching for food in the manure pile. He managed to make a living but he was pretty confused about it all. But one day, from way up in the air the mother eagle that had laid the egg spied that little eagle on the ground. She swooped down with tremendous speed and screamed at the top of her voice for him to fly up to meet her. He had never heard an eagle cry, but when he heard that first scream something in him stirred and he longed to launch out toward it. But he was afraid to try. Again that mother screamed for him to arise in the wind and follow her. He screamed back that he was afraid. Once more she called out, screaming that he try. Beating his wings he hurled himself into the air, and answering the cry of his mother, he soared off into the blue skies. You see, he always was an eagle! He acted like a chicken for a little while but he could not be satisfied. But when he heard the call of the great eagle he came to his own place. And once a son of God hears that symphony from out of eternity, once it reverberates down the corridors of his soul, he too, will realize who he is and run to the great eagle who begat him to be seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, to stand with the Lamb upon mount Zion — there to learn again that song he sang before the foundation of the world. It is indeed wonderful!

With deep spiritual insight brother Carl Schwing wrote, "There is a song that only the Sons can sing. That song was born within their hearts eons ago when they beheld the Lamb upon the throne. It is a song of all in all...a song that flows from the heart of the spirit...a song of wisdom and knowledge. It is a song of holiness...with words of life, liberty and perfection for all that the Father has made. If our ears could be opened for just a moment we would hear that song. Yet, the Melody has already begun His good work in us. It is unto Him that we look...it is by Him we live...and it is in Him that we abide."

Another has written, "This song of the Lamb, known and sung only by these firstlings, is a song that no 'man' can learn for it is not birthed through human and earthly experiences. Man cannot be taught it, for it comes out of the far distant past when these few were chosen to join in harmony with the Father and His precious Lamb as the master plan to subject His good, perfect, and heavenly creation to the frailty and futility of a human and earthly embodiment was made known to them. These chosen ones, elected of God for a purpose, see a God who is working all things after the counsel of His own will; a God who works in His creation both to will and to do of His good pleasure. These were chosen in Him before the foundation of the earth" — L. Dane Tabor.

A distant relative of mine, Dr. Richard Eby, was accidentally killed when he fell to the street from a three story building. Instantly he was conscious in the realm of spirit. One moment he was conscious with a flesh-restricted mind, the next moment with a heaven-released mind whose speed of function was that of light. He was instinctively aware that the Lord of lords was everywhere about him, though he did not at that time see Him. Hours later he was raised from the dead, and of one of the wonderful experiences encountered in that heavenly sphere, he said, *'Music surrounded me. It came from all directions. Its harmonic beauty, unlike earthly vocal or instrumental sounds, was totally undistorted. It flowed unobtrusively like a glassy river, quietly worshipful, excitingly edifying, and totally comforting. I had never sensed anything like it. The music was sounding within my head, not from an eardrum. Obviously it was not airborne. Most unusual to me was the absence of any 'beat.' Then I realized that without time this heavenly music could have no beat which is a measure of time! I was hearing harmonic perfection, undistorted by any interposed medium between me and its source, as heard mind-to-mind. The music around me suddenly seemed louder. I rushed to a nearby tree and grasped its trunk to my ear: it was 'singing.'* I lifted my right elbow to my head; it emitted the same joyous, beatless melody. Excitedly I stopped to pick some flowers, and found them already in my hand. They, too, were 'playing' the tune!"

The atmosphere all about us is permeated with this celestial song of creation. But only the sons and daughters of the most High can tune in to that higher frequency and sing its melody, for these are they who follow the Lamb. The music transcends any earthly sound, nor are there necessarily any words of earth's feeble languages with it. It is not learned in words, nor does it depend upon the skill of utterance. But it is a *living vibration* of all that GOD IS which is released from the very substance of the spirit within, flowing outward from the tabernacle of creation. This music is the beauty of holiness, the glory of the living God, the divine communion between Christ and His body, the spiritual harmony between the Father and His sons, the unspoken love between the Bridegroom and the bride, the triumphant symphony of glory! The source of power within the Song of songs is not tones or chords or melodies or harmonic sequences but, as it were, *spiritual vibrations* of divine power and reality — Perfect Love, Life Everlasting, Joy Unspeakable, Wisdom Unsurpassable, Omnipotent Power, Infinite Light.

As sons of our heavenly Father we are called, not merely to sing that song, but to BECOME that Living Song of songs! *"And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He **make Jerusalem a praise in the earth**"* (Isa. 62:7). It is when we **become** this mighty concerto of Life, Light, and Love that its power is made manifest. The release of the Christ-life within causes us to become this rhythm of glorified Life — creation's heartbeat of joy, peace, and victory. The song is sung as Life, Light, and Love and is expressed as the essence of Being. It is an *immortal Song* — the vibration of *incorruptibleness*. It is not in words spoken — it is in a state of being, the emanation of God's glorious and eternal *reality* to all about. Every man who develops the power to hear this Song out of the realm of the spirit is given the ability to sing the Song, sending it forth to a burdened and captive world. Sing that Song, O ye sons of Zion, for it shall eternally triumph! Let the beauty and majesty of the King of kings in the harmonic perfection of this Song vibrate from your redeemed spirit that it may fill the whole earth and subdue all the nations! It is the Song of the Lamb, the Song of mount Zion, the Song of the manifest sons of God, but its redemptive, healing, transforming effect is unto all the ends of God's great creation!

Truly we experience those moments when verbal praises are inadequate to even begin to express that which surges deep within. There is a note, a chord, an inner song of rejoicing that finds no articulation in mortal words nor any audible strains of melody. From whence cometh this? In the measure body and soul are brought into subjection to, and union with, the spirit, the Song of the morning stars begins to vibrate once more — there is a Song of songs to be sung unto His glory. It is heard through the celestial realms as the NEW MORNING STARS take up that Lost Chord and begin to express the life and reality of God in spirit and in truth. There is a glorious company that stands upon mount Zion with the Lamb, they are of the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north (Isa. 14:13; Ps. 48:2), and they are even now hearing that song, learning that song, beginning to sing that song, and are becoming the song! Hallelujah!

A song is peculiarly expressive of praise — praise with a *message*. And the quality and depth of praise is dependent upon one's spiritual progression in God. Those who have received salvation, but have never followed on to know the Lord in intimacy of fellowship and vital union of life, are limited in their praise and the message in the praise; for the more we experience the depths of God, the more His essence of Being is revealed. Saints are filled with praise according to their individual capacities. Consequently, while unfaithful and immature saints will be filled with the good things of God according to their various capacities, yet these can never render the same worship as those who have followed their Lord all the way into the fullness of His life. Therefore these sons of Zion are said to sing a NEW SONG that no one can learn, except those who have traveled the same road as they. Those who have never climbed the heights of the mount are satisfied with the songs they sing on whatever plane they are, for they do not miss the greater song, having never heard it nor been moved by it. All have different capacities and different interests. I remember walking into a little Pentecostal church many years after the Lord had called us out of that realm, and they were singing some of the old Pentecostal hymns about flying away to heaven, and others even worse, and I caught myself thinking within myself, "My God! Are there really people on this earth still singing that stuff?!"

A song in scripture represents both *praise* and a *message*. It is praise that bears a message, or beyond that, praise which is birthed out of revelation and experience with God. You can tell the spiritual level of a person by the songs he sings! A person's "song" will always express his depth of understanding and relationship with God. When we receive new revelation from the Lord, experientially inworked into our lives, a new song is created. There is an old English ballad the first line of which runs, "I cannot sing the old songs." Some change has taken place in the singer's feelings and experience which makes the old songs inappropriate, impossible. We all know something of this kind of feeling. Sometimes I look back over old sermons, and very often I have to say to myself, "I could not preach that again." God has been teaching me during the years of my ministry, leading me into a fuller knowledge of Truth and a deeper walk in the Spirit. Hymns and choruses which once ministered life no longer express what the Spirit is doing and speaking in our lives, so we no longer sing them as we once did, and sometimes we change the words. Children always sing different kinds of songs than adults do! In the things of God, as in well-nigh everything else, "*Time makes ancient good uncouth.*"

Paul Mueller stated it so well when he wrote, "Again and again we are told to sing a new song unto the Lord. '*Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth*' (Isa. 42:10). The old songs of yesterday are empty, meaningless, and of no value to us now. They have lost their prophetic appeal and purpose, for all those former things have been fulfilled on the plane for which they were appointed. They are yesterday's manna, and the spiritual people that we are can no longer live on yesterday's manna. We must have a new song to sing, and by the Spirit, God is giving us that NEW SONG TO SING, which we shall sing to the glory of the Lord with all that is within us! Our new song is a song of the fullness of redemption, with nothing left out, which the prophets foretold was to be fulfilled in God's elect."

Thank God, there is a ***new song***, a new revelation, a new message, a fresh word, a higher experience in God for this day, and for all the days to come! Those who sing the new song have outgrown the old ones. They no longer express their experience nor resonate with their state of reality. As the triumph of His life works within we are more and more learning to sing ***that song***, the ***new song***. The melody of praise which arises from the soul set free is rising as a sweet incense unto the Lord. All praise to the Lamb who hath redeemed us from the earth-realm!

REDEEMED FROM THE EARTH

"And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, *which were redeemed from the earth*" (Rev. 14:3).

Redeemed — what a glorious word! How deep, how high, how broad! Oh, yes, it is true that we have been redeemed, but, like salvation, redemption is no single act or experience; as one has stated, it is “a crisis *leading to a process*” as we are progressively “loosed away” from one realm to another, from one mind to another, from one nature to another, from one state of being to another. Truly we are being freed from the dominion of the carnal mind, from a world of flesh-centered, self-assertive religious activities, and from the power of sin and death, first in spirit, working outward into the mind, will, emotions, and desires of the soul life, and finally in body by the mighty working of His power whereby He is able to change even our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory (Phil. 3:21).

The prefix “re” in “re-deem” means “again” (as in re-copy, re-wash, re-write). The main part of the word is from a root that means “to purchase, to buy.” So an article that is left in a pawn shop can be redeemed by paying the money that was borrowed, plus the interest charges. The item is thus re-bought or bought back. The word is also used when a company finds it possible to call some of its indebtedness, pay the borrower, and cancel the obligation: this is the *redemption* of bond issues. Spiritually, it means a **return** to that place, wisdom, knowledge, life, glory, and dominion which we once had in God before the ages were framed, ere this present cosmos or world-arrangement began. This confirms in a beautiful manner the truth we shared concerning the “as it were” new song learned by the 144,000 on mount Zion; not a new song, but it seemed new, yet they had obviously sung this song before, long before they came to earth from the bosom of the Father. They can now hear and re-learn and sing again that heavenly song because their earth-journey is ended — they are *redeemed* from the earth! That doesn’t mean they have left the earth and flown away to some far-off heaven somewhere. Oh, no! It signifies a state of being — deliverance from the *power* of sin, carnality, sorrow, pain, limitation, and death. Redeemed from the *earth-realm!*

The English word “redeem” translates three Greek words, each of which has a rich meaning in connection with our salvation and transformation. One Greek word, *apolutro*, means “to loose, untie, deliver.” Another Greek word used in scripture and translated by our English word “redemption” is *agorazo*, the common Greek word for marketing. The noun *agora* means the market place, and the verb *agorazo* means to buy. In the New Testament the word is applied to souls. This would be readily understood in the ancient world, since there was a slave market that operated almost every day, and the traffic in slaves was very great. That Christ should have walked into the slave market and purchased, or redeemed, men who were slaves to the realm of carnality, sin, and death, would have been easily comprehended!

There is another Greek word which gives additional light on the thought of redemption. The word is *exagorazo* (*agorazo* with the prefix *ex*), and carries the idea of buying something **out** of the market. There is a difference between a purchase that is for resale and a purchase that is made in order to take an article out of commerce. For example, a dealer in rare books and works of art might purchase an item at a London or New York sale, and hold it for resale to a customer. Some pictures, books, manuscripts, and art objects are bought and sold again and again. But finally, when a great work of art is bought by a museum, it is thus **TAKEN OUT OF CIRCULATION PERMANENTLY**.

Today, we are being redeemed, loosed away from the earth — the earthy part of ourselves. The natural man always tends to gravitate towards the earth, towards soulish, earthly, fleshly, sensual things. We are being redeemed from this earthly mentality, consciousness, activity, and state of being! “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*” (I Cor. 15:47-49).

We are, furthermore, as sons on mount Zion, redeemed from that religious realm which arises out of the soulical nature of man. Redeemed from soulishness! Redeemed from religion! Redeemed from the carnal church systems of man! Perhaps you never thought of that. We equate redemption with

freedom from sin and death. Yet, here in our text it is the redemption, not of **sinners**, but of **sons** from the beastly religious orders set forth in chapter thirteen of the Revelation, represented by the beast out of the *earth*. This bespeaks redemption from that soulical “earth realm” that we read of again and again throughout the pages of the Revelation. That is the mystery!

Truly we have been loosed from this earth’s carnal systems. Oh, how our spirits were once tied to this world’s religious orders! We committed, we conformed, we volunteered, we were drafted, we labored, we worked, we performed multiplied works, participated in programs, drives, and promotions, tilling, as it were, the soil with the sweat of our brow — busily working “for” God! But God is LOOSING a people from the worldly religious spirit and bondage. No more is our spirit yearning to “do” great things “for” God, but our spirit is set free that we might go on to BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY, to be a manifestation out of the heavens of the spirit of the grace, and glory, and majesty of our God! Ah, these “redeemed ones out of the earth” are the ones STANDING ON MOUNT ZION, SINGING THE NEW SONG. And it is they who, like Moses of old, shall bring down from the mountain the *new order* for the *new day*! Redeemed — *how I love to proclaim it!*

Chapter 162

The 144,000 On Mount Zion (continued)

“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand...*these are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins*” (Rev. 14:1,4).

It is our purpose in writing these truths to set forth in awe and simplicity the things the Spirit is saying unto the Lord’s elect in this significant hour. As we approach the subject presented in the scene described in the passage above, let us remember, these things God did “*signify by His angel unto His servant John*” (Rev. 1:1). Signify — tell by signs, communicate by symbols. May God ever give us understanding by His Spirit to discern what the signs mean!

The word “defiled” in our text determines the meaning of the passage. It is the Greek word *moluno* meaning “to soil” or “defile,” thus denoting not a proper union with one’s wife, but an illicit intercourse or fornication with others resulting in impurity or unchastity of life. This has no reference to literal, natural, fleshly things. It does not indicate that the 144,000 is exclusively made up of “males” and in no way refers to physical celibacy. Celibacy is not the subject or virtue in this description, but *purity*, freedom from contamination by an improper conduct. Nor does the fact that they are all “virgins” suggest that they are all women! Again, these are all symbols of *spiritual realities!* The inspired apostle spoke of this when he wrote, “*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 subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity (singleness) that is in Christ*” (II Cor. 11:2-3). With a pure heart these 144,000 worship God and follow the Lamb, thus “*they are virgins.*”

We must keep in mind that fornication and adultery in scripture are the symbols of spiritual impurity. In that sense Esau is called a fornicator, not because he had relationships with women, but because he despised God’s covenant and joined himself with his fleshly desire instead. In the same sense Israel in the Old Testament is very often pictured as an adulterous woman, even a harlot, whoring after other gods and departing from the worship and service of Yahweh, their covenant God. In like manner, then, these one hundred and forty-four thousand have not become defiled. All the church systems of man have been committing fornication in the spiritual sense. All have gone a whoring after the beast. All have been defiled by the spirit, ways, and methods of the world. But the 144,000 have remained faithful to their Lord. They have followed hard after the Lamb. They have kept themselves unto Him and unto Him alone. They have not been stained by the defilement of the carnal systems, doctrines, and practices of religion. They are “without blemish”!

Ray Prinzing commented on this thought with these words of wisdom, “Singleness — ‘*He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*’ If, in any way, we turn from that singleness, and yield our mind and spirit to the spirit of the world, we have defiled ourselves. Works is a filthiness unto grace. The flesh is filthiness unto the spirit. The spirit of the world is filthiness unto Christ. We dare not prostitute the anointing, by using it for the satisfaction of the flesh. When our inward desire for God has turned elsewhere for its satisfaction, we have defiled our spirit, lost our virginity, and only our Redeemer can restore us to a virgin state again. It is truly a further ‘**revelation of Jesus Christ,**’ that we see Him revealed in a company of virgins — undefiled ones. Only He can bring forth such a company of PERSONIFIED PURITY to stand with Him!”

These were redeemed from the earth-realm, from among (natural) men — the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. They have been snatched as brands from the fire. The prophet Isaiah, in describing the condition of the churches in the days of “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with

whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication” (Rev. 17:1), says, “*In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*” The church is represented by a woman; and the relation of Christ to the true church, as the relation of the husband to his wife. The husband gives his name to his wife, and supplies her food and raiment; but apostate church systems, while claiming the name of Christ, eat their own bread, that is, they formulate their own carnal, man-made doctrines and static creeds, spurning the living word and revelation of God by the Spirit. They also wear their own apparel, that is, they clothe themselves in their own works of righteousness, of rules, regulations, laws, commandments of men, traditions of the elders, good works, etc., spurning the true robe of righteousness which is the inwrought nature of Christ by the Spirit. To conceal their reproach they loudly claim the name of Christ, profess that He is their Lord, call themselves “Christians,” yet go their merry way “doing their own thing,” ignoring the *living Christ* altogether! It is in contrast to these that we have the vision of the 144,000 “virgins” standing on mount Zion!

Again, I quote the timely words of Ray Prinzing, “John speaks of the ‘great whore’ who is also “the mother of harlots,’ one having many daughters who, like their whoring mother, are also harlots in their own right — and it is a fact we find their whore-houses everywhere. We shall not amplify this at length — they who have ears to hear what the holy Spirit is saying to His called out ones, are coming out of Babylon, and leaving these harlot women behind. They will no longer give their strength unto these women, nor pour their resources into her coffers. They refuse to be defiled by her whoredoms, and will not play her games. It has taken some tremendous purgings to become free from the taintings of the spirit of religious institutions. We find that for many, upon first being called out, literally go through a period of ‘withdrawal pains’ spiritually speaking. They feel great pains for fellowship, yearning to be with people, to get ‘another high’ from a service, etc., and it takes much time ALONE WITH GOD to be cleansed until their spirit is pure, and wholly joined to His. Methinks there is yet much purging needed to free us from ‘religious-ism’ in one form or another. We will not condemn nor point a finger, rather we cry out with the Psalmist, RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME!

“There are those who make their withdrawal only in the natural — they leave a religious system, ‘come out from among them,’ and feel they are free, and know not that their spirit is yet deeply defiled — and soon they have surrounded themselves with a little religious realm, which in due time has grown up to be another harlot in its own right, and they love her, defend her, fight for her, and do their best to say she is a true woman, but the spirit is the same as the old sectarianism they came out of, and they birthed another of its kind. But, there are those, praise God, who are *being* (process) redeemed from the earth, redeemed from among men, not defiled with women, for THEY ARE VIRGINS. They have a pure ‘virgin spirit,’ undefiled, a spirit that is free from the spirit of the world, free from all foreign spirits, free from all familiar spirits, free from all religious spirits. Praise God!” — end quote.

Sects, denominations, and cults have all come into existence through the love of something else rather than the Lord. Some are followers of a man — some eloquent, charismatic leader who can captivate people in their emotions. Some even *name* their “church” *after the man* — Lutheran, Mennonite, Wesleyan Methodist, etc. Some are given over to specific doctrines and unless one believes exactly as they do they will have nothing to do with that person regardless of how much their heart is toward the Lord. Various of these go on to *name* their denominations *after their pet doctrine* — Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist, Universalist, Christian Science, etc. Different forms of church government have divided believers into separate groups, each believing they have the best or most scriptural form of government. Some of these even *name* their organizations *after their form of church government* — Congregational, Presbyterian, etc. I have no hesitation whatever in telling you that all of this is gross carnality and utter defilement!

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ; are ye not carnal? Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (I Cor:1:12-13; 3:4-5). It matters not whether you call yourself a Roman Catholic, a Unitarian, a Methodist, a Baptist, the Move, the Church of God, the Church of Christ, the Order, the Word Church, Pentecostal, Charismatic, or any other, they *all* belong in the same category and are inspired and controlled by the same religious sectarian spirit. It matters not whether the leader or leaders are called popes, moderators, superintendents, presidents, pastors, senior pastors, presbyters, bishops, apostles, or prophets; if it is the same divisive spirit, the same love for something other than the Lord Himself, then those who make up the firstfruits company *cannot* and *will not* be defiled with *these women!* These systems, one and all, are called harlots because the love which should only be for the *living Christ* has been transferred to a man, a doctrine, a system, or something else. Some churches call themselves a “Bible Church,” but even the Bible, the Word, can be loved, esteemed, and exalted into an idol — a place in our affections above our true Beloved. Many years ago George Wylie related how he was talking with a precious brother who had been an elder in one of the local churches and who had left a group known as “the Move”; George asked him why he had left and he answered, “Because the Move was being preached and exalted above the Mover!”

Throughout the long history of the church age the established church systems of man have a record of rejecting every true visitation and outpouring of the Spirit of God! And, in our present generation, they have not gotten any better, but continue to get worse! The religious systems of this world, because of their spiritual carnality, fornication, and defilement, are anti-Christ in nature, and will reject any future outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord that Father sends into the earth — until the hour arrives for God to judge them unto correction, and break them unto repentance. And that will surely happen, as we hope to show as we progress through the book of Revelation! Our God is sufficient for His purpose! But, as of now, the natural mind of man that governs the carnal, man-made systems, is directly opposed to the sovereign Lordship of Christ, opposed to any fresh outpouring of the Spirit that disrupts their static forms, opposed to any deeper revelation that brings into question their established creeds, and opposed to any new truth that is given by the Spirit as we move higher into God. Their numerous false doctrines prevent them from accepting and receiving Christ as He appears in a greater and more glorious unveiling of Himself. No wonder the cry of the Spirit to all His apprehended ones continues to be, *“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”* ((Rev. 18:4).

Those who follow the Lamb must not be *“defiled with women.”* They must not be defiled with the error and shame of the fleshly ways and religious spirit that defiles the harlot woman called Babylon and her many daughters. Those who follow the Lamb have been called and separated and chosen by the Son of God to be a pure and holy virgin unto Him. Behold, I show you a mystery and a divine paradox beyond the wisdom of man. In the world one starts out as a virgin and may become a harlot; but in the church one begins as a harlot and eventually becomes a virgin! All the elect of the Lord must be comprised *only* of those who have been called out of both the world and the church system. They must follow only and always the Lamb! They must cleave unto Him, and to Him alone! They must not be defiled by man, and they must be cleansed from all other religious or spiritual relationships, to give themselves wholly and unreservedly to HIM! Then they shall be pure and holy, qualified to receive His fullness, and prepared for that greatest of all events, known in scripture, as “the manifestation of the sons of God. “There is also an individual and personal application of this truth, for we know that our individual *soul life* is also presented in scripture as a “woman.” On the individual and personal level, they, in their spiritual walk, no longer lie down with, and have a relationship with, their soul — their religious soulical nature and self-will. Rather, their soul is called upon to follow always and only the spirit whithersoever HE LEADS! Madame Guyon wrote of this personal experience within ourselves: “There is ‘a virginity’ of the soul in keeping the grace of God. A soul that is perfectly free from earthly things is a virgin soul. The Adam in them is completely destroyed. These follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They cannot part from Him

because of the unity that their nothingness has accomplished. These are redeemed from among men, that is, withdrawn from all human corruption in their nature — self-love and carnality. They are also the first fruits unto God, specially sacrificed to Him.”

The following beautiful word from the pen of Paul Mueller is a blessed inspiration to all who seek HIS FULLNESS in this great day of the Lord. He writes, “The last verse of chapter four of the Song of Solomon closes with this sentence: *‘Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits.’* Chapter five begins by saying, *‘I HAVE come into my garden, my sister, my (promised) bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my balsam and spice, from your sweet words I have gathered the richest perfumes and spices. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, feast on, O revelers of the palace; you can never make my lover disloyal to me! Drink, yes, drink abundantly of love, O precious one, for now I know you are mine, irrevocably mine!’* (Song of Solomon 4:16; 5:1, Amplified).

“When our Beloved came into the ‘garden,’ which we are, He came to partake of the fruits that His ‘bride,’ ‘sister,’ or ‘spouse’ provided. Our worship of Him in spirit and in truth are those ‘sweet words’ from which He has gathered *‘the richest perfumes and spices,’* which He also calls *‘my honeycomb with my honey.’* When we fully understand this great truth, we will then realize how important our worship of the Lord is, in spirit and in truth, to the whole plan and purpose of our Father! And then our Beloved invites the friends of the Bridegroom, including *‘the revelers of the palace,’* to join Him in eating and drinking. When He invites them to eat and drink, the bridegroom, according to the natural example, also realizes that some of the revelers may attempt to ‘flirt’ with His betrothed. So he makes this bold assertion to them: ***‘You can never make my lover disloyal to me!’*** Those who are betrothed to the Lord will never give in to the seducers or to the counterfeit lovers of Babylon, but will remain true to Him forever!

“As the chosen, elect of the Lord, we should never, ever think of going back to the harlotry of the corrupt church system, for we are betrothed to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that binds us to Him and to Him alone forever and ever! And then, as if to assure and affirm the eternal relationship He has with His ‘spouse,’ which we are, our Beloved says to His ‘spouse’ or to His typical ‘bride,’ ***‘Drink, yes, drink abundantly of love, O precious one, for now I know you are mine, irrevocably mine!’*** How can we fail Him when our Beloved says such beautiful things about us? The entire spiritual celebration involving the Bridegroom (which is Christ) and His spouse (or, the body of Christ, which we are), is just like a wedding celebration in the natural. This union, or this wedding, brings together two separate entities: Christ the Body and Christ the Head, making one complete Christ! And that is great cause for celebration, for the two then become ONE SPIRIT, joined together by the Spirit of Life in Christ! We then function as ONE BODY, OR ONE CORPORATE MAN, BY THE SPIRIT!” — end quote.

FOLLOWING THE LAMB

“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand...*these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth*” (Rev. 14:1,4).

“A relationship with Christ requires that WE FOLLOW HIM WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH. The Greek word for ‘follow’ is *akoloutheo* meaning ‘to be in the same way with, i.e. to accompany as a disciple.’ He has given us *‘an example, that ye should follow in His steps’* (I Pet. 2:21). This is not just an historical way of life, trying to be imitators of Him as He lived two thousand years ago — we are not called to consider, ‘What would Jesus do?’ and then be imitators, but PARTAKERS of Christ. It is BEING IN HIS WAY TODAY, as the Spirit leads us onward step by step. Eliezer said it so well, *‘I being in the way, the Lord led me...’* (Gen. 24:27). We’re going the same direction HE is going, following Him!

Following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth does not mean that we dash across the country, escaping all of our responsibilities. MUCH OF THIS FOLLOWING IS INWARD! We continue with the normal duties which He has given us to do, but with an attitude of constant surrender to His will, that HE be first and foremost in us at all times. We do not take our religious stance and insist that God do things in our way, in our timetable, according as to how we feel His word should be fulfilled. It is true, there are times when He will test us as to our commitment to Him, and there is a literal forsaking — yielding up our all. *‘Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee. And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more...’* (Lk. 18:28-30). But most of the time this is INWARD — upon the altar of our heart everything remains **offered up**, so that whatever possessions we have, they do not possess us. Paul wrote, *‘As having nothing, yet possessing all things’* (II Cor. 6:10). And when INWARDLY all is surrendered, it matters little if He requires an outward expression of this, or not. Relinquishment is an attitude of the heart, and when all is **loosed within**, there will be no exterior grasping.

“The secret of staying in the will of God is to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! Even if it does not make sense to us in the light of what we have always known as ‘revealed truth.’ It must have seemed most incomprehensible to Abraham, at least at first, that God would ask him to sacrifice that for which he had waited so long, and in whom his confidence rested. Especially since this was clearly that which had been given by God in such a miraculous manner, as the fulfillment of so long-standing a promise. Yet God’s purpose continued to unfold, and Abraham must follow.

“To follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth requires great flexibility. It is possible that when we adhere rigidly to a promise, as we understand that promise, without taking a step in any direction, we could suddenly find ourselves outside the will of God. And not only outside the will of God, BUT INSIDE THE RIGID WALLS OF LEGALISM, and in danger of crucifying our Lord afresh. We might claim it and stand on it, and insist that God honor His word *on the level we understand it*, when He has a far greater meaning for that promise, if we are willing to LET GO OUR OWN SELF-CLAIMING-WORKS, and just let the Spirit lead us where He wills. Hence we often find a prayer in our hearts, ‘Lord, I do not understand what all this Word means, but, whatever You mean by it, that is what I desire.’ Why limit Him to our understanding? Why not yield ourselves to Him — and follow whithersoever He goeth? There are such heights and depths to be experienced in Him!

“***These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.***’ What processing this one sentence covers, for it requires that we be LOOSED from all the binding restrictions of religion, to be free to follow as He leads. Our English word ‘religion’ comes from the Latin *religio*, meaning: taboo, or restraint. It bespeaks a system of faith and worship with all of its ‘do, and don’t,’ exercised by the will of man to gain favor with God. The Greek word is *threskia*, meaning: outward ceremonial observances — which were done primarily for an appeasement. Religion can be, and may well be, the greatest enemy of the Spirit, for it was religious belief that crucified Jesus. It was religious belief that hindered the entry of men into the kingdom of God. As Paul wrote, *‘O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you’* (Gal. 3:1). Having begun in the Spirit, they were ready to revert back to the works of the flesh, to obey days, months, times — back in bondage to form and ceremony, rather than the free flow of His life through them by the Spirit. Turning back to legalism is in effect crucifying Christ afresh, for it is a turning from the life of the Spirit, to man’s own works and self-effort” — Ray Prinzing.

To follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth means to trust in, lean upon, give allegiance to, be guided by, accept as authority, imitate, emulate, pursue, run after — **NO ONE BUT THE LAMB!** I was blessed reading the testimony of a brother who in his conversation with the Lord said, “God, I just don’t feel that I am what I ought to be.” God said, “What would you like to be like?” I said, “I don’t know.” My Bible was lying on the floor by me and I pulled it over to me and hugged it. I said, “Lord, look at these great men of God. If I could just be like them.” The Lord asked, “Who do you

want to be like?" I replied, "I would like to be like Moses." "Why do you want to be like Moses?" God asked. I said, "Lord, I need to be more humble. Moses walked before you in humility, the meekest of all men. If I could just be like Moses!" God said to me, "Let me ask you a question: If you saw my finger of fire write on tablets of stone, and my glory was revealed to you, and you heard my audible voice, would you disobey me?" I said, "God, I have seen your glory. I have heard your voice. I have never seen your finger of fire, but I would not knowingly disobey you, especially after that." The Lord responded, "Moses did! Moses so disobeyed me I could not let him go into the promised land."

I said, "All right, God, forget about Moses. Let me be like Abraham." God said, "Abraham? Why do you want to be like him?" I said, "Lord, Abraham was the father of faith. He had such tremendous faith and trust in you. I do not have anywhere near the faith I should have." God asked, "Son, do you love your wife?" I responded, "Lord, what do faith in God and loving my wife have to do with this — of course, I love her." He said, "What would you do if three men knocked on your door in the middle of the night and said, 'We hear your wife is very beautiful and we want to take her. Give her to us.' What would you do?" I said, "God, you know exactly what I would do. I would kill them!" At this point the brother said to those listening to this testimony, "I hope you don't feel any less about me, but that is true. You may think that is a terrible confession but I am telling you the truth. I would kill them, or they would have to kill me first and walk over my dead body before they would get to my wife. That is how much I love her." He then continued, stating that God said to him, "That is true. I know you. But Abraham went through a strange land and became afraid. This great man of faith pawned his wife off as his sister in order to protect his own life. I had to intervene and stop that man from sleeping with Abraham's wife!" Then God asked me, "Now — who do you want to be like?"

I told Him, "God, please have patience with me. One more. Let me be like David." God said, "David?" Have you ever read the Psalms? What kind of heart David must have had to write as he did! The scripture testifies of him that he was a man after God's own heart! How he sought God and walked with God! I said, "Lord, I don't seek you enough. I don't cry out enough to you. I don't long for you, yearn after you enough. I want to be like David." Again the Lord said to me, "Son, did you ever kill anybody?" I said, "No." He said, "Did you ever take another man's wife?" I said, "No, I never have taken another man's wife." God said to me, "David did!" By this time I was weeping. I said, "Lord, I understand what you are trying to tell me!"

Ah, the message is clear — the 144,000 do not follow, trust in, lean upon, give allegiance to, be guided by, accept as authority, imitate, emulate, pursue, or run after *any man!* These are *redeemed from among men*. They follow the Lamb whithersoever HE goeth! As He is The Lamb, so are they also *lambs*. They are conformed to the image of the Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren! They are like Him, entirely like Him, exactly like Him! They emulate no saint, no preacher, no bishop, no apostle, no prophet — for they follow the Lamb. They listen for no voice but His, they step only where He steps, and stand with Him upon *His* holy mountain. They continually and constantly "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

One translation renders the passage, "*Let us run...looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.*" **Pioneer** — this is a word in the vocabulary of travelers. Those who have grown up in the United States and Canada are familiar with this kind of traveler. Unlike explorers, who set out to discover what territory is beyond the horizon; unlike surveyors, who plot out the ground; pioneers travel to places where they can settle for the rest of their lives. The pioneers of the American West, for example, traveled in Conestoga wagons pulled by teams of oxen. At night they would draw their wagons into circles to protect themselves from Indian attack. The author of the book of Hebrews calls Jesus "*the pioneer.*" Jesus came not to explore, or to partition, or to sight-see. Nor was He a pilgrim, making a journey to visit a place someone else had made sacred. Oh, no! He was Himself the pioneer, claiming a calling, a purpose, a position, an attainment, a destiny, the very highest place in God for Himself and for all who would *follow Him*. It was not easy! Jesus the pioneer struggled against great odds to secure a stronghold for all the sons of God. His opponents were the religious

leaders of the day and the corruption in society. Like a sturdy pioneer, Christ prevailed; He persevered through a world of sin, through the arrogance and hostility of the entrenched religious system of the day, through the temptations of the adversary, through the subtlety of His own human mind, through His own natural will, and through obedience unto death, even the death of the cross — THE PIONEER! Pioneers prepare the way for those who follow. In this case, the promised land is **mount Zion**. No wonder we read, *“Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer...”* In the words of the old hymn, “My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, and all I have to do is *follow...*” It is indeed wonderful!

The mystery of God in Christ is exceeding great and the longer we walk with God, the deeper the mystery becomes, yet the depth of the mystery is not that which beclouds the understanding, but that which shines with scintillating brightness revealing the glory of God. Sometimes I am brought into seasons of deep meditation and contemplation concerning the majesty of the Lamb and those who stand with Him upon mount Zion. There has been a mystery in the fact that all the sons share the fullness of His glory, reflect His image to which they are fully conformed, and sit with Him upon His throne, which is also His Father’s throne. The question presents itself — how can we know *equality* with Christ while at the same time acknowledging HIS PREEMINENCE in all things? As I have waited before the Lord I have come to see that the idea of equality with Jesus has two levels of application — *rank* and *function*. As to rank, He is the firstborn among many brethren, the pioneer of our faith, the Head of the body, and the King of the kings. As to function as sons of God, we are His “many brethren” who “share His glory” and “reveal His fullness” under the yoke with Him.

Let me give you an illustration. I have been called to serve on juries a few times during my lifetime. When a jury is formed the first matter of business is to appoint a “foreman.” No one else can fulfill the *rank* of foreman — he guides, leads, moderates the proceedings, and makes requests of the judge if necessary. However, as to *function*, each of the twelve jurors is equal. The foreman is no more a juror than any of the others. He bears the same responsibility of looking at the evidence, forming a conclusion, and casting a vote. Being foreman gives him absolutely no advantage or superior power as a juror. His vote carries no more weight than any other. Each vote is equal. In like manner, as to rank, our Elder Brother has a superior rank, for He is the Leader, the Pioneer, the Firstborn, the Captain of our salvation, and the Lord of all the lords! He leads — we follow. But as to function, our sonship to the Father is one of equality — we all stand upon the same height of the mount Zion — He takes no advantage over us — for *as He is* in this world, *so are we!* He is not more of a Son than we are, He sits no higher on the throne, He has no greater degree of life, wisdom, knowledge, victory, holiness, glory, and power — for HE HAS FREELY GIVEN UNTO US ALL THINGS! Oh, the mystery of it!

There is another truth hidden in this blessed experience of following the Lamb *whithersoever* He goeth. John the Baptist announced Jesus that day at the Jordan river with these telling words, “Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world!” As the Lamb of God Jesus’ first stop on His journey to mount Zion was at another mount called Calvary. The flesh is wont to romanticize this idea of “following the Lamb,” while missing the great truth that in scripture the purpose of a lamb was, first and foremost, to become a sacrifice. As one has pointed out, “We hear Him call us, ‘Come and follow me,’ and we think He wants us to join Him in a walk by the sea of Galilee. Or perhaps He would sit with us under the shade of an olive tree, and tell us more about the power and wonder of His kingdom. We are sure that He wants us to help Him gather up the fragments after He feeds the multitudes bread and fish. It sounds like an excellent example of prosperity. Or perhaps it is time for Him to give *us* power to heal the sick, cast out devils, and raise the dead! All of these things have their time and place, and we rejoice in all that He does. A revival time in the camp is most welcomed — but this, this call from mount Calvary, ‘Come, follow me, yield your life to me as a whole burnt offering’ — are you sure you heard right?

“For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own

blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach' (Heb. 13:10-14). It is to be noted that when Jesus *went forth without the gate*, it was not a celebration time — there were no musical bands playing — no singing and dancing in the street. Without the camp He suffered, without the camp He was crucified. He left us an example, a footpath, consecrating for us a new and living way, and He leads us outside the camp, drawing us onward to where HE IS. *'For even hereunto were ye called: for Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps'* (1 Pet. 2:21). It is a way that includes 'the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death' (Phil. 3:10)."

There are ways in which we can trace the footprints of the Lamb's glory upon mount Zion. Every step that He took was also ordained for us, that we should follow in His steps. His whole life was marked by unswerving commitment to the purpose of His Father. It was not broken into fragments by many side issues of self-interest, or distracted by lesser pursuits. There was no cross-current of personal ambition. He never allowed the whims of friend or foe to interfere with His devotion to the Father's plan and will. The whole nature of Jesus was united in one single aim — to prosecute the purposes of God. To that one grand point He related all His words and works, His hopes and aims. He never narrowed His vision to the outer world. He looked at it in relation to the Father and the establishment of the kingdom in the earth.

This path led Him into the valley of misunderstanding, dispute, controversy, hostility, and danger. And finally Calvary laid its track before His feet! The judgment hall, the spittle of His enemies, cruel mocking, the crown of thorns, His beard plucked, His back torn, the weight of the cross, the pain of the nails, the agony of thirst, blood, and death, the darkness of the tomb — the pathway to mount Zion wound its treacherous way through all this! And for everyone who would attain to the unsurpassed glory of Zion's holy hill, there is nothing that the *Lamb* will not share with us. Even Calvary lays its trail before our feet! Those who "follow the Lamb" shrink from no part of the Lamb's life, whether on earth or in heaven. There is a fellowship of His sufferings for those who will dare that great enlistment. The law of sacrifice lays its claim upon us: *'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.'* *'I am crucified with Christ,'* said one who dared the uttermost renunciation, and entered into sacrificial partnership with the **Lamb** of God. Oh, yes! It is His purpose to transfigure our lives, confer upon us His glory, and lead us all the way to His throne. But with this in mind we reverently trace His footprints from Nazareth to Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to mount Calvary, from Calvary to the tomb, from the tomb to the resurrection, from resurrection to ascension to the dizzying heights of the holy mount and the pinnacle of glory, majesty, and redeeming power. Saviours come up upon mount Zion — via another mount — Calvary. That is the mystery.

The King there in His beauty,
Without a veil is seen;
It were a well-spent journey,
Though sev'n deaths lay between:
The Lamb, with His fair army,
Doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's band.

When Jesus was here on earth He never asked very many to follow Him. Though there were thousands who believed on Him and who followed Him around as He went from place to place, even walking all the way around the sea of Galilee to meet Him on the other side when He had crossed the sea by boat. They followed Him to hear Him teach, to see the miracles He did, and to eat of the loaves and the fishes; but this is not what He meant when He said, "Follow me," to Peter and his brother Andrew, and to John, James, and a few others. This following Him was something different. They followed Him on their own account. He had never bidden them to follow Him! To those men that Jesus had called to follow Him, He said, *"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me,*

in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mat. 19:28). Those who sit with Him upon His throne are those who have been **called** to follow Him. Just following is not enough! If one has not received the **call** to sonship he will never complete the journey. The multitudes followed Jesus around the lake, but when He ceased to multiply bread and fish and commenced to speak the deep mysteries of the kingdom of God, the multitude began to filter away and followed Him no more.

I heard His call, “Come follow,” that was all.
The world grew dim, my soul went after Him,
I rose and followed; that was all.
Who would not follow, if they heard Him *call*?

The sad truth is that some can even receive the call, and still fail or refuse to follow the Lamb. To follow the Lamb *all the way* is not an easy proposition! Of the three would-be followers Jesus encountered on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified, only one of them said, “I will follow you *wherever* you go.” But Jesus saw through His presumptive words, replying, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.” Jesus wasn’t telling this man that if he followed Him he would have to spend his nights sleeping on the hard, cold ground. That would have indeed been enough to discourage some from following! But the words of Jesus carry a deeper meaning and message than a mere physical discomfort. Jesus was pointing to HIS HEADSHIP and the fact that He had yet to find a people so abandoned unto Him, so committed to follow Him, so consecrated to follow none other but Him, so ready to forsake everything else, so determined to go to Calvary and onward and onward down the pathway of the Lamb, that HE COULD CONFER HIS HEADSHIP UPON THEM. Ah, this is what constitutes Christ the Head and Christ the body — a body that is so attached to the Head that it goes *whithersoever* the Head directs with no hesitation whatsoever! It is upon such a people that the Son of man *lays* or *places* HIS HEAD!

To another Jesus said, “Follow me.” But his response was, “Lord, let me *first* go and bury my father.” He was told, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” This man wanted to first bury all of the old order, in order to then walk in the new. But that cannot be done! When we begin to *follow on* to know the Lord we soon discover that the old order will take care of itself. The way into the new is not to bury the old, but to follow the Lamb. The new will unfold before us, and the old will fall away of its own accord. Isn’t it wonderful!

The third would-be follower said, “I will follow you, Lord; but let me *first* say farewell to those at my home.” Jesus replied by telling him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” Peter also promised to follow Jesus, not only to prison, but also to death, but failed to keep his word. Only those who take an irrevocable stand for the Lamb can follow Him wherever He goes, for they alone follow Him out of unselfish love, without reservations, and without looking back. Only they are fully committed to do His will no matter *where* it leads. Only they are willing to give up their rights to themselves and lay down their lives for Jesus. Only they are ready to follow the Lamb not only beside still waters and through green pastures, but also through troubled waters and the valley of the shadow of death. Wherever He goes, they follow! And these have no request to return to tell the old order of the flesh and Babylon “Goodbye,” for it holds nothing for them anymore. Oh, my Father! What a word is this!

Charles Allen related the fascinating story of the migration of the Pacific Golden Plover. “Those birds are hatched in the northlands of Alaska and Siberia. Before the young ones are old enough to fly great distances, the old birds desert them and fly far away to the Hawaiian Islands. The young birds are left behind to grow strong enough to follow their parents. One day these birds rise into the sky and set their course out over the Pacific. They have never made that journey before and they must cross two thousand miles of ocean, with no marks to guide them. During this trip they have not even

one opportunity to stop for rest or food and frequently they encounter high winds and storms. Yet unerringly they fly straight to those tiny specks in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Islands.”

How do you explain the flight of these birds? Surely God has provided them with something akin to our radio beams, *something they can follow without getting lost*. And it is *within them!* Has God not made the same provision for His sons? Jesus, our Forerunner, has gone before. He has ascended to the heavenly mount Zion. He reigns upon the throne in the heavens of the Spirit. And now, blessed be His name, within all who have received the call to sonship God has provided our very own INTERNAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM! This internal guidance system is discovered as we grow in the Lord — the secret, innate knowledge of our origin and destiny, that inward, irresistible compulsion of divine purpose, the deep mysterious urging of the inner spirit of life by the mind of Christ raised up within us — something we can follow without getting lost! As our lives are brought into harmony with our Father’s will, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, even though we cannot see the way ahead, we possess an instinctive sense of the right direction, and with understanding, courage, and confidence we move steadily forward without any fear of getting lost or missing the goal, knowing that through the storms, desert places, dark valleys, and rough and rocky roads, we shall arrive at last to stand with the Lamb upon the mount Zion. Aren’t you glad!

Consider with me an actor preparing for his role in an upcoming drama. He pours over his lines. Striding back and forth in his room, he commits to memory the lines he has been assigned for the play. It is a major part; he will be the dominant actor. The action will swirl around him. He needs to get the lines memorized, know the director’s instructions about where to move in each scene, and get a “feel” for how each scene is to be played. He spends hours and hours to get this drama to fit the director’s expectation. When the curtain is raised on the drama, he will be judged on how closely he stays with the script. The play will become unintelligible if he doesn’t follow the script!

Jesus had walked out every step of His ordained pathway and was now approaching the cross, resurrection, and ascension — the “end game” of His journey to mount Zion. On the night of His last supper with His disciples He said to them, “*The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him*” (Mk. 14:21). It was written of Him! One can reverently say that His life was scripted for Him. All the major events were foretold in *scripture*. Yes, it was written in the scriptures, but it was also written *within Him in the scroll of His life*. The Father dwelt within Him, spoke within Him, worked within Him. The revelation of who He was and what He came to do was not merely learned out of the scriptures — it was learned from the voice of the Father within, out of the very mind of the Father written in His forehead! At every step Jesus shows that He knew this script by heart! This script, this inward knowledge, this inner revelation, this voice from out of His innermost Being — this was Jesus’ INTERNAL GUIDANCE SYSTEM! This is what He followed, how He journeyed from heaven to earth and all the way up to mount Zion. And now, my beloved, WE FOLLOW THE LAMB. By hearing the voice of the spirit within, by receiving the *call* within ourselves to follow the Lamb, and by stepping forth day by day to walk out the revelation of the spirit we find the “script” for *our lives* is easier to know and understand! It is leading us to mount Zion!

Chapter 163

The 144,000 On Mount Zion (continued)

“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand...these were redeemed from among men, *being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*” (Rev. 14:1,4).

It is very clear from the above scripture that the designation “firstfruits” is drawn from the well-known offering of “firstfruits” under the Old Testament law of Israel, in which the first portion of any harvest was dedicated to God, in token that the whole belonged to Him, and was recognized as His. Hence it always implies that something of the same kind will follow it. If there was a field of wheat, the firstfruits, the very first of the ripened grain, would be offered up to God, following which the entire field of wheat would come to the same condition of maturity. In this signification it is often used in the New Testament in the *spiritual sense*: “If the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump;” “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit;” “But every man in his own order: a firstfruit anointed; afterwards they that are Christ’s at His appearing. Then cometh the end;” “Epeanetus, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ;” “Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep;” “Of His own will begat He us...that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” In like manner the mention of the hundred and forty-four thousand as “firstfruits” suggests that they are the first of an order, specially consecrated to God — with a great harvest to follow!

Notice further that these 144,000 are firstfruits for God and for the Lamb in the sense that they were purchased, as the Greek expresses it, *away from men*. In other words, there was a separation: the firstfruits were uniquely for the Lord. In its broad application it signifies a people set apart from men in general, separated unto God; but in a deeper sense it speaks of them being separated from the *Adamic nature*, from the *human consciousness*, and from the *soulical religious disposition*, for in the Revelation the symbol of “men” often refers to the state of the natural man within ourselves, as well as the whole race of mankind. So they are firstfruits, purchased away from *men*.” This is also evident from the fact that these 144,000 “had His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.” And as such they are the opposite of “the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond” who receive the mark of the beast on their right hand or in their forehead.”

They are firstfruits — that means after this the full harvest will be brought before God, for the full harvest must come as well as the firstfruits. It is significant to note that here in the early verses of chapter fourteen we are shown a wonderful picture of the firstfruits. Then in the closing verses of the chapter we see a dramatic picture of the gathering of the full harvest! “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and *reap*: for the time has come for thee to *reap*; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the *earth was reaped*” (Rev. 14:15-16). And then only a few verses later, in the fifteenth chapter, we see the fruit of this: “Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For *all nations shall come and worship before Thee*; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest” (Rev. 15:4).

Notice — the 144,000 are **first** — they are not *only*, they are **first**. They are not *better*, they’re just **first**. They are destined to affect all mankind, for these are redeemed *from among men*, being the **firstfruits** (of mankind) unto God and to the Lamb. These are not the firstfruits of an elementary salvation, where men experience the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God. Oh, no! We have untold millions of these, and yet all mankind is still subject to the bondage of corruption. These are the firstfruits of the *finished product*, perfected, totally transformed, fully matured, incorruptible *sons of God*. That clearly is what we see in all the symbolism of their being virgins, following the

Lamb whithersoever He goeth, standing upon mount Zion, redeemed fully away from the human identity, with no guile, and without fault. And they are the firstfruits of *that kind of men!* These will be responsible for bringing all mankind back to the Father, not just to Father's house, but with the Father's ring of authority, with the Father's garment of royalty, and the Father's feast wherein all men partake of the FULLNESS OF GOD! As the firstfruits are, **so shall all men be!** That is the mystery.

NO GUILF — WITHOUT FAULT

“And in their mouth was found *no guile*, for they are *without fault*...” Rev. 14:5).

In the past, some popular television evangelists and other well-known ministries have caused some embarrassment among Christians due to impropriety with women. Men claiming to be “servants of God” have been found guilty of adultery, rape, consorting with prostitutes, or engaging in homosexual activities. Perhaps the greatest sin in these cases is that these men did not come forward to confess their sins until “caught.” One wonders how sincere a confession can be after being “caught in the act.” Yet, when our text tells us that these 144,000 have no guile and are without fault the issue is not one of fleshly lust, but one of *deceit* — no *guile* in their *mouth*. How utterly awesome! The Greek word is *dolos*, meaning “deceit, subtilty, crafty, a trick — a lie.” No deceit or trickery in their speech. These are certainly not the preachers who use every trick in the bag to raise an offering and fleece God's people of their money! The question is asked in Psalm 15, “*Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?*” The answer is, “*He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*” It is with this last characteristic that the 144,000 correspond, and they are upon God's holy hill of Zion with the Lamb. The King James Bible reads, “*They are without fault before the throne of God.*” The words “before the throne of God,” however, are not in the best manuscripts, and are dropped now by common consent of all translators as no part of the original. Even if we did not know this, we would suspect it, for those standing on mount Zion are not, in symbol, “before” the throne of God — they are UPON THE THRONE! Throughout the book of Revelation a clear distinction is drawn between those who stand “before” the throne and those who sit “upon” the throne. This clearly identifies the 144,000 as the same company as the manchild in chapter twelve and the four living ones in chapter four!

Having truth in the inward parts, no lie was found in their mouth. True sons pray with the Psalmist of old, “*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer*” (Ps. 19:14). And the apostle James tells us that “*if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man*” (James 3:1). The word of these sons of God is a *sure word*, and such a word is possible because it comes out of a state of being which is “**without fault.**” The word in the Greek is *amomos*, meaning “blameless, without blemish, without spot.” It bespeaks the qualification first of Him who is “*the Lamb without blemish and without spot*” (I Pet. 1:19). Ah, this is the same Lamb standing upon the mount Zion! And now He is able to bring all who follow Him to that same state of having no guile and being without blemish. He is truly able to “*present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy*” (Jude 24). What anticipation this stirs within our hearts! He that is within us is mighty, and He is abundantly able to do this! As Ray Prinzing once said, “If ever a victory testified to the capability and success of the Redemptive process, this company, which stands with the Lamb upon mount Zion, is a living manifestation of that triumph!” Their temple has been so thoroughly cleansed that the mouth has become a channel for the words of God.

It will be useful to us to note that many translations read that in their mouth was not found (the) LIE, rather than the word “guile.” Furthermore, the Greek text is clear that “they are blameless” **with regard to the LIE.** The lie is believed as a result of not receiving the love of the truth (II Thes. 2:10). The overcomers who repudiate the lie stand on mount Zion, just as those who are unable to enter into the holy city, New Jerusalem, are those who “make a LIE.” The *truth* has ever been the mark of God's children, and the *lie* the mark of the devil's children. To the scribes and Pharisees Jesus said,

*“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and **abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it**” (Jn. 8:44). God is “a God of **truth, and without iniquity**” (Deut. 32:4). He is a God that “cannot lie” (Tit. 1:2). And to those who follow the Lamb it is written, “But you have not thus learned Christ, if indeed you heard Him, and were taught by Him, as the **truth is in Jesus (namely) to put away from you the former manner of life, the old man which is corrupt...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and to put on the new man which according to God has been created in holiness and righteousness of truth; wherefore, putting off THE LIE, speak every man truth with his neighbor**” (Eph. 4:21-25). I have used this translation because it correctly translates the Greek text which reads, “putting off THE LIE,” rather than “putting away lying” as the King James Bible renders it.*

Read that passage again, carefully, and you find that here **THE LIE IS THE OLD MAN AND HIS DEEDS**. This is fundamental! Throughout the book of Revelation “men” in most cases refers to the Adamic man, the natural man, the men who cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him who sits upon the throne; men who have not the seal of God, men who die of the bitter waters, men who seek death and cannot find it, men hurt by the sting of the scorpions, slain men, men upon whom fall grievous sores, men scorched by the sun, men upon whom great hail falls, men who blaspheme God because of the plagues, men whose flesh is consumed at the great supper of God. Oh, yes! The man who does not receive the knowledge of the truth and the love of the truth, does believe *the lie*; not merely a lie, but *the lie*.

The message is just this: Christ is “the truth,” the old man is “the lie.” With a lie Satan deceived our first parents by offering them a godhood in independence from God Himself — and that lie has lived on in the human race from that day to this. There they were, spiritual beings, in the image of God. Yet Satan promised them that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would be *as God* in a way that God had deliberately withheld from them — in the knowledge of good and evil. This sounded *so spiritual*, it was designed to make them *more like God!* Who wouldn’t want to be more like God? This had to be a great revelation because it inspired men to be more God-like! After the woman and the man partook of that realm of sense-consciousness, self-determination, and fleshly wisdom, God Himself acknowledged that they had indeed become “*as one of us, to know good and evil*” (Gen. 3:22). Yes, they had become AS GOD! They had assumed a state of GODHOOD! The only problem was that it was a godhood in the wrong realm! It was a godhood of *independence from the life of God*, not a Godhood through *union with God*. Man became a self-created god, a self-centered god, truly the *god of this world*, but not the expression of the divine nature. The Spirit of God which had been in union with man’s spirit fled, and man’s spirit sank low into the hidden depths of his being.

Man took on a distorted, corrupted consciousness, accepting himself as something other than his true being. And that, my friend, is THE LIE! It is not the truth about God and it is not the truth about God’s purpose in man! Paul made this crystal clear when he said that the *old man IS the lie!* That is not who you are! All the reasoning of the carnal mind, all the self-hood of the natural man, all the vanities of the human personality, the ego of the human nature, the lusts, desires, plans, purposes, ambitions and grasping of the flesh man is part and parcel of THE LIE. Paul stated it so plainly, and I give it as it is in the Greek text: “*Who changed the truth of God into THE LIE, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator*” (Rom. 1:25). Every man who lives in self-centeredness, walking after the understanding of the carnal mind, obeying the lusts of his flesh, driven by the impulses of the soul, is fully deceived by *the lie!* He *thinks* that is *reality!*

Adam is *the lie*, and our Lord Jesus Christ is *the truth!* What a man thinks himself to be in the Adamic life and nature is the lie; what a man knows himself to be in Christ is the truth! The grandest of all truths is that CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD! If you want to know what God had in mind when He said, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness,” you have only to look at Jesus Christ. **That is what God meant!** “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost* (who

know not *who* or *where* they are): in whom the god of this world hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). “In whom we have redemption through His blood...who is THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, the firstborn (prototype) of *every creature*” (Col. 1:14-15).

We will only understand the majesty of man in God’s image when we see that Jesus Christ is the express or *exact* image of the Father’s Being, the perfect imprint and very image of God’s nature (Heb. 1:3-4). The allusion here is to the impression made in ancient times by a seal on molten wax; and as the image made on the wax is the exact representation (though on another substance) of the die, so is Christ the precise representation of the Father in human flesh. And thus He was able to say, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, but this is what God meant when He said, “Let us make *man* in our image, and after our likeness.” CHRIST is the image of God and God meant for every man to look and speak and act like Jesus Christ! And that is *the truth* as it is in Jesus! Anything less than that, accepted as the normal human state, is *the lie!*

As we consider the wonderful advent of man created “in the image of God” we can only conclude that is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, attributes, and power. The “image” of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus the spiritual man is the true image of God! The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shined upon mortals the truest revelation of God and lifted man’s sights higher than their poor thoughts would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption and so great a salvation shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD.

We are birthed into this carnal Adamic realm of life, which is really death, not knowing what our original and true state was, who we are, why we are here, or what God’s purpose is for us. So because we do not know we assume that carnality, sin, and death is our true heritage and destiny. We accept our state of being in the Adamic identity; after all, we are “just human.” We believe *the lie!* Not only do we believe it, we live it! We are captives of a nature that is controlled by a law — the law of sin and death. So the Adamic identity is unable to be anything other than it is, for it is a lie, and cannot receive the truth. No matter how much Adam wants to be godly, no matter how often he goes to church, no matter how many scriptures he learns or resolutions he makes, he always fails, for he is living out of a lie.

Even most of God’s people today do not realize that the Adamic nature, human ego, and the carnal consciousness, need to be totally consumed by Christ. Christ is our true identity, not the human consciousness. The Adamic life is the lie that keeps us bound and limited. The carnal mind knows that it cannot live as Jesus lived on the earth. It knows that it cannot be pure and holy, it cannot love unconditionally, it cannot love its enemies, it cannot conquer sin and death, it cannot possibly multiply the loaves and fishes, walk on water, heal the sick, or raise the dead. Yet because we have not fully *unbelieved* the lie, and because of our hunger and thirst after God, we keep trying to perfect human nature and purify the human consciousness, in order to please God and be more like Him. Then we feel condemned, because we cannot do or be that which we desire!

When your eyes are opened to see that Christ in you *is your true life*, then you realize that all the struggling you have done in Adam is to no avail. The idea that you can somehow perfect the old man is part of the lie! Once we learn the truth as it is in Jesus we are able to focus our attention on the reality of the Christ Life within. This is not mere head knowledge. This is a paradigm shift! This is understanding that Adam is a lie, so we now embrace the truth. We repudiate the lie! The truth is that Christ IS OUR LIFE! Forget Adam. He is just a corpse! In reality, he is not even there, for he is *the lie*. The more we turn our attention away from our Adamic consciousness and focus our

attention on Christ within, the more the new man, who is the image of God, will arise in our consciousness as the power of our life. It is not by trying to discipline Adam, it is by focusing on Christ! CHRIST IS THE TRUTH! Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God! Embrace the truth and there will come a mighty transformation! Can you hear what I'm saying? If Adam no longer motivates me, if I'm not driven by the natural desire to be godly, if there's nothing in me any longer that tries desperately to be godly, if I am no longer trying to make myself better, always making resolutions, always confessing sins, but I simply rest in HIS ability within to do that in me which I cannot do, and He begins to arise within me replacing all my good, carnal, natural desires, replacing everything with the Law of His Life, and He fills my temple with Himself and His glory, then *who am I*, what is my true identity? CHRIST IS MY LIFE! You see, my beloved, THAT IS **THE TRUTH!** This is what we are coming to. This is what the world is longing to see, God *manifested in humanity!* That is the image of God in man!

These sons of God upon mount Zion are **without fault** — in their mouth is found **no guile** — no lie, no deceit, no false confession, no acknowledgement of Adam, no admission of being “just human,” no declaration of a mistaken identity. These stand upon mount Zion with the Lamb who is without spot or blemish, He who is the truth, and they are **like Him**, entirely **like Him**, they are **as He is** in this world, new creation men, sons of God, the body of God's Christ. In their mouth is no guile, for CHRIST IS THEIR ONE AND ONLY CONFESSION! Oh, the wonder of it!

*“These were **redeemed from among men**, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”*

These are redeemed from “among men,” and the men whom they are redeemed away from signify that there is **another man** in the earth today. This man is the man of THE LIE — A FALSE, DECEIVING MAN! For “guile” is always found in the mouth of this man! Only the 144,000 are found to have “no guile” in their mouth!

There passes across the pages of scripture a character who is awesome and appalling. This menacing figure is mysterious; he is hazy and he is enigmatical. Sometimes he is the shady character of a man. Again, he is an evil influence. Then again, he is an angel of light. There is actually no crystal-clear, cameo-cut presentation of him. He moves on the borderline of the natural and the supernatural. John, in his epistles, calls him by the name “antichrist.” This does not mean, of course, that only John refers to him. Jesus, Paul, Peter, David, Solomon, and many other of the writers of the Bible speak of him. He has many names in scripture, and, as most crooks have aliases, antichrist has more aliases than any person I know of! Also many figures of speech are used in scripture to speak of him, to set him before us, and they occur again and again. One of these is found in II Thessalonians 2:1-10, where he is called “the man of sin.”

*“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that **man of sin be revealed**, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now restraineth (the man of sin) will restrain, until he be taken out of the way. Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (II Thes. 2:3-4, 7-8).*

In these verses it is interesting to note that the “falling away” and the “man of sin” should be so LINKED TOGETHER! Indeed, these two realities have been with us a long, long time. The first person in recorded history to “fall way” from the truth and from his place in God was Adam; we have all heard of the “fall” of Adam! Of him it is written, “by one **man sin** entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all **men**, for that **all** have **sinned...**for by **one man's** disobedience **many were made sinners...**” (Rom. 5:12,19). Can we not see by this that Adam himself was a MAN OF SIN. The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can give men light. My earnest prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God shall shine as

a beacon light to guide our footsteps and illumine our pathway as we now go back to the shadowy mists of man's beginning on earth and trace the dilemma, mysterious and sinister, that has bedeviled his path from the dazzling glory of Eden on down to the dreadful darkness of this present time.

When Adam fell we fell with him. Because one man sinned, we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Can we not see by this that in the Adam-nature lies the very root of the MAN OF SIN? In fact, every Adamic man has been a "man of sin"! Truly, *Adam is the man* who made the earth to tremble, that shook kingdoms, and made the earth a wilderness, for it was to him and to him alone that these terrible words were spoken: "Cursed is the ground (earth-realm) for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). When God formed man He placed him in Eden, a kingdom of peace and righteousness and power; but when Adam sinned, he and all his descendants were cast out into a wilderness of sin, suffering, and death. Now poor, sin-laden mankind, darkened in mind and impoverished in spirit, is forever spending money for that which is not bread and laboring for that which satisfieth not. As one has pointed out, vainly they imagine that their thirst can be quenched by partaking of the stagnant waters of earth's fleshly cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Place after place they roam in their pitiful search for the fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to Christ. They fill the bars and nightclubs to buy wine and strong drink that can do no more than dull their senses, unleashing their passions and rage. They throng the places of pleasure in their unending longing to satisfy the thirst that is within them. They fill their lives with the vanity of things and more things, only to find that all they have attained rises to mock them in the end. This is the way of the world. No satisfaction can be gained from its fountains, for all its potions are libations of death.

Yes, my beloved, within the Adam-nature lies the root of the "man of sin" who brought this dreadful condition and we are all too aware of the inbred power of sin. "I am *sold* under sin," Paul lamented, "for by *man* came *sin*," he said again. Sold under sin means he was a slave to it, and we all know the meaning of this bondage and slavery, and our hearts cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). As it has been stated, "We literally weep these words from hearts that are weary of sin!" The spirit of Adam, the man of sin, is within every man. The unvarnished truth is that he dwells within the saved man as well as the unconverted. Some will deny this, but deep within their heart they know better.

Is not this what Paul meant when he wrote, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin *be revealed*, the son of perdition: who opposeth and exalteth *himself* above all that is called God; so that he *as God* sitteth in *the temple of God*, showing *himself* that he *is* God." This is precisely why, after the first few holy years of the early church, there arose such an apostasy, a "falling away" of such a dark and dreadful nature that that church, once glorious, actually *became* the swaggering, filthy harlot, rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing, drunken with the blood of saints, riding in pomp and arrogance upon the back of the bestial system of this present evil world.

The principle never changes! Adam "fell away" from his pure walk in the Spirit to become the "man of sin" in that dawning day. The hearts of God's people in the early church "fell away" from the love of the truth and the simplicity that is in Christ, so that the "man of sin" became revealed in the temple of God. This has been the course in dealing after dealing, revival after revival, move of God after move of God. It sounds strange, but it is true...and it is just as true in our day! God brings a people out of some form of religious Babylon, they desire the liberty of the Spirit in their midst, they throw off the bondages of man's domination, of rules, programs, and creeds, they profess that they want Christ to have His Lordship in their lives, and for a while they so walk; but, ere long, the unsanctified *man of sin* arises in their hearts, in the very *temple of God* which they are, and pursuing the vision of God, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth becomes burdensome to their flesh, and someone cries out, "Give us a leader, someone who will tell us what we are supposed to do, someone who can organize this thing, get everyone properly involved and committed, and make the church *grow*." And after every fresh moving of the Spirit of God in the earth, as men settle in to the

new thing God has done and revealed, sooner or later SELF exalts HIMSELF in the temple of God, and men begin to set up a pattern of church life and doctrine and ritual very much like the old ways they were accustomed to in their former bondage, and there is a reoccurrence of THE FALL once again!

That *man of sin* of whom Paul spoke is none other than the old Adamic-nature, the self-life ego of the natural man and the fleshly mind sitting on the throne of a man's life, usurping the throne of HIS LORDSHIP in our own temple, setting himself up in self-will against the Father's will, making himself to be, instead of the Spirit, the owner and master and captain of our lives, showing himself that *he is God in the temple of our being*.

Tales of fiction and the most absurd imaginations of childhood furnish no parallel to the extreme notions of some of God's dear children who have naively swallowed the carnal interpretations of natural-minded and tradition-ridden theologians of the religious systems of man. Untold millions of Christians have lived in mortal fear of the arising of the dreadful *man of sin*. He is supposed to be a world political leader, sinister and tyrannical, the incarnation of Evil, the very offspring of the Devil, and the ruthless enemy of the Jews. He is to be revealed after the supposed "rapture" of the church to heaven, and will make his headquarters in Jerusalem. He will set himself up in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and declare himself Almighty God. His manifestation marks the beginning of "Daniel's 70th week," according to their teaching. The Scofield Reference Bible, Blackstone and other authorities? in general, subscribe to this view although there is almost unlimited speculation on details.

There are many fallacies in the popular interpretation of this scripture. First, Paul is addressing the "brethren" in the church of his day, rather than the Jews. The "brethren" would not be affected if they were to be "raptured," and no warning was given to the Jews who are supposed to be the "victims" of the man of sin! In II Thessalonians 2:7, Paul said that this mystery of iniquity "doth *already work*." This statement cannot fit in with something that is to happen some two thousand years later! After Paul warned the brethren about the man of sin he exhorted them to *stand fast* and hold the teachings they had received (vs. 15). This would be non-sensical advice if it was not meant to be heeded for two thousand years! Furthermore, absolutely *nothing* is said in this passage about any rapture, great tribulation, seventieth week, world political leader, or the *rebuilding* of a Jewish temple. Every bit of that is pure myth, legend, superstition, folklore, and fairy tales!

Oh! may God give us spiritual minds to discern Paul's true *spiritual meaning* as he identifies and lays bare the roots of this man of sin and declares, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." Iniquity — the Greek word here means *lawlessness* — without law. And while it is true that we are no longer bound under the old laws of the ministration of death written and engraven in stone, the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which has been taken out of the way, nailed to His cross (II Cor. 3:6-11; Col. 2:14), we are not now lawless, for in the heavenly realm we have been brought into relationship with the higher and greater law — THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS! (Rom. 8:2). The laws of Moses were natural laws designed for natural men, but God is now bringing His elect into complete harmony with HIS SPIRITUAL LAWS, so that as heavenly and spiritual men we are ordered aright in His ways. How difficult can it be to understand that the old man — the Adamic man, the carnal mind, the flesh nature — *does not* and *cannot* obey the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus or any other spiritual law of God! It is impossible! That is the "mystery of lawlessness" that was already being manifest in Paul's day, only a few decades after the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had been released into the body of Christ. As to the laws of the spiritual realm of the kingdom of God the Adamic man is a worker of iniquity — *lawlessness!* That is a great discovery for God's people, even today!

Jesus touched on these higher laws of the kingdom when He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name?"

and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work **iniquity — lawlessness!**” (Mat. 7:21-23). There are two classes of people which immediately stand out in this passage of scripture, **THOSE WHO DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER**, and **THOSE WHO WORK LAWLESSNESS**. I think we know, at least in a measure, what Jesus means when He speaks of those who do the will of the Father, for these are they who have been so dealt with by God’s mighty hand that they have surrendered their own will into HIS WILL. These have been taught His laws, His commandments, precepts, ways, purposes, and will by the Spirit and they delight to do them! These are those sons of God who say with Jesus, “I am able to do nothing from myself — independently, of my own accord; but as I am taught by God and as I get His orders — because I do not seek or consult my own will — I have no desire to do what is pleasing to myself, my own aim, my own purpose — but **ONLY THE WILL AND THE PLEASURE OF THE FATHER**” (Jn. 5:30, Amplified).

It is this other group, the **WORKERS OF LAWLESSNESS**, that we would briefly consider. These are not the ungodly who aren’t even aware that there is a kingdom to be received, for such, being dead in trespasses and sins, must first be awakened into spiritual consciousness, and then they can hear the gospel of the kingdom, and be led therein. But these are religious folk, even religious folk who claim to be filled with the Spirit and have power to do great and mighty things for God, even prophesying, casting out devils, and performing signs, wonders, and miracles, and they cry, “Lord, Lord,” claiming His Lordship. Yet He says to them, “I never knew you!” The word “knew” in Greek denotes to “know intimately, as a husband *knows* his wife through intercourse.” “And Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived...” (Gen. 4:1). So Jesus says to these, “I did not know you intimately, you did not receive the *seed of my word* into you.” They are out busily “doing” great things “for” God, they know that HE is supposed to be LORD in their life, the message of HIS LORDSHIP has reached them, and they even claim it, but they still continue to take their own way, creating their own plans, designs, programs, methods, and means, *in His name*, but it is *their way* rather than God’s, as they seek to operate in the kingdom on their own terms. “Workers of iniquity” — without law! These work according to their own designs and purposes, their own plans and objectives, and forget, forsake, cast aside, disannul the laws of God, the ways of His Spirit, the principles of His kingdom. They boast in their works, for they have prophesied, cast out devils, held large meetings, touched many lives, and done mighty things — **BUT NOT AT THE FATHER’S COMMAND NOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WAYS!**

Rather than ministering out of the law of the spirit of life, much of their ministry, teaching, praying, prophesying, miracles, etc., are but a cloak to conceal a servitude to the same old flesh and ego of the carnal nature as they seek a following, to make a name for themselves, and build a kingdom, to usurp control over other men’s lives, and use various gimmicks to fleece God’s people of their money to support their grandiose schemes and programs to save the nation or convert the world. They will prophesy or lay hands upon anyone they think will follow after them, or fill their coffers with money, and forget the admonition to “lay hands suddenly upon no man” (I Tim. 5:22). The point is clear, all our so-called spiritual works, if done outside the word and anointing of the Spirit, which is the law of God’s life, if done out of our own zeal and initiative, and not under the leadership and control of His Spirit, become a manifestation of lawlessness. Such can never be partakers of the kingdom which God holds in reserve for those who become **ONE IN HIS WILL**. To these, when the time comes to rule and reign upon the throne with Christ, He will say, “Depart from me...ye lawless ones!”

Have you noticed, precious saint of God, that Paul does not say of the man of sin that he *comes on the scene*, or that he *comes to power*, or even that he is *born* — but that he is **REVEALED!** He does not say that he seizes power, or that he marshals great armies, but simply that he is **REVEALED — IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD!** Revealed — the Greek word is *apokalupto*. Apokalupto is a compound word composed of *apo*, meaning “off” or “away,” and *kalupto*, meaning “to cover up.” Thus apokalupto means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, disclose, or reveal. It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils, or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: “There is nothing *covered* that shall not be *revealed*”

(uncovered)” (Mat. 10:26). Our English word “revelation” has become for many a word that signifies a strange belief or some far-out-doctrine, which should be handled as something delusive and dangerous, and avoided if possible. But this is just the opposite of the biblical meaning of the word, and the consideration we need to give to that which is revealed. That which is uncovered is no more a mystery, nor can it any longer be a threat. It is open to view, whether positive or negative, and can be considered without fear since it is no longer shrouded in darkness or mystery. Since *apokalupto* means to reveal, or unveil, there must be something to uncover or which may be uncovered. That something must be *present* or it cannot be uncovered; and it must be hidden from sight or not understood or it cannot be disclosed.

The whole world has been waiting for the man of sin to be born and to appear on the world scene, and now by the grace of God we are discovering that he has been here the whole time, yet unperceived, not understood, or seen; but now he is being uncovered, he is being *revealed* as the Lord makes known to His apprehended ones the awful depths of our own carnal minds, self-will, and inherent sin — faithfully and relentlessly purging, refining, crushing, and stripping us of all that pertains to the self-ego and mistaken identity of Adam’s nature.

The moment you understand this great truth, you will also be able to grasp the fact that the destruction of the man of sin comes **at the time he is revealed**. “And **then** shall that Wicked be **revealed**, whom the Lord shall **consume** by the spirit (word) of His mouth, and **destroy** with the brightness of His manifest presence” (II Thes. 2:8). This man of sin within will do everything in his power to conceal his identity, for his discovery is his undoing! He is hidden, not to God and Christ, but to every man who is not walking in the spirit. As our lives become exposed to the life and light of Christ the man of sin **is revealed**, uncovered, exposed — then to be dealt with, destroyed, consumed by the bright-burning of the Day Star arising within our hearts. If the cunning, craftiness, subtleness, deceitfulness, treachery, and wickedness of your own carnal mind, even the religious mind, is being uncovered, revealed, exposed by the Spirit’s dealings, and you find it abhorrent, and are distressed and horrified by it, then know, beloved, that THE HOUR OF HIS DESTRUCTION IS AT HAND! The order is: REVEALED... DESTROYED! Glory!

There is a story about a little piece of wood that once bitterly complained because its owner kept whittling away at it, gouging it and making holes in it. But the one who was cutting it paid no attention to the stick’s protests. He was making a flute out of that piece of ebony, and he was too wise to stop when the wood complained so bitterly. The man said, “Little piece of wood, without these rifts and holes, and all this cutting, you’d be just a stick forever — a useless piece of ebony. What I am doing now may seem as if I am destroying you, but instead it will change you into a flute. Your sweet music will charm the souls of many and comfort sorrowing hearts. My cutting you is the making of you, for only thus can you be a blessing in the world.”

The meaning of this little parable is clear: That flute, whose music blended so sweetly in the orchestra, was made a flute only by the knife and file that filled it with rifts and holes which seemed to be its very destruction. But the purpose of the master was *the cutting away of the outward form, so that breath could flow through it*. The breath upon the wood created a melodious sound which made it an instrument to the praise of God. Ah, the Lord is shaping us, my beloved, cutting away the denseness of our outer shell of human consciousness with it darkened understanding, making rifts and holes in the way that seems right to the natural man, that the in-breathed spirit of life from God may sweep through our earthen vessel, producing the image of God, that His glory might be revealed in creation. Isn’t it wonderful!

The Psalmist alluded to this process when he penned these inspired words: “**He weakened MY strength in the way; He shortened my days**” (Ps. 102:23). It is in bringing us to the end of ourselves, that we are prepared to rise up solely in HIS STRENGTH. It is the subduing of our will that brings us to the place where we fervently pray, “not my will, but Thine be done.” In ways which *He* knows best, He strips His sons of every prop of the flesh, removes their self-made reputations,

demolishes their personal kingdoms, dries up the fountains of their own soulish religious activities, and tenderly and carefully draws them aside into a separated walk where He unfolds truth and works it deep into their being. God has endured with much longsuffering the rule of the man of sin in the temple of His body, all the self-seeking of carnal men, who have presumed to speak and work in His name, and while they have usurped their positions and made their claims, He has secretly and silently prepared His own little flock of disciplined ones to whom He shall give the kingdom! These are called to stand with the Lamb upon the mount Zion, having the Father's name written in their foreheads, and in their mouth is found no guile, for they are without fault!

Call to remembrance here that the man of sin "exalts *himself* above all...so that he as *God* sitteth *in the temple of God*" (II Thes. 2:4). It is so tremendously important that we understand just what Paul meant by his use of the term "temple of God." The popular teaching is that Paul was speaking of a future rebuilt *Jewish temple* in the city of Jerusalem. But a careful study of every reference that Paul made in his epistles to the "temple of God" reveals that he **never** applied this term to the Jewish temple! When the New Testament speaks of the complete, *literal* temple, the Greek word *hieron* is used. This word is used seventy-one times in the New Testament in reference to the temple at Jerusalem. On the other hand, the word that Paul used for temple is *naos* which refers not the complete, literal temple complex, but to the Most Holy Place or the Holy of holies — the **dwelling place** of God! And the dwelling place of God is now THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY!

It cannot be temporal or transient as were the temples of Israel which were all destroyed in turn. The true temple, which is Christ's body, is eternal in the heavenlies! It is not earthly nor does it belong to the earthly realm, but to an heavenly, for the people that comprise this holy temple have been "redeemed away from men." It is not of corruption, but of incorruption. Paul wrote of it thus: "The temple of God is holy, which temple YE ARE" (I Cor. 3:17). "Know ye not that your body IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS IN YOU?" (I Cor. 6:19). "For YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD; as God hath said, I will *dwell in them*, and walk in them" (II Cor. 6:16).

Would God that all the saints might see that God's purpose from the foundation of the world has been the building of a spiritual house, a holy temple, an eternal abiding place in which He can be at home, and in which place He and His creation can meet. It is a temple made up of living stones. Every stone is a redeemed person and every stone is a person upon whom the mighty hand of God has been laid in dealing. More than three thousand years ago Solomon built a magnificent temple of stone and precious materials. He overlaid it with gold and adorned it with silver. So wonderful was it that the Queen of Sheba stood transfixed at the sight. But the temple built by Solomon was only an ephemeral foreshadow of the living temple which Christ would build by the Spirit — a temple not made with hands!

The beautiful temple in Jerusalem was a type and shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:16-17). Praise God, we are living in the days of those good things to come, a full realization of which causes us to bow our heads in awe and wonderment. These fulfillments are so astounding that to many they will seem fantastic. As with the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, so the temple of old was made according to the pattern of the true tabernacle which Moses saw in the mount, and in spite of all teachings to the contrary, there will never be another temple built to take the place of, or to serve the same ends as, that which passed away with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That temple was only the shadow of better things to come: merely the natural type of the spiritual reality which Moses saw in the mount and after which he patterned the shadow. So wherever we see a reference to a temple of the present or future, it **must** refer to "the true sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2), and to "the temple of God which is holy, which temple YE ARE" (I Cor. 3:17).

Furthermore, there is only one such tabernacle, or temple. The scriptures nowhere tell of two, or three, or one hundred, one away off somewhere in space where Jesus is ministering, another in Jerusalem built by the Jews, and another spiritual temple composed of living stones. There is but

ONE temple, ONE great High Priest, and ONE royal priesthood. So when the priests of old served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5), those heavenly or spiritual things were the same heavenly or spiritual things that Moses saw in the mount, and the same heavenly or spiritual things unto which we have now come. We “**are come** unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the **heavenly Jerusalem...**” (Heb. 12:22). This is not something found out beyond the Milky Way somewhere; this is the heavenly and spiritual reality fulfilled within a heavenly and spiritual people right here upon earth! Let us never forget that fact!

Listen to the words of Peter as he presses this golden truth home to the understanding hearts of the saints. “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To Whom coming, as unto a **living stone**, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, **ye also, as lively stones**, are built up a **spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 2:3-5). This superb gem of revelation vividly reveals just what the temple of God really is. Not a temple of dead stones, but of living stones, each stone a spiritually living person. Not covered with glittering gold, but overshadowed by God. Not adorned with silver, but founded upon Christ, the chief corner stone. Not fashioned with glittering gems, but with the eternal jewels of His very own nature, glory, and power!

Notice further that the saints of God are the **holy priesthood** of this spiritual temple, offering up **spiritual sacrifices** BY JESUS CHRIST. Now, we all know that Jesus is the High Priest ministering in the true tabernacle not made with hands. And where is that true tabernacle where Jesus, the High Priest, ministers? Not out in space somewhere! Would it not be the very same temple where we, the royal priesthood, minister, offering up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ? Would not the priesthood and the High Priest minister in the *same temple*? If we offer up spiritual sacrifices in this spiritual temple, and do so by Jesus Christ, then would not Jesus be in this temple where we offer up the spiritual sacrifices? And would He not be the High Priest in the heavenly and spiritual temple? Oh, yes! Our Lord Jesus is the High Priest of the temple of God WHICH WE ARE! Mystery of mysteries! Wonder of wonders! He ministers in the house of God, whose house “we are.” There is no temple out in space. YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD! And it is in *this temple* that the “man of sin” has been revealed, uncovered, exposed — **consumed**, and **destroyed**! Aren’t you glad!

If you are one of the many who believe that the temple of God is the harlot church system of man, or a future Jewish temple in Jerusalem, I must tell you that neither qualifies as THE TEMPLE OF GOD. That swaggering, drunken, idolatrous harlot called *Mystery Babylon* is not the temple of the living, holy God! The temple of God is a **holy abiding place** which God is raising up for Himself to dwell in in all fullness. That is why the “man of sin” must be revealed and destroyed out of this temple! And let us not forget that God never will vacate this temple. God will never vacate this heavenly and holy and spiritual temple to return to a paltry temple made of earth by the unsanctified hands of men. To do so would be to set aside and deny the Christ of Calvary, and to render that “once for all” sacrifice of the Lamb of God impotent and of no avail. There will never be another sacrifice for sin offered (Heb. 10:10-14). There will never again be a temple for the offering of such sacrifices! The “shadow” has forever passed away!

It is in this heavenly and spiritual temple of glorified sons that God and creation shall meet. The living stones of this temple are members of the body of Christ. They are sons of God and members of HIS FAMILY. By adding them to Himself God is expanding Himself, as a man by fathering many sons expands his family and himself. By God’s family of sons the holy temple of the Lord will fill the universe with HIMSELF, for the saints are the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. From this temple of sons, and by the royal priesthood of this temple, our God will reconcile all things unto Himself and rule the universe in righteousness for evermore.

For two thousand years it has been rising on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and the flaming words of the prophet Malachi are even now being fulfilled: “THE LORD, WHOM YE

SEEK, SHALL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE. Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a **refiner's fire**, and like **fuller's soap**: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall PURIFY the sons of Levi (the royal priesthood), and PURGE them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3). Praise God! He is reigning within His called and chosen elect, to dethrone the man of sin (self-ego, Adamic mind, flesh nature) which sits in the very temple of God, proclaiming HIMSELF as god, and striving for his own will and way. That SELF is being de-throned is evident as more and more of God's elect come to that place of experience where surrendered we pray, in spirit and in truth, "not my will, but THINE be done!"

The man of sin is the man of THE LIE, just the opposite of the 144,000 on mount Zion in whose mouth is *no guile* — **no falsehood** — **NO LIE!** It is this "old man" who is "the lie" that is destroyed by the brightness of Christ's manifest presence. The truth of this is magnified by the words of Paul, and I am giving the literal translation: "Then will be exposed the LAWLESS ONE, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the breath of His mouth, and annihilate by the appearing of His manifest presence; whose presence (the man of sin) is according to the energizing of the adversary, with all power, and signs, and wonders of **falsehood**, and with all **deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that are perishing**, because they received not the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a **strong delusion, that they should believe THE LIE**: that they all may be **judged** who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (the state of the old man)" (II Thes. 2:8-12).

The message is clear — when man turns to and trusts in the flesh he becomes possessed of a strong delusion (mistaken identity) and believes THE LIE — that's how it is in the Greek — in order that all those may be **judged** who believe not THE TRUTH. **Christ** is THE TRUTH! **Adam** is THE LIE! The mind of Christ is THE TRUTH! The carnal mind is THE LIE! The word of God is THE TRUTH! The voice of the serpent is THE LIE! And all who believe the lie will be judged. Oh, yes! Yet, praise God, how blessed the knowledge that God's judgments are never unto eternal damnation, for all the judgments of God are *redemptive* and *corrective* — to correct that which is wrong, to eradicate the error, to restore men into life and wholeness, into righteousness and truth, into praise and glory.

The 144,000 are the **firstfruits** of **this redemption** — they know who they are, they have been raised up into the life, nature, mind, wisdom, knowledge, glory, and power of the Son of God — they stand tall in their true identity, they confess only that which is true in Christ and in them — therefore in their mouth is found **no lie**, for in Christ the image of God they are WITHOUT FAULT! It is indeed wonderful!

Chapter 164

The Three Angels' Messages

“And I saw *another angel* fly in the midst of heaven, having the *everlasting gospel* to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, *Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*” (Rev. 14:6-7).

As we approach this portion of the Revelation let us again guard against a literal conception and interpretation of the text, keeping in mind that the scenes are beheld by John in a vision, and therefore are communicated in symbolism which has to do with spiritual realities. If we understand it literally we would simply read, “Then shall an angel fly in mid-heaven and shall preach the gospel to every creature.” And yet that is certainly not the meaning! John tells us that he sees a vision. And in that vision he first beholds two beasts coming up out of the sea and out of the earth. And, in the second place, he tells us how he sees the Lamb standing on mount Zion, surrounded with 144,000 other lambs who are like Him, exactly like Him. And now once more he beholds three angels, yet he hears one voice. And therefore this part still belongs to the original vision. As such it must not be taken at face value, but must be understood by the mind of the Spirit. The three angels are no more literal angels than the two beasts are literal beasts. If we bear this in mind, we will not reach the absurd conclusion that in this portion scripture teaches us that in the end-time angels will proclaim the gospel of Christ in order to sound a last warning to all nations before God’s wrath is poured out. That certainly is not the meaning. We have no literalism, but symbolism, a vision, in the words of our text. The contents of the symbolism is that the first angel flies in mid-heaven and shouts to all the earth, to all nations and tongues and tribes, that they should fear and worship God. Thus it is in the vision. But the question follows — what is the spiritual significance of this?

“Angel” signifies a *messenger* as well as the *message* he bears. Can we not see by this that even the angels in the book of Revelation are wonderful *symbols*, representing the living word of God communicated by the spirit of revelation! From the very beginning of the book an angel came and showed these things unto John — that is, a powerful word of the Lord came to John out of the heavenly realm of the Spirit, speaking mysteries to his heart and passing before his spiritual eyes visions of wonders to come. The proof of this is found in John’s own statement as to how the revelation was received. “He sent and signified it unto His servant John: who bare record of the **word of God**, and of the **testimony of Jesus Christ**, and of all that he saw” (Rev. 1:1-2). The voice of the angel was merely a figure for THE LIVING WORD OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT! And now, wonder of wonders, God is going to *speak again*, send a *living, quickening word, revealing Himself* to the *earth-dwellers* and to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people!

By the word “*another angel*” a *new message*, a *new thing* from the Lord, a *new working and dealing* of God is signified. The messages of these three angels bespeak that dealing of God by which He shall finish His work in all of His people, not just the elect. After describing the glorious scene on mount Zion, where John saw the 144,000 manifest sons of God with the Lamb, all having the Lamb’s and the Father’s name on their foreheads, and all following the Lamb whithersoever He goes, the apostle then describes another scene, where he saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, proclaiming the “everlasting gospel.”

I would point out that in Greek grammar, when the word “*another*” is used with a noun before it, it is very significant. It signifies literally, “another who is the same,” and throughout the book of Revelation we find this word descriptive of our Lord. Remember, Jesus told His disciples that when He went away He would send them “*another Comforter*.” There we have the same grammatical structure in the Greek, indicating “another who is the same.” The Lord made it clear that this “*another*

Comforter” was truly *Himself* in another form! “*And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you (as Jesus Christ in the flesh), and shall be in you (as Jesus Christ, the Spirit).*” And then He adds with unmistakable clarity, “***I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME UNTO YOU***” (Jn. 14:16-18). Can we not see by this that the Comforter, or the Spirit of truth, was not another or different person, but another manifestation or form of the very same Christ who said, “***I am the Truth,***” while standing there before His disciples! He was “*another Comforter,*” ah, yes, ANOTHER WHO IS THE SAME!

Commenting on our text my friend Jonathan Mitchell wrote, “John saw a messenger continuously flying in mid-heaven. In our study last night, Lynda observed how the Lord, in using parables to describe the kingdom, would use one picture after another to teach different aspects, or views, of the same subject — the kingdom (e.g. Matthew 13:44-47). We see that here, too, the Lord is using different pictures to describe the same subject — each new scene is just a different view. Thus, I suggest that this messenger *is a figure of these same 144,000, showing a specific aspect of their ministry: they are evangelists!* That they are ‘flying within mid-heaven’ speaks that they are operating in the realm of the spirit. They preach ‘good news pertaining to the ages.’ Notice that this message goes to all the earth dwellers and to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” The flying angel represents a special ministry of the Spirit, and a special ministration of the Word of God, through a collective body of messengers, outside the mainstream of official Christendom, as emissaries called and chosen by God to minister on behalf of all the Lord’s people who dwell in the “earth-realm.” Their mission is to proclaim and make known in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost the “good news of the ages” — the true purpose of God and the *next step* in God’s great plan of the ages!

The word “gospel” is a translation of the Greek word *euaggelion* from which we derive our word “evangel” and means, simply, “good message” or “good news.” It was a common word in the Greek tongue long before the time of Christ. It should be noticed that the word “angel” is to be found in the word “evangel.” The first was the messenger who brought the second, the good message. In classical Greek it is possible to find the word “angel” applied to men, women, children, birds, the morning star, slaves, ambassadors, and anything or anybody capable of bringing a message, literally, or figuratively. In like manner the word “evangel” was applied to almost any type of good news. Therefore, here in John’s vision it is not a messenger sweeping over the earth with a wail of woe. Oh, no! Instead of such pessimism, we have in *the first angel* a missionary of hope, who preaches what the King James Bible terms *the everlasting gospel*, the good news that is never stale, calling on men *to fear God* as the beginning of wisdom, because the hour is come for *judgment*, that is, for a final correction which will change everything and make all things right, that all might *worship Him*. Ah, truly that is... GOOD NEWS!

Consider the scene, look with me away to the heights of mount Zion where stands the Lamb, together with the 144,000 lambs! Behold the manifest sons of God in the power and glory of sonship! In his beautiful writings on this theme Ray Prinzing pointed out that “There have been many messengers, with all sorts of doctrines and theologies. Some have held fragments of truth and a lot of interpretations of the carnal mind. Some have been totally error, serving only the lust of the flesh. The voices of Babylon have been many — sounding brass and clanging cymbals that are abrasive to the ear and a vexation to the spirit. But now there shall be seen ANOTHER MESSENGER, a company with a message so different from what has been heard, for it is the ‘everlasting gospel.’ The word ‘everlasting’ is from the Greek *aionian* meaning of the ages, or ages-abiding. They shall have the GOSPEL OF THE AGES, the declaration of the GOOD NEWS OF GOD’S PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE AGES. *‘To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord’* (Eph. 3:10-11). The ages have been fitted for a purpose, and there is a purpose being wrought out through the ages. This ***gospel of the ages*** is first of all GOOD NEWS. It is not a message of condemnation, for it is a word

of reconciliation, *'not imputing their trespasses unto them'* (II Cor. 5:19). *'For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved'* (Jn. 3:17). He was not sent to condemn and neither is He sending His messengers with HIS GOOD NEWS to condemn mankind.

"No wonder that when God would bring forth a MESSENGER COMPANY filled with the GOOD NEWS, He must first purify and purge out all the perversion and distortion of the carnal mind, until *'in their mouth is found no guile.'* Then will HE send them to every kindred, nation, tribe, and tongue. *'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth **good tidings**, that publisheth **peace**, that bringeth **good tidings of good**, that publisheth **salvation...**'* (Isa. 52:7). I heard the account of a certain minister who, in his travels, walked by the door of a place where some of the present 'confused' generation were gathered, and singing a song about 'where will we go when San Francisco falls into the ocean?' And he stuck his head in the door and shouted, 'You will all go to hell!' He thought he was delivering the gospel. Wasn't that good news? Is that the message of the triumph of Calvary? THAT MARS THE IMAGE OF THE CHRIST, who said, *'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,'* and *'come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'* There is no need to bring in 'heresies of damnation.' Declare the true gospel of hope, truth, peace, joy, and victory as we receive of His life.

"In due time we will FLY WITH A MESSAGE, not repeated by rote as a parrot, but out of a state of being, that which we have experienced IN HIM, we share truth. Back to our opening verse — we declare, 'FEAR GOD.' He finds us, and we would give Him our reverence. Give glory, respect, honor, for HE IS LEADING ON. The HOUR OF JUDGMENT is come — it is INSTRUCTION time, with all of the necessary corrections, as men learn to walk His way. And they all will be dealt with, to become His worshippers. Thus we find a parallel between our own time of processing and development, and the message we will declare to all mankind. Experiencing Him, and receiving divine revelation, there shall be an outworking of His purpose which shall redound to His praise.

"What a contrast between the messengers that *fly through the midst of heaven*, and these earth-self-centered ministries that abound around us. Man wants to be seen, but GOD'S MESSENGERS will continually cry out, 'FEAR GOD, give glory to Him!' With all of our heart we would exalt Him, for as HE is lifted up, He will draw all men unto Himself. And we will recognize that the hour of judgment is instruction time, positive and purposeful, 'When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world *will learn righteousness*' (Isa. 26:9). And then shall we all, from the depths of our being, WORSHIP God...kept, sustained by His eternal life" — end quote.

I cannot help but rebuke the blindness and error of modern Christians, for the Spirit makes the message urgent within me. Most professing Christians are more concerned with their own denominational, sectarian, and doctrinal interests than with God's purpose of the ages. Religious activities and programs, threatenings of judgment, hell-fire, and damnation, with end-time doom and gloom, confirm that the "gospel" preached in most churches is not the pure gospel of Christ — the "good message." It is an adulterated gospel! For the most part it is no "gospel" at all! The preachings and example of Jesus are used not to lead people to Him but to conform Christianity to the antichrist spirit of this world. Organized religion's effort to make the gospel more relevant to the times is nothing more than man's attempt to stultify the gospel of Christ to suit his own ends. To stop and reverse this tide of spiritual corruption, the Lord has HIS FLYING ANGEL! Beholden to no man or group, this ministry is intent on proclaiming the gospel of the ages — not a new or different gospel but the very good news brought into this world by the firstborn Son of God! There is a wonderful surprise concerning to whom this "gospel of the ages" will first be proclaimed in mighty spirit-power by the "flying angel," and we will explore that later. But the message of the flying angel is both clear and emphatic — with a **loud voice** — *Fear God and give Him glory, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water.*

It gives my heart much joy to know that the gospel proclaimed by God's flying angel is indeed "the good news of the ages." In a world of fast food, live communication, instant messaging, and immediate gratification, it can be hard to think about future blessing. Our world today is often unwilling to wait for anything, much less a revelation of divine glory. But there is a living hope for all who await the glory to be revealed at the manifestation of the sons of God! God does not measure time from our perspective. God works methodically through history to bring about His plan and His purpose — in His time. Often working through centuries rather than moments, God shapes and molds the future. The present groans of creation are the birth pangs of a new life, a new day, a new order in God's unfolding plan. That new life is nothing less than redemption accomplished and all of creation restored! People who share in communion with Christ are those who know the joy of this living hope. Followers of the Lamb know that even though the claims and blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God have not yet come upon all men, that day will most surely arrive, and they will be part of a glorious future. Aren't you glad!

As pointed out earlier, the King James Bible says that this gospel preached by the flying angel is "everlasting" — the *everlasting* gospel. That is not a correct translation, however. The Greek word here is *aionios* which is the adjective form of the Greek noun *aion*. The noun *aion* nowhere means eternal! In our little booklet on "Eternity" we have unquestionably and incontrovertibly demonstrated this fact from numerous New Testament passages. Now once we understand that ***aionios*** is the *adjective form* of the *noun aion*, a simple little sixth-grade grammar lesson should once and for all establish the exact meaning of ***aionios***. Bear with me while I explain, so that all may understand!

A noun is a word that tells what you are talking about. A noun is a word that names something, a person, place, thing, quality, etc. Boy, water, tree, age, and truth are all nouns. An adjective is a word that is used with a noun to describe it. It is a word that tells you *what kind, what color, which one*, etc. If you wanted to tell me about the hat a woman was wearing you would describe that hat in some way. You might say that it was a *large* hat, a *straw* hat, an *atrocious* hat, or a *red* hat. These are adjectives, words that describe what kind, what color, what quality of hat. When you add one or more of these "describing words" or "adjectives" to hat, you give a clearer picture of what the hat is like. Some words are both nouns and adjectives, that is, the same word can be used both ways. Sometimes the adjective form of the word is identical to the noun form, while at other times the spelling is slightly different. Look at these sentences: "I would like to visit France." "I am learning the French language." France is a proper noun, but the adjective form of the same word is spelled differently — French. But in both cases they indicate the same setting. Anyone with even an elementary knowledge of grammar (English or Greek) knows that the meaning of a noun and the meaning of the same word in its adjective form **MUST CORRESPOND!** It cannot have one meaning as a noun and exactly the *opposite* meaning as an adjective!

Ah, brethren, let's be fair with the basic rules of English grammar and interpretation, and Greek, too, for they both follow the same basic rules. No one can say that ***aionios*** means *eternal* or *everlasting* without breaking the basic rules of both English and Greek. The adjective ***aionios*** which is derived from the noun ***aion*** occurs seventy times in the New Testament. It is a self-evident axiom of grammar that derivatives cannot have a greater force than the parent word. Should you disagree with this, please cite me some examples. When we have an adjective derived from a noun, the meaning of the adjective is dependent upon the meaning of the noun. A *daily* paper is one that comes every *day*. Here *day* is the noun, *daily* is the adjective. They both refer to the same time period (a particular twenty-four hours). A *monthly* bill is one that is due for payment every *month*, not every two months, or once a year. A *yearly* automobile license is good for *one year*, not for a life time or forever.

Thus the adjective ***aionios***, a derivative of ***aion***, carries within itself its own solution; for ***aionios*** is simply that which belongs or relates to the ***aions*** — the ages — hence it cannot carry a force or express a duration greater than that of the *ages* of which it speaks. Let us consider just a few examples out of many. "*For the children of **this age (aion)** are in their generation wiser than the*

children of light" (Lk. 16:8). "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more **in this present time, and in the age (aion) to come life eonian** (of the ages)" (Lk. 18:29-30). "The children of **this age (aion)** marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain **that age (aion)**, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage" (Lk. 20:34-35). "That in the **ages (aions) to come** He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). "Which in **other ages (aions)** was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is **now** revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). "Even the mystery which hath been hid from **ages (aions)** and from generations, but **now** is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1:26). If therefore these ages — past, present, and future — are one and all limited periods which come and go, the word **aionios** CANNOT MEAN EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, OR INFINITY! And yet men who should know better tell us that the Greek noun **aion** means an age, or ages, which is TIME, and then proceed to ridiculously explain that the adjective form of the very same word means exactly the opposite — unending, everlasting, ETERNAL! A child of ten should be able to understand that that is not so!

In our text the adjective **aionios** modifies the noun **gospel (Greek: euaggelion)**. It tells what kind of gospel John is writing about. It is the "ages-lasting gospel," or the GOSPEL OF THE AGES — THE GOOD MESSAGE OR THE GOOD NEWS OF THE AGES! Ah, when mankind gets the message that at the end of this present age the ball game is not over, everyone's eternal destiny is not eternally sealed in either heaven or hell, with the vast majority in hell, according to many thousands of preachers, but that God has a merciful, gracious, wise, glorious, redemptive, and restorative plan far beyond this age and even the next age beyond that one — who can deny that that news of God's great plan of the ages will indeed be GOOD NEWS — THE GOSPEL — unto the billions of earth's benighted subjects of ignorance, sin, sorrow, bondage, and death! Isn't it wonderful!

Upon your table today there is or should be a book we call the Bible. This book alone reveals God's secret plan of the ages. It unfolds with unerring accuracy the mysteries of ages in the dim and misty past, and points with unerring finger to the purpose of countless eons yet to come. The Christian Church as we know it has been living in a fool's paradise, propounding pet doctrines, ranting and raving about an endless eternity with golden streets and harps and white nightgowns for some and crackling, searing, tormenting flames for others, while almost completely overlooking God's wonderful PLAN OF THE AGES. Paul writes of this plan of the ages in Ephesians 3:8-11. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and make all to see **what is the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the **eternal purpose (KJV)** which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The word translated "eternal" in the phrase "eternal purpose" is the Greek word **aionon** which like its kindred words denotes "ages." Young's Literal Translation reads, "And to cause all to see **what is the fellowship of the secret that hath been hid FROM THE AGES** in God, who the all things did create by Jesus Christ, that there might be made known **now** to the principalities and authorities in the heavenly places, through the assembly, the manifold wisdom of God, according to **A PURPOSE OF THE AGES**, which (ages) He made in Christ Jesus our Lord." The Emphatic Diaglott renders verse 11 thus, "According to **A PLAN OF THE AGES**, which He formed in the Anointed Jesus our Lord," and Rotherham says, "According to **A PLAN OF THE AGES** which He made in the anointed Jesus our Lord."

God has a plan! Indeed, God has a wonderful plan for this world! It is a plan of which the architectural drawings were made in eternity. It encompasses the minutest detail of all of creation. I assure you that when time has run its course, and the veil is dropped upon the final scene, we shall

discover that that plan has been worked out to its very tiniest detail, just as God had planned it in eternity — that His will has been done!

That is an amazing thought because it often seems as if the world is flying off unattended, like a chariot where the driver has fallen off, the horses are running wild, the reins are flapping in the breeze, and it is threatening to go over the precipice at any moment. Yet the scriptures would have us know that God, the sovereign Lord of history, has His hands firmly upon those reins and that His plan is coming to pass. Think about it! Our God is perfect in all His attributes. He is perfect in His power. He is perfect in His holiness and justice. He is perfect in His love and mercy. He is perfect in His wisdom and in His omniscience. Therefore, His plan must be perfect. Indeed it is a perfect plan!

That God might advance His kingdom from one stage to another He has by omniscient wisdom designed dispensations, epochs, and ages. From time to time He brings about a change in dispensations, which means the bringing forth of new means, methods, and revelations, always richer and more glorious and powerful and earth-shattering than the previous ones. There always lies between the closing of one age and the opening of another a season of transition, a short period which partakes of the powers and methods of both ages, and is especially filled with dramatic manifestations of God's activity. We are now in the very throes of such a time, which lies between the age of the building in the earth of the many-membered Christ body and the age when the kingdom shall subdue and break in pieces all the governments and institutions of man. The rule of the kingdom of God over the nations is about to open in power and great glory! This new age that is even now dawning will witness the most extraordinary move of God, so vast in proportions, so dynamic in power, so revolutionary in its effects that it will transform all the present cultures and society of mankind, switch the currents of civilization, and alter the structure of the nations. The earth will receive such dramatic shock, such a global earthquake, such a divine impact of wisdom and glory and power that the whole world will be changed, completely remodeled!

The *plan of the ages* conceived in the heart of Him who purposed all things after the counsel of His own will is being worked out *one step at a time* in each succeeding age in like manner as you and I have often planned in advance the work for each successive day of a week. Is it not true that many of the wives and business people now reading this paper have plans in mind for today and tomorrow in order to accomplish certain ends, and perhaps even weeks and months into the future? I do! Each week I can tell what I, Lord willing, will be doing on each day of the week. There is mail to answer, days for study and writing, business with the printer or at the post office and numerous other things, and each week is mapped out in advance. Whether consciously or unconsciously we all plan ahead, daily and hourly working toward some human goal. There is nothing that opens the wellspring of love, of understanding and hope and faith, in the hearts of God's people like THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS PURPOSE. What infinite illumination floods our souls, what joy and satisfaction and assurance fill our hearts when by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God our great and wonderful Father is seen to be a God of purpose, knowing the end from the beginning, because He *planned* the end from the beginning! He created all things by His omnipotent power that His glorious purpose might be fulfilled. And the power that made all things is the same power that upholds all things, and fills all things, and controls all things, and shall bring to a successful conclusion the divine purpose in all things. Oh, the wonder of it!

As men with the aid of the holy scriptures have gazed into the vista of the future, it seems to have missed their understanding that God says very little in His Word about eternity, while devoting many hundreds of passages to His will and works wrought through THE AGES. “*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, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He **framed the ages**” (Heb. 1:1-2). What tremendous statements we have here! God has spoken to us through His Son — literally, “*spoke to us in Son,*” or, God spoke to us in One who has the character that He is a SON, revealing within Himself the realm and relationship of sonship to God. That is a new and*

marvelous revelation! Men knew what prophets declared of God, but now men would see what a **son** would reveal of the Father. Every age has its beginning and its end, its *first days* and its *last days*. Never assume, my beloved, that the expression “the last days” always refers to the end-time of the so-called church age. We must pay attention to *which age* is being talked about. So the writer to the Hebrews tells us that God has spoken unto us in the person of His Son in “*these last days*,” that is, in the closing days of the old age of law in which Jesus came into the world. People unthinkingly talk about “the” last days, as though the end of our present dispensation were the only “last days” or “end time” ever to exist! This beautiful principle is vital to our understanding of God’s *purpose of the ages*.

This Son is heir of all things and, blessed be God! we are joint heirs with Him. The Greek text says of Him, “*By whom also He framed the ages.*” This goes beyond His being the Creator of matter and its arrangement into multiplied billions of galaxies with their countless trillions of stars, suns, planets, and moons together with their atmospheres and inhabitants. This word lends *purpose* to everything! He is the heir who GIVES THE PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE! He planned and framed the ages, He ordained the end from the beginning; not only did He create everything, He did it for a purpose, and “*known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the ages*” (Acts 15:18).

The Amplified Bible says, “*But in the last of these days He has spoken to us in the person of a Son, whom He appointed heir and lawful Owner of all things, also by and through whom He created the worlds and the reaches of space and the AGES OF TIME — that is, He made, produced, built, operated and arranged them in order!*” So much wonderful truth is obscured by the faulty renderings of the King James Bible. Notice how the Greek text reads in the following passage: “*Through faith we understand that the ages were planned by the word of God*” (Heb. 11:3). How very different that is from what the King James Bible says when it declares that by faith we understand that “*the worlds were framed*” by the word of God. Not worlds — AGES! God made, planned, and determined the destiny of all the ages in and by our Lord Jesus Christ!

The age we are now living in is not the last age, nor is the age to come the final age in God’s vast kingdom program. The apostle Paul tells us that God “*hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the AGES TO COME He might show (put on display, exhibit) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:6-7). According to these inspired words there are “ages” **yet to come** — so there can be no less than **two** ages beyond our present age and there could be many, many more! It is during these “ages to come” that God shall take the wonderful work He has so meticulously wrought in His called and chosen elect throughout the past age and **put it on display** in and through them for the whole creation to behold and consider. This will certainly not be to the condemnation of creation, not a taunt in the face of the masses of unregenerated men that have lived and died upon this planet, but rather redounds unto their blessing, deliverance, and transformation: for it is HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US IN JESUS CHRIST THAT IS EXHIBITED THROUGH THE SAINTS THROUGHOUT THE COMING AGES. **Grace and kindness on display!** Think of it! That is no curse, no judgment — it can only mean salvation! The grace of God *always appears unto salvation!* What a word that is! This glorious display is for the instruction and enlightenment of all men. What a marvelous prospect!

The Word of God is crystal clear that there is to be an *increase* of the kingdom from age to age. The very fact that there are yet “ages to come” shows that the kingdom advances from one age to another. Historically, every new age has superseded the previous ones, bringing greater light, a further revelation of God, and more advanced dealing with mankind. Each new age inaugurates a higher dimension of God’s purposes in the earth. Nothing is clearer in the scriptures than the fact that THIS IS NOT THE LAST AGE. There is no “final windup,” no “great assize” at the close of this present dispensation. We can expect, therefore, fresh and greater manifestations and

administrations of kingdom dominion as we move from this age into the new one now dawning. What anticipation this evokes in our hearts!

With utmost solemnity I now tell God's precious elect that no one will be qualified, no one will be able, in fact no one will be *willing* to be a part of God's flying angel company to proclaim the gospel of the ages into the age and the ages to come who does not thoroughly understand and joyfully embrace God's wonderful plan of the ages. How could a man who believes the age of grace and the door of mercy is about to end, and who consigns 90% of mankind to eternal damnation in hell-fire — how *could* such an one proclaim the *good news of the ages* to the world of lost and doomed men — he would consider such an action as rankest heresy! I know men who tell me they are called to manifest sonship, yet they deny that there is any salvation for the billions of humanity beyond this present "age of grace." I do not doubt for one moment that when the chips are down, on that portentous day when the flying angel soars through the midst of heaven proclaiming with a loud voice into the ages to come that all men must *fear God* and that now they must *worship Him* — these "angels" will **refuse** to either fly or proclaim! It would mean the denial of everything they have believed and stood for! So sadly they fold their wings as their tongues cleave to the roof of their mouths.

The apostle James made a statement to the council at Jerusalem in which he clearly defines the complete outline of God's purpose for the so-called age of grace and the dispensation that is to follow. "*Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to **take out of them a people for His name.** And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, **AFTER THIS** (after God has taken out of the nations a people for His name) I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David (the fullness of God's glory in a people), which is fallen down (following the great apostasy); and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the **RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND ALL THE NATIONS**, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things*" (Acts 15:14-18). Dispensationally, this is one of the most important passages in the New Testament! It gives God's divine purpose for **this age** and the **next age**. James says that the purpose of God during this age now ending has been to visit the Gentiles to **TAKE O-U-T O-F T-H-E-M A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME**. Clearly that denotes the calling and choosing of God's elect!

One thing that nearly all Christians have missed is the fact that it has never been God's purpose to save the world during this present age. While the gospel was to be preached in all the world as a "witness" to all nations, there is no hint of it being accepted by all. Jesus never led His disciples to expect any such result from their ministry! Wherever the preached gospel is referred to in the New Testament, its limited acceptance is at the same time made clear. "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. **He that believeth...shall be saved;** but **he that believeth not shall be condemned (judged)***" (Mat. 16:15-16). The witness of Paul is equally clear. He says, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation **to everyone that believeth***" (Rom. 1:16). "*I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means **save some***" (I Cor. 9:22). "*For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are being saved, **and in them that are perishing.***"

All through the centuries the church has been found holding to the false hope of converting the whole world during this age. Frequently one hears preachers, especially missionaries and televangelists, speaking of "winning the world to Christ." In missionary conferences and evangelistic crusades people are admonished to go forth and "win the world." But as honest and sincere as these persons are, the fact remains that the efforts of those who walk in the spiritual feasts of Passover and Pentecost are doomed to failure. The fact remains that nowhere did the Lord tell His disciples to save the world! Rather, Jesus said, "I will build my *church*." Church means "the called out." And that is precisely what the Lord has been doing for the past two thousand years — *building His church* — *calling out* a people for His name! But never did He say that all would believe or that we should win the world to Him or sweep the nations into the kingdom of God during the age now

ending. If He would have said it, it would have happened, for He is the omnipotent Lord with all power in heaven and in earth! The fact that the world hasn't been saved, and the nations have not been subjected to the rule of God, is the only proof needed that it has not been God's plan to do so! He who holds the hope of converting the world by Passover preaching, or by Pentecostal gifts of the Holy Spirit, or by well organized revival crusades, or by forty days of fasting and prayer, is running after a mere phantom. It is wishful thinking — it simply won't happen!

God *has* been calling out a people for His name — saving, delivering, teaching, purging, purifying, dealing, nurturing, maturing, and bringing them progressively unto the full stature of Jesus Christ. It has taken the long and tedious process of two millenniums to bring His people to birth that a manchild, the manifest sons of God, might be revealed. Meanwhile, the Lord has not interfered with the downward course of the world! He has allowed the selfishness of the human race to drag it down into ever lower depths of sin and degradation. Even when His professed people, misguided by their lack of understanding, and motivated by their unscriptural and unspiritual ambitions, have established state-church systems in His name, He has not interfered. And when these have fallen, and when all the misguided efforts of those people who have tried to establish peace for the Prince of Peace by carnal warfare, bloodshed, and tyranny in the Lord's name, God has still not intervened. His plans for the salvation of the world have been separate from all human efforts, and He wants the whole world, including worldly churches, to learn that apart from GOD'S CHRIST and GOD'S TIME they can accomplish nothing beyond the limited work prescribed for this dying age. He wants them to learn that in order to achieve success they must work with Him, and in keeping with *His plans*, rather than expect Him to bless *their plans* and *their efforts* to establish His kingdom.

Therefore I do not judge the governments of this world, or their cultures, or their religions. I do not try to “sweep nations into the kingdom of God,” as some say. BUT GOD **DOES** HAVE A PLAN FOR THE NATIONS and a glorious day of release and restoration into the kingdom of God! And those called and chosen as the elect of God, as the sons of the Father in this significant hour, are being given *understanding* of the sacred secret of God — His **plan of the ages!** His “flying angel company” is receiving its training and its instructions for this hour. Out from among the billions of earth God is choosing an ELECT COMPANY to bear His name — His nature and His authority. It is here, in the true church, which is His body, that Jesus Christ **FIRST ESTABLISHES HIS GOVERNMENT** that He might rule and reign on the throne of men's lives. And now soon — these sons of God shall be revealed to all creation that the exceeding riches of the grace and kindness of God unto these sons of His love might be exhibited for all to see and be blessed thereby!

For this all creation eagerly waits, as the apostle has said. *“In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has in store for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited — yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end **the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the sons of God!** It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies **which will mean that we have reached our full sonship in Him**”* (Rom. 8:18-23, Phillips).

It is also plain to see that the reason all creation is expectantly awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God is just because the sons of God themselves are the instrument through which creation will be set free from the tyranny of sin and death. We must first be partaker of the fullness of His life, then shall creation be set free! But most Christians will not come to this! They are too busy playing church, rejoicing that they are not going to hell or that they are going to heaven when they die, and blundering around in the carnal programs, immaturity, and shame of a wretched, fleshly, religious system which falsely *calls itself* “the church.” But just as the dispensation of the law, at its

conclusion, brought forth that which it typified and pointed to — Jesus Christ the Son of God — so this present church age must, in *these last days*, at its conclusion, bring forth that for which it was intended and to which it pointed — a many-membered **body of Christ**, perfected, matured, overcoming, and full grown into the exact likeness, image, wisdom, power, and glory of the firstborn Son of God, its Head and Lord.

The wonderful truth is: NO ONE CAN HINDER OR STOP THE PROCESSES OF GOD! God has a plan! At the beginning of the church age the world was visited by events so momentous in their power and glory that all things were changed from that time onward. In the eternal realm before the ages were formed, and ages before man first saw the light of earth's day, the almighty Lord set in motion His omniscient and immutable purpose for the ages which were to follow. Let it be thoroughly known that our all-wise heavenly Father planned the events of each successive age from the very first age unto the ages of ages far beyond the comprehension of mortal man. It is not by accident nor by natural evolution that the world has progressed from the darkness of paganism to the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. It is by divine design!

God never intended that Christ should rule over all the earth and all nations during this age. His reign is confined completely to that company of footstep followers who have heard His voice and follow Him all the way unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Baptized in His fullness these sons of God become the embodiment of His government in the earth. This may seem to be an extremely slow method and a very small kingdom for such a great and exalted King, but we cannot overemphasize the importance of this lowly beginning for a government whose authority is destined to “subdue ALL THINGS.” So let us see that not only is God establishing His government in the lives of His elect, but through His dealings with them He is actually FORMING THEM INTO A GOVERNMENT — a ruling body of sons of God, sons upon mount Zion, kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek, the angel company flying in the midst of heaven having the **good news of the ages** to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, **Fear God**, and **give glory to Him**; for the hour of His judgment is come: and **worship Him** that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters!

God is calling out a people to bear His name, to *be* His nature, authority, and power in the earth! But — to bear His name WHERE? WHEN? HOW? To bear His name only through their fleeting years in the flesh? Not at all! James says, “AFTER THIS (after the Lord has completed His work of calling out a people for His name) I will return and build again the tabernacle of David...THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND **ALL THE NATIONS**...saith the Lord.” The “residue” of men simply denotes “all the rest,” that is, all who were not part of the “called out.” I tell you, my beloved, God is now *forming a government* composed of faithful sons (the tabernacle of David) whom He shall use in the age now dawning and in those *ages* yet unborn as kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek to bring God's kingdom to pass in all the earth and throughout all realms. Through this glorious anointed body of sons ALL THE REST OF MEN...ALL THE NATIONS...SHALL SEEK THE LORD! What wonderful news that is! While the church world is getting ready to “fly away” to some far-off heaven somewhere, the sons of God are even now being prepared and equipped to rule all nations with a rod of iron. They are being taught, and are learning well, THE GOSPEL OF THE AGES — THAT GOSPEL WHICH WILL BRING HOPE, RELEASE, VICTORY, AND SALVATION UNTO ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH! Great is the mystery!

Chapter 165

The Three Angels' Messages (continued)

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the *everlasting gospel* (good news of the ages) to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6).

Having considered in our previous study the wonderful theme of the *everlasting gospel*, or the *gospel of the ages*, we now direct the reader's attention to *the people to whom* that gospel is first proclaimed by the “flying angel” ministry. A casual perusal might lead one to believe that this good news of the ages is simply preached to all the “earth dwellers” or “carnal Christians” as one group, and then afterwards to all the peoples of every nation, tribe, and language unto the ends of the world, as another group. Our endeavor, however, must always be first to realize what God says, and then to seek to understand the meaning of His words.

The expression “them that dwell upon the earth” is frequent in the Revelation and we have spoken of it many times throughout this series. It has become very clear that this expression refers to those of the Lord's people who are carnal minded, who mind earthly things, who interpret the scriptures by human reasoning and natural understanding, and seek primarily those blessings which minister to the natural man and the flesh life. The ordinary reader would most probably take it for granted that this expression as found in Revelation 14:6 was but another occurrence of the familiar phrase. This is not so however! Those who read the scripture with thought and purpose will surely notice that there is one significant difference between the way the phrase is stated in our text and the way it appears in every other passage in the Revelation. The usual expression in the Greek text is this: *hoi katoikountes epi tes ges*. *Katoikeo* means “to dwell,” and is related to the Greek word *oikos*, meaning “a house.” Those who “dwell” upon the earth are those who make the earth their “home,” — the carnal, natural, fleshly life, even in spiritual things, as they seek blessings of health and wealth and position, is where they are comfortable — at home! They are spiritually contented with programs, rituals, ceremonies, works, sacraments, pageantry, Christian entertainment, fellowship dinners, social and political activism, and temporal blessings — these are the earth-dwellers!

This word *katoikeo* meaning “to dwell,” used in every other reference to the “earth dwellers,” is **not**, however, the word used here in our text! The very best Greek manuscripts unanimously use an altogether different word — *kathemai* — meaning “to sit.” This word also is of frequent occurrence in the Revelation, and in many cases has a special connection with the idea of *authority*. The word is used at least eleven times in reference to “**sitting upon** a throne.” Nine times the references are to “**sitting upon** a horse.” Three times it refers to “One **sitting upon** a cloud.” None of these passages convey the idea of merely resting, but of sitting in authority as a king upon a throne, of riding forth into conquest as a warrior upon a horse, and of exaltation in a position of eminence and glory upon a cloud. There are but five more occurrences of the word in the Revelation, and they will identify the people to whom the *aionian* gospel is preached, and illuminate the true meaning of the clause that follows their mention:

“The great whore that SITTETH upon many waters” (Rev. 17:1).

“A woman SITTING upon a scarlet colored beast” (Rev. 17:3).

“The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman SITTETH, and they are seven kings” (Rev. 17:9).

“The waters...where the whore SITTETH, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15).

“I SIT a queen” (Rev. 18:7).

There is no passage where the verb “to sit” is used in any other way in the whole book of Revelation! Check through Strong’s Concordance and you will see that in every instance the “sitting” is connected with power, authority, and dominion! Every occurrence has to do with rule! Those who “sit” upon the throne rule! Those who “sit” upon the horses are going forth conquering and to conquer! He who “sits” upon the cloud is high and lifted up in glory and might! The woman that “sitteth” upon many waters rules over and controls those “waters”! The woman “sitting” upon the beast has the reins in her hands and is directing and controlling the beast! The woman “sitting” upon the seven mountains, which are seven kings or kingdoms, is obviously the authority over those kingdoms! We can now view our text in a clearer light. “They that SIT upon the earth” are not the earth-dwellers themselves, but the *leaders*, the *ecclesiastics*, the *pastors*, the *priests*, the *bishops*, the *overseers*, the *superintendents*, the *presidents*, yea, the *rulers* over the earth-dwellers!

The next consideration must be the relation which this great religious system, the carnal church system of man, has to those who are spoken of as “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Those that “sit upon” the earth are also those who “sit upon” every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The Greek word *epi*, meaning *upon*, is repeated in this second part of the verse, so that it reads, “...them that SIT UPON the earth, AND UPON every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Do you doubt for one moment, my friend, that the religious systems of earth not only exert an influence, control, and domination over their members but also over the governments of this world? Oh, yes! Religion in one way or another controls nearly all the governments of earth! We can positively say that according to our text the meaning is that those same ones who are said to SIT upon the earth-realm, the carnal church, are also said to SIT upon all the nations and tribes of mankind!

Oh, my Father, what a word is this! Have you seen this before? Dare we believe it? I do not hesitate to tell you that this is the word of the Lord! This “gospel of the ages” will at this time be preached to a particular, select, exclusive group — the **religious leaders**, the **kings of the earth-ream** — those who **sit upon** and **rule over** the universal realm of Mystery Babylon! If it doesn’t indicate that, then I understand nothing of the Greek text. Can you, in your wildest imagination, conceive of such a thing! We would want to preach to the earth-dwellers first, in hope that they would flee the system, causing it to implode upon its leaders. But our God and Father is indeed a genius, a superb tactician and a distinguished strategist. If you planned to turn the whole church world to God and truth, would not the most ingenious scheme of all be to first convert the *leaders*, those with the *influence* and *power*, those in *control*? In other words, *capture, conquer the king* and the door is open to march in and possess his kingdom!

“Having the gospel of the ages to *preach* to them that *sit upon* the earth...” The word used in Greek for “preach” is not the usual verb *kerusso*, meaning to “herald, or proclaim,” but *euaggelizo*, meaning to “evangelize.” So the literal meaning is: “...with a gospel of the ages to **gospelize**, or an **evangel of the ages to evangelize**, those who rule over the earth-realm!” How could even the Holy Spirit, through John, have better expressed the purpose of God toward His people? When we think of “evangelizing” we associate it with carrying the gospel to the lost, to the heathen, to the unchurched. But that is not who God is after at this time. He is sending His sons to **EVANGELIZE THE HEIRARCHY OF THE CHURCH SYSTEMS, FROM THE POPE AND PATRIARCHS ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE LOCAL PASTOR AND ELDERS!** And when you think about all the error and folly and false concepts of God and perversions of truth of the religious systems — that is certainly what must be done — they must be *evangelized* and *gospelized!* The world can never be reached nor can creation be restored until the ministers of Babylon have an attitude adjustment, embracing the *true gospel* of Jesus Christ!

The gospel preached by the nominal church will never get the job done, it will never bring the kingdom of God in power to deliver mankind from sin and death and restore all men and all things to God. The church world is using worldly means and soulish methods to promote its programs and its false gospel today. It is conformed unto the world’s way of doing things. 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 men's emotions, to entertain them with music, to put on a good show. 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 has dawned, a day when the pure, unadulterated, living, and powerful *gospel of the kingdom* shall go forth to the whole world. Religionists have tried in vain to lift the world out of its shame by their ambitious programs and preaching their own ideas, fear mongering, and the doctrines of the antichrist. It simply would not work. The world has grown steadily worse. The lofty phrases, text-book prayers, apologetic platitudes, time-honored traditions, and soulish manipulations have utterly failed. Now a new company is to go forth with a burning message of truth direct from the throne, and with a *loud voice* — in the *fullness of power* reserved for this day!

The anointing of the sons of God shall be an anointing WITHOUT MEASURE, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the intellectual absurdities that have been preached through 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 are being quickened from above. A new army is being prepared for this new day, an army of the sons of God perfected in His image, filled with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus, radiating the effulgence of His glory, demonstrating the omnipotence of His power and the invincibility of His life. And there shall be an exultant victory! For now the day is dawning when "**ALL** nations shall come and **worship** before Thee" (Rev. 15:4). Notice — those blessed words are only one chapter further on in the book of Revelation, the glorious result of the "flying angel's message" — "...saying with a loud voice, **Fear God**, and **give glory to Him...and worship Him!**" It cannot be denied by any that throughout this age **all nations** have never come to **worship the Lord**. But there is a day, glorious day! when all the nations shall know the Lord and the Lord alone shall be glorified.

Now — the *key* to it all will be the gospel of the ages sent in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost to that vast network of men who rule over and control the whole world of nominal religionists and carnal Christians. As we shall see later in our studies of the Revelation, the most severe dealings of God shall come upon this entire class of men of every denomination and group to break them, purge them, refine them, purify them, change and transform them into living epistles of Christ. Don't think for one moment that it can't happen — when the manifest sons of God are revealed upon mount Zion, that is the very next issue on God's agenda! Most of these clerical men are honest and sincere, with all their heart and soul they desire to serve God, and they do so in the manner in which the system has instructed them. They have a zeal to do God's work, but without knowledge. But manifest the sons and you can transform the church leaders! Transform the leaders and you bless, liberate, and make spiritually alive untold millions of the Lord's people everywhere — in fact, all one billion of them! Set one billion Christians on fire for God, ablaze with truth, grace, glory, and power, and you can sweep the nations into the kingdom of God! Oh, yes! Our God *has a plan!*

The very first action of the sons of God will be to deliver all of God's people from the bondage of religious Babylon! You see, my beloved, the precise order of God's great restorative work is clearly delineated in the visions of the book of Revelation! In chapters one through fourteen we see the internal work of God in His called and chosen elect, the processing, maturing, and transformation which results in the birthing of the manchild and his catching up unto God and to His throne. This manchild is viewed again as the 144,000 with the Lamb upon mount Zion. Then at once we see the beginning of his ministry and his rule, as the "angel flying in the midst of heaven" is given the gospel of the ages to proclaim with a *loud voice* — that is, in great authority and power — and this word issues from the sons of God unto the leaders of the carnal church systems of man!

In chapter sixteen of the Revelation we view the internal purging and purification of God's people — not the elect, but of the vast multitudes of Christians in the denominational systems of every nation under heaven. It will be a most wonderful and thrilling story when we get to it! In chapters seventeen and eighteen we are shown the final destruction and annihilation of the entire world-wide system of Babylon, not the *people*, but the *system*. Then in chapters nineteen and twenty in transfixed wonder John beholds the ultimate perfection of the bride of Christ, the transcendent glory of the city of God, and the illuminating rule of the Lamb and His wife, restoring the nations and all people and all things back into God again. Isn't it wonderful!

It is my deep conviction that the hour of the deliverance of God's people and the manifestation of His glory, majesty, wisdom, and power upon them is nigh at hand. The King is coming! Hallelujah! He is coming in mighty spirit-power to set His people free, to burst asunder the chains of their captivity, that they in turn may deliver creation. Once the church is cleansed from her idols and defilement, she will be in a position to bring deliverance to a sin-sick and judgment-weary world, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Only when Christ's church is cleansed from her idols can she ever hope to be a light unto all nations.

Don't write the "church world" off, my friend, for they, too, are the Lord's people and will one day move out of the darkness of tradition, bondage, carnality, immaturity, and limitation and move into the bright light of the fullness of the glory of God. Oh yes, they will! God will bring forth a light that is sevenfold in its intensification, so that there will be nothing hidden from it, and its heat and brightness will consume and destroy everything that opposes. And that deliverance has to come. It will come through those who have given up their all, those who have lost everything to be joined to their Lord, and who henceforth live only unto Him. Sons shall reign from mount Zion, but the water of life must also flow from the city and the leaves of the trees must be distributed to bring healing to the nations. But before we can have any part or lot in this great work, we must forsake all and follow the Lamb alone. No one can deliver men from the lies of the antichrist while continuing to preach those lies. "And in their mouth was found no guile — no lie." No one can deliver the world from the bondages of sin, fear, ignorance, carnality, limitation, and death while himself remaining a captive of those things. And before God's true church can persuade men to give up their idols, and loose their bands, she must first get rid of all her own golden calves and march in victory out of Babylon's domain.

Let us quote from Isaiah 25:6-7, and we read from the New English Bible. ***"On this mountain (mount Zion, the mount of sonship) the Lord of hosts will prepare a banquet of rich fare for ALL THE PEOPLES, a banquet of wines well matured and richest fare, well-matured vines strained clear. On this mountain the Lord will swallow up that veil that shrouds ALL peoples, the pall thrown over the nations: He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears FROM EVERY FACE and remove the reproach of His people from THE WHOLE EARTH. The Lord has spoken."***

In the preceding chapters the prophet tells us how that God will destroy all that has ever oppressed the people of the earth. His power will be used to take away every degrading thing and everything that binds and this power is spoken of as THIS MOUNTAIN in the passage above. Having destroyed the oppression, ***this mountain*** (the government of God) will then turn to be the place where God will prepare a very wonderful feast for ALL THE PEOPLES. Everyone is included in this for when this morning comes, none will be left out. The work of restoration will be completed and now will come the time of rejoicing. After the preparation of this feast (of Tabernacles), ***this mountain***, or this power of God, will do another wonderful thing. The veil that shrouds ALL THE PEOPLE will be swallowed up by God. All spiritual blinders will be removed! The pall that hangs over ALL THE NATIONS will be taken away by the power of God. Nations and their officials today are seeking how to do away with all that plagues humanity from sickness to crime. But they cannot

find the way! Just when the nations feel they are making some progress, things suddenly turn and the trouble starts all over again.

Of course they know nothing of this veil of flesh that is upon all nations and peoples. They are unaware of the covering that God has placed over all nations, therefore they cannot know how in any way to look in the right place for a solution. There is no solution outside of God Himself and He will reveal that when His hour arrives. But even now the feast that the Lord is to prepare for ALL PEOPLES is in the time of preparation, it is being prepared *within a people in the heights of this mountain of Zion*, and when it is completed, God will lift the veil and the covering from all people and nations and reveal the wonders that He has formed for everyone who has ever lived or ever shall live. And as we have seen in our text, the veil and the covering will *first* be removed from the ministry that ministers to the Lord's people in Babylon!

Instead of preparing a terrifying hell to bring to a close this age, as we have been told by the churches, we find that God is preparing a wonderful feast for the opening of the coming age! But the carnal mind or the human nature always looks upon the negative side of anything and it actually forgets that there is a positive side. For instead of preparing for destruction, God is preparing for the morning, the dawning of a new day in which there will be no more weeping or crying. God also tells us that the reproach of His people will be removed from all of the earth. That can only happen when the Babylon religious system is fully taken away, with all its false teachings, carnality, and foolishness. Then the Lord will swallow up death in victory! All death! "To be carnally minded *is death.*" The death of carnality, dead religion, spiritual death, physical death, *all* death will be swallowed up! Please notice that the Lord will do the swallowing up of death, and it will be by the ministration of HIS LIFE. The only solution for death *is Life!*

We have come to a period of the world, and to a condition, for which there are no precedents. There are no instructions left for guidance in the details of the restoration of all things, beginning with the deliverance of all the Lord's precious people from the tyranny and folly of religious Babylon, followed by the deliverance of the nations and their entrance into the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit has given no exact direction concerning the manner in which the priesthood for the nations is to minister or its work to be effected. We have, in the scriptures, abundant instructions for the "in part" realm of church age ministry. It is not difficult to learn how to function in the body of Christ as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, bishop, elder, teacher, deacon, or to move in the gifts of the Spirit unto the edification and building up of the body of Christ. But I challenge any theologian to find anything that will give direct help, even in the words of Jesus Himself, concerning how to reign as king-priests, or how to minister as manifest sons of God unto creation! He left that for the Holy Spirit to teach to the elect company of overcomers who should be the heirs of the kingdom of God. We have come to that hour. Ah, we can only learn these sacred and secret things by being TAUGHT OF HIM!

In our text we come as close as one can get to a statement about the actual ministry of the sons of God. It is portrayed as a messenger flying in the mid-heaven, having the gospel of the ages to preach unto those who rule over and control the church systems of man. They make this proclamation with a LOUD VOICE, or a ministry of EARTH-SHAKING SOUND, as the Greek also implies, a trumpet blowing through the lower heavens and the earth, coming forth with a CERTAIN SOUND, whose pitch and frequency will be tuned to the inner ear of the leaders of God's people, to that deep hidden inner desire to please God and do His work, even though they know not how; deep crying to deep, spirit crying to spirit, the word of God *living* and *powerful*, dividing asunder between soul and spirit, breaking, smashing, shattering, rending, opening a fountain of tears and a wail of repentance, leading to regeneration and transformation by the spirit of grace and glory. That, as I have said, is about as close as we come to a divine revelation of this beginning of the ministry of the sons of God! Beyond this we must lean hard upon the word of our elder brother who has taught us, "*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME*" (Jn. 16:12-13).

We think we have seen some wonderful moves of God, and we have, but we haven't even scratched the surface, we haven't seen anything yet that faintly resembles the glorious things God will do in the days that lie before us. With all its multiplied missionary programs and evangelistic efforts the church has not yet even started on world evangelism. God is laying a groundwork and teaching, processing, qualifying, equipping, and empowering His people for the coming invasion of all the church systems and of the whole world. He must do something unprecedented for us first, so that we will be ready. Let us not deceive ourselves, we don't have all that we need for this great work, but God is quickening us for it. He is stripping away our dependence upon money, education, status, recognition, methods, promotions, and materials, drawing us to move out of that and into HIS REALM. The realm of God is the realm of *Spirit*. It is the realm of *Being*. God is teaching us the ways of His Spirit, and we must be endowed with the absolute fullness of His Spirit, which is the sevenfold *spirit of sonship*.

We are entering a wonderful day in the world's history — when the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom unto the age of the ages, and *all dominions* shall serve Him! Prophecies which have been spoken by holy men of God since the world began are being fulfilled in these days. Mysteries which have been sealed up in the Book of God for millenniums are now being opened. Streams of events which had their source in the dim, remote past are now converging in a mighty river of divine destiny, which is rushing on with irresistible swiftness to the dispensation of the fullness of times.

There is coming a new and fresh and full revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The night is falling on the present order. But the trumpet blast from God's flying angel company will pierce the darkness and awaken the night. Already we are seeing evidence of the dawning of a new day breaking forth upon us as thousands of the Lord's elect are arising to behold the first rays of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. There is a mighty cry in our hearts for the Lord to move in an altogether new way in our lives, in the church world, and in all the earth. Many things are happening in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms today, but I do not hesitate to tell you that all of those things are but stale "left overs" from previous visitations. Yet, beneath it all, there *is* a deep hunger and an honest cry for God to do a new and greater thing! And God will answer that cry. We are due for a fresh move and a new work of God in the earth in this hour! So the night is coming upon the religious realms, bringing an end to particular forms of the movings and operations of the Spirit of God. Though all the manifestations of the past have been precious and needful, yet our God in this hour is moving on. A new manifestation and revelation of the Christ is coming in the midst of us, and I hear and see the signs that He is beginning to come. We are living in the early dawn of the fullness of the APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. This appearing is His *bodily appearing*, His appearing in the fullness of His glory and power *in His body*, bringing the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God. It will not just save and heal and bless people, it will deliver creation from the *bondage of corruption* in all realms of man's corruption.

The very first ministry of the sons of God will not be to empty the hospitals and bars and prisons and hell-holes of this world — their first ministry is that of the *three angels* sent forth to deliver the **Lord's people** from the spirit and bondage of Mystery Babylon the Great! Do you suppose, my beloved, that God would empty out the hospitals and bars and prisons and hell-holes *before* He empties out the church houses of the apostate religious systems? No way! Judgment *begins* at the house of God! The bride must *make herself ready*. Jerusalem must be *made a praise* in the earth *before* the nations can walk in the light of the city. Oh, the wonder of it!

I must speak very frankly, my friends. The next move of God, the manifestation of the sons of God, will not come through those who are waiting for a rapture to whisk them away to the skies. Nor will it come through those who suppose that the next thing on God's agenda is the world-wide rule of the antichrist. It will come through people who are crying out from the depths of their spirits, "Oh God, visit us afresh. Do a new thing! We need YOU! Creation groans for a mighty deliverance! Come, Lord Jesus, move through us on a higher order, a higher dimension of your power and glory! Come

to your temple in fullness. Come in the manifestation of your sonship. Come! that we might behold you as you are and be changed into your image, clothed with your life and immortality. The whole earth is waiting with bated breath for the glory of the Lord to be revealed. Come! and cause righteousness and praise and incorruption to spring forth before all nations!”

FEAR GOD

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the gospel of the ages to preach unto them that rule over the earth-realm, and over every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a *loud voice*, **Fear God**, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:6-7).

In our present chapter the beloved apostle John describes three angels that he sees flying in the mid-heaven. He doesn't say what they looked like, because the important thing was not their appearance, but what they represent and the messages they bore. So John is very careful to record what he heard the angels proclaim as they flew across the sky. These three angels' messages come at a very crucial point in the unfolding revelation being communicated to John. Let's take a moment to examine their context so that we can better understand them. If we know what John talks about before and after these angel messages, we can see how they fit the overall picture God gave him.

The scene immediately preceding the angel messages is that of the Lamb upon mount Zion and the one hundred and forty-four thousand with Him. Just prior to John beholding the first angel, he is told that the 144,000 upon mount Zion are those who follow the Lamb, who have the Father's name written in their foreheads, and they are redeemed from among men, being the **FIRSTFRUITS** unto God and to the Lamb. The term “firstfruits” is drawn from the well-known offering of “firstfruits” under the Old Testament law of Israel, in which the first portion of any harvest was dedicated to God, in token that the whole belonged to Him, and was recognized as His. Hence it always implies that something of the same kind will follow it. If there was a field of wheat, the firstfruits, the very first of the ripened grain, would be offered up to God, following which the entire field of wheat would eventually come to the same condition of maturity, though not offered up to God in the same special way for His unique purpose. Thus, the 144,000 are the **firstfruits** of God's redemption, the very first of all creation to come into full redemption and into the full stature of Jesus Christ as sons of the Father!

They are firstfruits — that means that after this the full harvest will be brought before God, for the full harvest must come as well as the firstfruits. It is significant to note that here, *just before the ministry of the first angel*, we are shown a wonderful picture of the firstfruits. So what follows the messages of the three angels? Ah, immediately we see a dramatic picture of the gathering of the full harvest! “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and *reap*: for the time has come for thee to *reap*; for the **harvest of the earth is ripe**. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the *earth was reaped*” (Rev. 14:15-16). And then only a few verses later, in the fifteenth chapter, we see the fruit of this: “Who shall not *fear*, O Lord, and *glorify Thy name*? For **all nations shall come and worship before Thee**; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest” (Rev. 15:4). Is that not exactly what the first angel commanded: “...unto **every nation...saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him...and worship Him!**” Between the firstfruits and the harvest we have the three angels' messages. The Holy Spirit bears witness within my spirit to the truth that the great purpose of the three angels' messages is to **PREPARE THE HARVEST FOR REAPING!** It is a word sent to the Lord's people and to all the ends of the earth, breaking up the fallow ground, and preparing all to experience the fullness of redemption already revealed within the firstfruits! It is, in very fact, the firstfruits themselves, under the symbolism of the three angels, delivering this message to the world! That is the mystery.

The first angel's message is a powerful, authoritative word through the manifest sons of God unto all the vaunted religious leaders of the world, commanding them to turn from all their man-made religious pomp and show, from their lifeless rituals, static creeds, empty ceremonies, impotent sacraments, flesh-oriented programs, and self-aggrandizement in order to FEAR GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME: AND WORSHIP HIM! "Fear God" is first, for the inspired Psalmist has told us that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The very first principle we must understand in this connection is that the fear of the Lord has absolutely and positively nothing to do with being afraid. Our Lord does not have, nor does He give, the spirit of FRIGHT! Jesus was not, and is not, TERRIFIED of His Father, neither does He impart to men the spirit of TERROR. Allah is a God of terror, but not our heavenly Father! "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). In the scriptures our English word "fear" is translated from the Hebrew word *yirah* and from the Greek word *phobos*. These words have two principal meanings: first, that apprehension of evil or danger which normally causes one to flee or fight; an expectation of harm or pain which evokes a feeling of alarm, dread, or disquiet; and second, that awe or reverence which a man of sense feels in the presence of that which is high or eminent, such as a king or authority. A child feels the first of these kinds of fear in the presence of a harsh, cruel, and abusive parent, and the second before a parent who is good and loving, but who must also be just. The Greek word *phobos* is used in both of the above senses. In Matthew 14:26 we read that the disciples "cried out for fear," being frightened and terrified because they *thought* they saw a ghost! But in Acts 9:31 we read, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the **fear of the Lord**, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Here, the second meaning of fear is implied, the awesome reverence of God.

We are not to fear God because He is mean, demanding, exacting, vindictive, implacable, or full of wrath and vengeance. We are to fear God because HE IS GOD — omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, all-wise, faithful, just, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies, our FATHER, and also THE CREATOR AND KING OF THE UNIVERSE! What this means is that we should feel the solemn majesty of our Creator and Father and *reverence Him with reverential fear*.

If you should receive a formal invitation to meet the Queen of England or the President of the United States of America, wouldn't you be a little *fearful* just before you entered into the presence of such an important person? You would know you really had nothing to fear, yet you would be very respectful and altogether reverent in the presence of such a famous and important individual. And how much more glorious, majestic, and worthy is the great God and our Father above all the earthly kings and emperors and queens and prime ministers and presidents who have ever lived! We live every moment of our lives under the purpose, watchfulness, and intervention of God; He knows everything about us and has planned for us from before the foundation of the world. How much we ought to reverence Him and stand in awe of His incomprehensible majesty, His divine power and wisdom, His matchless love and abounding grace! We need to give glory to Him not only with our voices but in our attitudes and actions. By gladly obeying Him and reproducing His character in our lives, we glorify the One who has given us His very own life! Such a holy and reverential fear of the Lord is the spirit of sonship in which Jesus walked and ministered throughout His earthly life. It is also the spirit in which every son of God walks! And it is this reverential fear of the Lord that shall in turn be ministered by God's elect unto all the leaders of the church world and unto all the Lord's people everywhere, so that they may learn to reverence the Lord Himself, and not man and the kingdoms of man. This is the first angel's message!

Perhaps this simple story will aid our understanding of what is meant by the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord, as represented in scripture, is a godly thing, a wonderful thing, a lovely thing. How many precious believers, influenced by the false doctrines of Babylon's church systems, have

absolutely no conception of the difference between the pure and holy fear of the Lord and the terrible **fright** of the Lord. When I was a boy the church in which I was raised painted such a picture of God as One who is so exacting, demanding, harsh, and judgmental, that if you went to bed at night with even one little sin unconfessed and not put “under the blood,” should the “rapture” take place during the night you would surely be left behind to face the nightmare of the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist. But it got even worse! Should you have the misfortune of *dying* in your sleep that night, you would burst hell wide open! I tell you that in those days I could not truly love God, nor know the beauty and power of **His unconditional love for me, FOR BEING AFRAID OF HIM!** The coming of the Lord sent no thrill of glory through my soul; the very thought of His coming struck terror within my heart; for God was so holy, so righteously opposed to and intolerant of sin, and so absolutely and unalterably just, that I was certain, beyond a reasonable doubt, that I could never be quite worthy enough to stand before His fearsome presence!

How my ransomed soul exults with joy unspeakable and full of glory that the work of the Holy Spirit in bearing witness to the truth has swallowed up the veil that shrouded my mind, and lifted the dark pall that hung like death over my spirit, revealing the heart of my Father, that at last I could SEE AND KNOW HIM AS HE REALLY IS! Do you think that we should be afraid of someone as glorious, gracious, merciful, and loving as our heavenly Father? Should we cringe in fear before Him like a dog that expects a kick? What has God done to us that we should be afraid of Him? Oh, how the church and the world need this revelation of the God who IS LOVE! Jesus has come and shown us the Father! The power of the *spirit of sonship* is to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to declare the acceptable year of the Lord! It will be a real shock when the preachers are called upon to learn the true *reverential fear of the Lord*, to once and for all abandon their heresies of vindictive judgment and eternal damnation, and to forever cast away all their hell-fire and brimstone sermons! The President of one Bible College claims that eighty to ninety percent of their students were saved by *fear*. Fear was the motive that brought them to the altar, not the fear of the Lord, but the fear of terrorists, or of one world government, or of missing the rapture, or of the Great Tribulation, or of the Antichrist, or of eternal hell-fire. We have had too many conversions based on this self-saving. The power of the spirit of sonship will preach a gospel to which people are not responding to *save themselves from the hands of an angry God*, but they will respond as a result of HIS SELF-GIVING, THE OUTPOURING OF HIS LIFE AND LOVE AND GRACE AND ABUNDANT SALVATION. At last the world will understand that truly “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16).

“The *fear of the Lord* is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10). How plain it is that God will never grant wisdom to the man whose soul is void of true reverence for God, for true reverence is true humility, and true humility places God’s will and God’s purposes and God’s glory above all else in the universe. The writer to the Hebrews admonishes: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28). The glory and power of the kingdom of God is only given in the power of the Holy Spirit to devout and humble souls who seek His face in truth. Our exalted heavenly Father, full of power and wisdom and grace and truth, will not consent to walk with the arrogant and the scornful; neither will He be found in the midst of careless, irreverent, profane, or hypocritical men. If deep within your heart you have a strong and fervent desire to truly KNOW GOD and to have part in the righteous government which He shall bring forth in the earth in this day, you must first above all else remove the shoes from off your feet when you walk upon His holy ground. If ever you would receive the fullness of the seven spirits of God; if ever you stand upon Zion’s holy hill and share the glory of sonship with the exalted Lamb of God; you must first pray earnestly for grace whereby you may serve God *acceptably with reverence and godly fear*. Walk softly and with the deepest love and respect when you enter the presence of Him before whom holy and powerful angels cover their faces. The God who is your Father is also the architect and creator of the universe! Only those who experientially know within themselves the spirit of the *fear of the Lord* can fly with the angel through the midst of heaven, with great power calling upon the church and the world to FEAR GOD, AND

GIVE GLORY TO HIM...AND WORSHIP HIM! What a calling, as God's "flying angel company" brings that wonderful *attitude adjustment* to the whole world of man's self-centered religion!

The victorious congregation of Israel sang of His majesty by the Red Sea, proclaiming, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Ex. 15:11). The prophet Isaiah, that holy man from whose lips had poured forth mighty utterance of prophetic truth, upon beholding the glory of the Lord, cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). Every true revelation of God will mightily increase respect for our all-glorious Father. As one has pointed out, any revelation which produces lightness, frivolity, carelessness, or looseness of living within its recipients is not a revelation from above but from beneath. Even to consider the attributes of our Lord fills the saints with reverence and godly fear. To learn that God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies causes men to bow in awe before Him. Such characteristics do not abide by nature within us and they do not exist apart from HIM. When our spiritual eyes behold and our spiritual minds begin to grasp the sacred mysteries of God's great purpose of the ages which in other ages were not revealed to men, but which are now unfolded to those who walk in humility before Him, then our love and reverence for our wonderful Father increases beyond words. Then even the slightest lightness or looseness before Him appalls our souls, causing us to cringe in spirit. Let wicked men who know Him not wag their idle tongues to curse and blaspheme that holy name which is above every name, but let no word of foolishness or disrespect soil our lips or bring dishonor to Him before whom all creation will one day bow to confess on bended knee that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

The spirit of the fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:1-2) will be one of the remarkable signs of the sonship of the apprehended ones in this day, and it shall be a most remarkable evidence of the sonship ministry. Along with the astounding manifestations of God's almighty power there shall be the reverence that has been so sadly lacking up to this time. Men, even religious men, treat the holy things of God with such fickleness and impulsiveness, but the spirit of the Lord shall be so evidenced through the holy sons of God that men shall begin to tremble, knowing that they are dealing with a living God.

Jesus was the perfect embodiment of the wisdom of God, and because that is so, He also had a fear of God. When the firstborn Son of God was faced with the reality of His own upcoming crucifixion, the record tells us that "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, *and was heard in that He feared*" (Heb. 5:7). Hear it! Jesus FEARED! The truth in this one small verse of scripture is most remarkable. It tells us not only that Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death" but it also tells us that HE WAS HEARD! How can we say that He was heard when, in fact, He died? How was He then *saved from death*, if He died? Yes, He died. But the wonderful fact is that He did not remain dead! He was heard — He was saved from or out of death — by the *power of His resurrection!* Why was He raised from the dead? Was it because of His great faith? Was it because the Father purposed it? Ah, beyond all that it was because HE FEARED!

"He was heard, *in that He feared.*" Not that He feared the suffering, not that He feared what men could ever do unto Him, not that He feared the humiliation, not that He feared the cross, not that He feared death itself — but in that He feared GOD! Only He who knew by experience this principle could teach us, as He did, saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear HIM which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mat. 10:28). FEAR HIM! Fear, reverence Him who is able to create conditions within the inner man, conditions in the mind, conditions in the emotions, conditions in the external world that will destroy both the inner and the outer man and reduce him to utter rubble. Not that he is annihilated, but he is so devastated that he is unable to gather his faculties together to function in any way. Oh, yes! God can bring a man down to the dust! Jesus loved God. Because He loved God, He came to know Him. And because

He knew God, He feared, He revered Him. Because He feared, because He revered God in His heart, HE WAS HEARD. Because He was heard, He was raised from among the dead and exalted unto the fullness of the glory of the Father. Can this mean that the fear of the Lord *leads to LIFE*? Hear the wisdom of the wise man: “The fear of the Lord is A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE, to **depart from the snares of death**” (Prov. 14:27). Great is the mystery!

There are those who would tell us that we are not to fear God. Yet it was said of our Redeemer and our example that He was delivered from the jaws of death just because He *did* fear! And He not only feared, but He taught us to fear! The wise King Solomon, after he had run the whole gamut of human thought finally arrived at the end of his thought with this observation: “Let us hear the **conclusion** (end) of the whole matter: **Fear God** and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). And why? “For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil” (vs. 14). Now notice, “Fear God and keep His commandments: for ***this is the whole duty of man.***” It is significant to note that the words ***is*** and ***duty*** in this verse are in italics in the King James Version. When a word is in italics it means that that word does not appear in the original language and is merely supplied by the translators in an effort to make the meaning clearer. Many times, however, the translators go far afield in their choice of words, and I have discovered that in some cases it is best to read the passage *omitting the man-inserted words*. In this case, omitting the words supplied by the translators, the passage reads, “**Fear God** and keep His commandments: ***for this the whole of man.***” The meaning is that the **fear of God IS THE WHOLE MAN**, or, the man who truly fears God **IS A WHOLE MAN** — THE FULL IDEAL OF MAN, as God originally purposed him to be when He said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” The only such “whole man,” one who completely feared and revered God for His wisdom, power, and purpose, and kept all His commandments, His word and His will, was JESUS CHRIST! That is what made Him the unique SON of the Father! And now, He has paid the price, He has opened up the way, He has become our Forerunner and the Captain of our salvation, He has entered in that we may, like Him, BECOME WHOLE MEN — sons of God bearing the image of our Father!

To fear God and keep His commandments was the *end* or *conclusion* of Solomon’s thought — but that which was the *end* of the thought of man proved to be the *beginning* of the thought of God, for it is written, “The *fear of the Lord* is the *beginning* of wisdom.” The end of man, then, and the beginning of God in a man are one and the self-same thing: ***the fear of the Lord.*** Man’s *end* is God’s *beginning*! Hallelujah! “I must *decrease*, but He must *increase*” (Jn. 3:30). Jesus was faced with death, and yet He was saved out of that death in that He feared. His deep and sincere reverence of the Father and His will became the *fountain of life* that delivered Him from the snares of death. Noah was faced with the same prospects of judgment that all the others of his day were faced with — but “moved with fear,” he prepared an ark that *saved* himself and his household from death. If he had not truly revered the Lord in his heart he would not have obeyed, to the saving of his house. Is not this then — the fear of the Lord — truly THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM! And does this not reveal the deep and eternal secret of why the ministry of the flying angel unto both the church and world begins right here with this immutable word: **FEAR GOD, and give glory to Him!**

Chapter 166

The Three Angels' Messages (continued)

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the gospel of the ages to preach unto them that rule over the earth-realm, and over every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; *for the hour of His judgment is come*” (Rev. 14:6-7).

We now come to what seems to us perhaps a strange, sad, woeful message, and yet is the *good news of the ages*, which an “angel flying in mid-heaven” proclaims to the whole church throughout the entire world. And this is what his voice declares: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His **judgment** is come!” How strange, indeed, that sounds to us, that the hour of God’s *judgment* could be characterized as GOOD NEWS!

We are living in a time when the truth about God’s judgments is missed by many of the Lord’s people, misunderstood by others, and misinterpreted by multitudes. The announcement of *divine judgment* is intended to be GOOD NEWS. Yet many people react in fear to the very thought of judgment, for they associate it with the end of the world, which to them means complete disaster. The picture most people have of “the judgment” is vividly portrayed in Michael Angelo’s picture of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel at Rome. I have stood there and looked at that picture. The central picture in that celebrated masterpiece is that of our Lord seated upon a throne, with all the host of heaven gathered about Him, and trembling humanity arraigned before Him. The countenance of the Divine Judge is not at all what we are accustomed to associate with Jesus. It is wonderful in its beauty and majesty to be sure, but there is not a hint of mercy or compassion in it. On the contrary, it is menacing and awful in the extreme, as, with uplifted hand, the Omnipotent Saviour consigns to hopeless perdition the multitudes who are falling away downward upon His left hand with every expression of anguish and despair. The only suggestion of pity or compassion the scene contains is to be discerned in the face of the virgin mother, who stands close to her august Son while the fearful sentence is being pronounced; there is none in the face of Christ Himself!

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). The Psalmist of old prophesied, “...for He cometh, 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 hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Judgment is inseparably related to the work of Jesus Christ in the earth. “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (II Tim. 4:1).

Through the cunning of the adversary, and the foolishness of the carnal mind, both the popular church and the world have been robbed of the blessed assurances of the time when God’s RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS break forth in the earth. Most people know that the Bible tells of a “judgment day,” but the average person, believer or unbeliever, regards it only with a certain sense of eventual fear and dread. Because of this *fear* there is, to them, no more unwelcome tidings that that the Lord is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH! Many cower inwardly at the very thought of God’s judgments, and in this mind shove them far into an unknown future, preferring not even to hear the

subject mentioned. At various times in the past many people have become terror-stricken when some unusual event or a terrible calamity has occurred, because they have supposed that the event signaled the end of our civilization or the finale of our planet with billions of people getting what they deserve for their sins and wickedness — suddenly thrust into horrifying punishments and eternal damnation. They have absolutely no idea, not a clue, of the wonderful blessings in store for all of God's precious people and for a sin-weary world under the glorious reign of the manifest sons of God filled with all the nature, wisdom, glory, and redemptive power of God!

There are many who preach what they call the "end-time message" who capitalize on this emotion of *fear*: "Christ is coming to judge and **you are not ready!**" That message sounds like something exasperated mothers shout as they shake their disobedient children: "You just wait until your *Daddy* comes home!" Many souls have been scared into the altars and have lived in dread of the end of the age, the coming to the Lord, and the horrors of great tribulation, the wrath of God, and the antichrist ever since. One day, they expect, they will suddenly be yanked up from their world of ease, taken to that great woodshed in the sky, and given the spanking of their eternal life. The threat of the Lord appearing as Judge is somehow supposed to produce righteous living among the saints. Yeah, "JUST YOU WAIT UNTIL YOUR DADDY (JESUS) COMES HOME!"

The vast majority of churches and Christians believe and teach that judgment is **punishment**. As Ray Prinzing has pointed out, because they view God as a Tyrant, out to "get them," and they are afraid that He will punish them without mercy for every little mis-deed, they shudder with a superstitious fear because of the misconceptions resulting from all the erroneous doctrines and traditions which they have been taught. But let us think sober and godly thoughts about these things. If Jesus was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of *the world*; if God was in Christ reconciling *the world* unto Himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*; if Jesus is indeed the Saviour of *all men*, and the Saviour of *the world*; if by one man death passed upon *all men*, and if by one man the free gift came upon *all men unto justification of life*; if Jesus truly "paid it all" and bore the sins of all mankind in His body on the tree; then how could God legally be **punishing** any man, or any nation, or the whole world **for their sins**? To all the above scriptures the members and ministers of the church systems will give a hearty "Amen!" But then by making men **pay** for their sins with **punishment** for them, either in this world or in the world to come, they repudiate the all-inclusive redemptive price already paid by the Redeemer of the world!

"Jesus **paid the price** for all your sins," the churches proclaim, "but God is going to **punish you** for them!" Something's wrong with this picture. Are they telling me that human beings on this earth are more just and honorable than God? I make a contract with someone and I pay the price for an acre of land. The person I purchase it from can't come back and take it away from me, can he? These folks are telling me that humanity is more just and honorable than God because He's going to come back and demand payment (punishment) for the sins of the world after the "iniquity of us all" has been "laid upon Jesus"! Not so! No way!

Now — this doesn't mean that there is no **judgment** in God! It becomes clear, however, as we compare spiritual things with spiritual things that **judgment** and **punishment** are NOT THE SAME THING! Punishment, on the one hand, is a *penalty*, a *sentence*, one's *just deserts* for an offence committed. God, under the new covenant of grace, is not in the punishment business! Can we not see that punishment is inflicted only *under law*? Judgment, on the other hand, is God's action to correct what is wrong. Because Jesus paid our debt, taking our penalty upon Himself, God now has a claim upon our life. He has purchased us for Himself! In order to enforce His claim upon us, He brings His *judgments* into our lives, and these judgments are not punishment — they are *remedial, redemptive disciplines* — it means that the time of *restoration*, of *correction unto righteousness* has come. Punishment merely pays one back for a wrong, giving him what he deserves. But all scriptures reveal judgment to be a process unto correction, deliverance, change, rehabilitation, restoration, and redemption. You don't believe it? Thus saith the Lord: "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin...afterward thou shalt be

called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be *redeemed with judgment...*" (Isa. 1:27). We would never think of that! The great Martin Luther said, "If I were God, and the world had treated me the way they treated God, I'd have kicked the whole thing to pieces long ago!" God would have condemned all humanity and left us to go to hell if He had been like unto carnal men. But He's not a negative, unforgiving, vindictive God! He is positive, He is purposeful, He is creative, He is redemptive, and He is constructive, not destructive!

Just as there is a world of difference between God's dealings with His people under the old covenant of law and the new covenant of grace, so is there a vast difference in God's dealings with the *nations of mankind* under the administration of law and His attitude toward the nations under the administration of grace. For remember, "He is the propitiation for *our sins*: and not for *our's only*, but also for the sins of the *whole world*" (1 Jn. 2:2). These words are far too potent and full of meaning to be carelessly read over or ignored. Do they not tell us that as God's attitude and dealing is toward His people, so is His attitude and dealing also toward the whole world? Under Old Testament economy God called peoples and nations to account for their actions and executed His punishments by bringing destruction upon them. The best known of these is the world-wide deluge in the days of Noah of which we read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:5-7). The destructive judgments of God always came as a result of the *disobedience* of mankind, and the wicked conduct of the people in their daily lives. Sodom and Gomorrah are graphic examples of this. Obviously these cities had knowledge of the Lord and light from Him, just as the civilization of Noah's day had. God inspected those cities and determined that the sin of the inhabitants was very heavy; He judged that the cities must be brought to ruin (Gen. 18:20-21; 19:14). Many hundreds of years later the apostle Jude wrote that those cities underwent the "vengeance of fire" which brought destruction.

Destruction was sent upon the seven nations inhabiting the land of Canaan and later upon Moab, Assyria, Damascus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Tyre, and various other cities and nations of antiquity. Likewise, when the northern kingdom of Israel, as well as Judah and Jerusalem, became unfaithful and idolatrous and merited the Lord's displeasure, He promised to destroy their land and allow them to be carried away captives. This destructive punishment came when the northern kingdom was desolated and the people carried away into Assyria, never to return, and later Nebuchadnezzar came and plundered Judah and Jerusalem, destroyed the city and the temple, and carried the people away slaves to Babylon.

God conducted a legal case against Babylon, the longtime enemy of God and His people. Because of being unnecessarily cruel to the house of Judah, not intending to release them after the seventy-year captivity mandated by God, and crediting the god Marduk with the victory over God's people, Babylon was in line for a destructive punishment. That came to Babylon in the year 539 B.C. when it was violently overthrown by the Medes and Persians.

Let us consider now whether God is dealing in that same way with cities and nations in this dispensation of grace. Nothing is more evident in the scriptures than the fact that God has a great and wonderful plan which He is working out among the nations of earth. Many saints recognize that God has a predestined purpose in the life of each of His called and chosen elect, an appointed end for Israel, a wonderful purpose for the church, and a foreordained plan for the overcoming sons of God. We must also understand that the Lord has a determined plan and purpose for ALL NATIONS; God is actively dealing with NATIONS!

From the first dawn of human history God has had the formation, development, and destiny of nations in mind and purpose. The present nations of earth had their origins in the early days following the Great Flood. In Genesis chapter ten is found a most remarkable and comprehensive list of the descendants of Noah who became the heads of the families and tribes which subsequently

developed into nations. Even so-called higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness. You would do well to read the entire chapter. Here is the one link between the historic nations of antiquity and the prehistoric times of Noah and the antediluvians. The grandsons and great grandsons of Noah are listed, each of whom is identified with the city or country established by his descendants. It has been possible in many cases to identify the names in Genesis 10 with peoples and nations known to antiquity, especially as revealed by archeology. Thus this chapter provides the link between recorded history and the period of "prehistory" which is, except for the Bible, preserved only in ancient traditions.

An interesting verse is found in Genesis 10:25. "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was *Peleg*; FOR IN HIS DAYS WAS THE EARTH DIVIDED; and his brother's name was *Joktan*." As one has pointed out, Peleg — or rather, the event associated with his name — is of special interest at this point. "*In his days was the earth divided.*" Evidently this was a most memorable event, and Eber named his son in commemoration of it. The name Peleg means *division*. Almost nothing else is said about Peleg apart from mention of his family line and how long he lived. The fact that the earth was divided in his days seems the only possible item of distinction that can knowingly be attributed to Peleg himself. The important thing concerns the meaning of this indicated "division of the earth." It is obvious that this division was the division of the peoples that took place at the tower of Babel, rather than an actual splitting of the continents. We have such statements as this: "From these were the isles (coasts) of the Gentiles (nations) DIVIDED IN THEIR LANDS; every one *after his tongue, after their families*, in their **nations**," and again, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their **nations**: and by these were THE NATIONS DIVIDED in the earth after the flood" (Gen. 10:5,32).

The descendants of Noah migrated over the whole face of the earth, forming tribe after tribe, city after city, and nation after nation. Let all men know that it is the Almighty God who is the designer and architect of all the nations in the world! The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all been pre-arranged by the will of Him who "worketh *all things* after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). The truth of this cannot be made any plainer than it is by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:8, "When the **most High divided the nations** their inheritance, when **He** separated the sons of Adam, **He set** the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Paul refers to this verse in Acts 17:26-27, "And hath made of *one blood all nations* of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and HATH DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, and the BOUNDS OF THEIR HABITATION; **that they should seek the Lord.**"

How plain it is that it was GOD who, from the beginning, set the bounds of habitation or the national boundaries of all nations. These boundaries were established in relation to Israel and with a view to their being able to *seek after the Lord*. Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and planted Israel at the crossroads, to the end that **all nations should seek after the Lord**. The theater was small, but wonderfully suited for the convenient observation of the whole human race — at the junction of the two continents of Asia and Africa, and almost in sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common center the reports of God's wonderful works, of His mighty power and awesome glory, of the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience, suffering, death, and resurrection of His precious firstborn Son, of the wonder-filled outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the faithful disciples of Jesus were set ablaze by the life and power of their glorified Lord, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe. THAT ALL NATIONS SHOULD SEEK AFTER THE LORD! Out of Israel came Christ; out of Christ has come the church; out of the church shall come the manchild, the manifest sons of God who are destined to bring deliverance to the whole creation that it might be fulfilled which was promised to Father Abraham, "And in thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED" (Gen. 22:18). ALL NATIONS **SHALL BE BLESSED!** What a prospect! Not destroyed — *blessed!* Not turned into hell — *blessed!* Not punished — *blessed!* From the very beginning God not only designed the nations of men that dwell upon the earth; He also planned and purposed to *bless them* — each and every one of them!

Perhaps it was David, the sweet singer of Israel, who intoned these words of hope in the spirit of prophecy: "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon the earth, Thy saving health among **all nations**. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let **all** the people praise Thee! O let **the nations** be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt **judge the people** righteously, and **govern the nations** upon earth...yea, **all kings** shall fall down before Him: **all nations shall serve Him**" (Ps. 67:1-4; 72:11). It is obvious that all nations do not today serve the Lord, neither do all kings (rulers) fall down before Him. China does not serve the Lord. Japan does not serve the Lord. The various nations that contain one billion Moslems do not serve the Lord. The Buddhist nations do not serve the Lord. Great numbers of nations do not today serve the Lord, and few of their rulers fall down before HIM. But the day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and shall fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Saviour. If that day never comes, then the Bible will have to be relegated to the scrapheap of ancestral errors. But the promise is sure: "Arise, O God, **judge the earth**: for Thou shalt INHERIT ALL NATIONS. A-L-L N-A-T-I-O-N-S whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things" (Ps. 82:8; 86:9-10). And my spirit shouts a thousand Amens!

Many precious "fragments" reveal God's ultimate purpose for mankind, when "**all** the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and **all kindreds of the nations** shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord's and HE is the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:27-28). For further confirmation of God's gracious intention toward the nations let us read Psalm 2:8. In this wonderful prophecy the Father is addressing His Son (Head and body), saying, "**I will give unto thee the nations** for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Surely the will and plan of God is revealed in this most gracious request, and surely this was the purpose for which Jesus *came* and was *sent*. "Christ Jesus *came* into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15). "The Father *sent* the Son to be the Saviour of **the world**" (I Jn. 4:14).

A most marvelous prophecy is found in Micah 4:1-3 which points to the very day in which we are now living. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain (government) of the house of the Lord (the sons of God) shall be established in the top of the mountains (strong kingdoms, super powers), and it shall be exalted above the hills (weaker kingdoms, third world nations); and people shall flow unto it. And **many nations** shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain (government) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we (the nations) will walk in His paths: for the law of the Lord shall go forth of Zion (sons of God), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the church). And He shall **judge** among many people, and rebuke **strong nations** afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: **nation** shall not lift up sword against **nation**, *neither shall they learn war anymore*." Blessed beyond my feeble ability to describe shall be that day when it shall come to pass that "He shall sprinkle (cleanse, sanctify) **many nations**; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard they shall consider" (Isa. 52:15). What a word that is!

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And **many nations shall be joined to the Lord** in that day, and shall be my people" Zech. 2:10-11).

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the **nations** of them that are saved *shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it*. And they shall bring the glory and honor of **the nations** into it...and there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 21:24-27; 22:3). As Jerusalem was the seat of the empire, the center of government under the Old Testament typical kingdom of God, so the New Jerusalem must occupy the same position and be the "city of the great King." A city is a symbol of a kingdom or dominion, and so God's kingdom is symbolized by the New Jerusalem, the new dominion coming down from heaven to earth. This is the heavenly city, the

heavenly spiritual government embodied in a people, the city for which Abraham looked, “a city which hath foundations” — a government established in righteousness, being founded upon the sure rock foundation of the righteousness and authority of Jesus Christ. This city is composed of a heavenly and spiritual people in and through whom the mind, nature, glory, wisdom, will, and power of God are expressed. This governmental city is being built now in the heavens of God’s Spirit as God brings a people into union with Himself, conformed to His image, filled with His life. It is this overcoming body of Christ that shall so demonstrate the fullness of the power and glory of the Lord that ALL NATIONS shall be impacted and swept into the embrace of the kingdom of God. Glory to God!

“At that time they shall call Jerusalem *the throne of the Lord*; and ALL NATIONS SHALL BE GATHERED UNTO IT, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: *neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart*” (Jer. 3:17).

I must admit that for many years I clung to the old Babylonish teaching that God today, in this age of grace, still deals with cities and nations according to their **sins**. I thought that God used natural things or disasters — storms, tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, pestilence, plagues, famines, wars, economic collapse, etc. — to *punish* and thereby *judge* peoples, cities, and nations. How difficult it is for us to *put off* the last vestiges of the old Babylonish garment! Only in recent decades has the understanding crystallized within my spiritual consciousness that **Calvary brought a great and glorious change in God’s dealing, not only with those who believe, but also toward all mankind!** “*To wit, that 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).

The question is just this — Do we truly believe that? Do we really believe that God was in Christ **reconciling the world** unto Himself, or did He reconcile only those who believe? Can we clearly see that God in Christ is **not imputing** the sins of the world unto them? Ah, there is the *difference*, the *change*, my beloved, that came at Calvary! Now don’t misunderstand what I say. The subject here is not salvation, but reconciliation. I do not say that the whole world is “already saved” because of Calvary. But they *are reconciled!* And the action in that reconciliation was on God’s part. HE reconciled the world. It bespeaks a change in God’s manifest attitude and His manner of dealing with mankind. His thoughts toward mankind are not now thoughts of condemnation, punishment, or wrath, but thoughts of forgiveness, mercy, and redemptive activity unto salvation!

Under the old law it was “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” The adulterer was to be put to death. Those nations whose iniquity was “filled up” were designated to be wiped off the face of the earth, even the women, children, babies, and cattle were to be destroyed — nothing spared. God dealt with men and nations by law and punishment. That was one way of restraining evil in the world. But under the new covenant, the new arrangement, the new order, God came in Christ reconciling the world *unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM*. The **law** came by Moses, but **grace** and **truth** came by Jesus Christ, who is **THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD**. Therefore the law was neither grace nor was it truth! To say God punishes a city today for its sins is certainly not **grace**, and neither is it the **truth!** Now — instead of wrath and vengeance upon the nations the word is, “Go ye and preach the gospel (good news) to every creature...*disciple the nations.*” God is dealing with the nations by that man whom He hath ordained, Jesus Christ, who came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. This is the “good tidings of great joy which shall be to *all people*; for unto you is born this day A SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord.” **That** is the New Testament message and I fail to see any other message as representing either God’s Christ, His New Covenant, or His Kingdom. That is why Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, “Neither do I condemn thee — go and sin no more.” Our message is not, “Repent, for the punishment of God is at hand,” but “Repent, for the *kingdom* of God is at hand!” There is a great difference!

It is true, nations, like individuals, still *reap what they sow*. There is a law of sowing and reaping, and that is true for every man. If you sow a seed, you will reap that seed, whether it be good or evil. There is a sowing and reaping in my life. I will reap what I sow. If I sow to the flesh, I will of the flesh reap corruption, and it will happen every time. It is an inviolable law. That's why I tremble today for America, because America is sowing to the wind, and if America continues to sow to the wind, it will reap the whirlwind. Our great land of America is already today reaping many negative things that we have sown as a nation in unrighteousness. But I want you to hear me: that is not the punishment and vengeance of God poured out, that is merely the law of sowing and reaping. Every nation sows; every nation reaps. Every denomination sows; every denomination reaps. But that is not the vindictive wrath of God! *God's attitude* toward our nation is that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and therefore only the *gospel* can save America — not punishment! To us is committed the word of that reconciliation, not the word of wrath!

God's method of dealing with the world conforms to the economy of the dispensation according to His purpose. Under law men were **held responsible** for their sins — not only the Lord's chosen people — but all men and all nations! Is that not why God both punished and destroyed heathen civilizations like the Antediluvians, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Hittites, Amorites, Babylon, and numerous others? You can read God's indictment against all these nations in Genesis 6:12-13, Genesis 18:20-21, Genesis 19:1,13, Deuteronomy 20:16-18, Jeremiah 51:24-25, and Ezekiel 7:3,8,27.

Scripture could be piled upon scripture, but these few are sufficient to show that in ancient times God dealt with His people, as well as all the nations of earth, *according to their sins*. He *did* impute their trespasses unto them! And while all men and nations still reap what they sow, according to the law of nature, God is no longer imputing the sins of mankind unto them for He has inaugurated an entirely new provision. We have been prone, in every forward step in God, to bring a lot of baggage out of our former realm along with us. I brought that "apocalyptic" baggage with me into the message of sonship, that end-time mentality of outer world events, of horrendous punishments that God was soon to unleash on a rebellious world, as though that had something to do with the kingdom God is bringing forth! You see, my beloved, I still did not understand that now *judgment is given to the saints of the most High!* God is not in the business today of judging nations in the sense that we think of judgment as punishment and vengeance. That was the old covenant! God is not punishing nations today under the new covenant. So if we have economic collapse, it is not the judgment of God, it is reaping what we sowed. The judgment of God is in His saints.

Now hear me! The wrath of God today is called in the book of Revelation "the wrath of the Lamb." It is a redemptive wrath. It is not vindictive punishment, but purposeful correction! It is a judgment that is unto redemption, for the flying angel says, "Fear God, and *give glory to Him: for the hour of His judgment is come: and WORSHIP HIM!*" And then comes the word, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and *glorify Thy name? For all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest*" (Rev. 15:4). Whoever heard of such a thing, of a lamb that had wrath? It is a redemptive wrath, unto salvation, and that salvation is planted in a people, in a lamb company. God is dealing with the nations today *unto salvation*. And it doesn't matter what happens, God is ministering through His people in judgment and mercy and redemption unto the nations of earth. The judgment of God is the wrath of the Lamb. The judgment of God is the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. That's where the judgment of God is! It is a *spiritual work!* Get your eyes off of the so-called "signs of the times." Those outward events have nothing whatever to do with God's judgment! All who believe that today God is judging nations for their sins and wickedness are still possessed of a legalistic mind-set and are preaching a world view that is under the law covenant rather than the covenant of grace!

With the exception of a few verses in the book of Revelation which are highly symbolic and must be understood spiritually, the New Testament has no message of vindictive judgment by disasters and calamities upon cities and nations! Let us now examine God's gracious attitude toward the nations

under the covenant of grace. “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. **Go ye therefore and TEACH ALL NATIONS...teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you...***” (Mat. 28:18-20). “*By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for **obedience to the faith AMONG ALL NATIONS for His name...***” (Rom. 1:5). “*...now to...the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest...according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **made known to ALL NATIONS for the obedience of faith...***” (Rom. 16:25-26). “*And the scripture, seeing that **GOD WOULD JUSTIFY THE NATIONS THROUGH FAITH**, preached before the gospel (good news) unto Abraham, saying, **IN THEE SHALL ALL NATIONS BE BLESSED...***” (Gal. 3:8). “*And he that overcometh...to him will I give **POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron...***” (Rev. 2:26-27). “*And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword (the living word of God), that with it He should **SMITE THE NATIONS: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron...***” (Rev. 19:15). “*And the **NATIONS OF THEM THAT ARE SAVED** shall walk in the light of it: and the **kings of the earth** do bring their glory and honor into it...*” (Rev. 21:24). “*And the leaves of the tree are for **THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS...***” (Rev. 22:2).

Some years ago when hurricane Katrina brought terrible pain, suffering, devastation, and loss to thousands of people in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, destroying their homes and businesses, killing hundreds, and scattering the people all across the land, many Christians were quick to view the disaster as some kind of deserved “judgment” upon the people for their many sins — drunkenness, gambling, prostitution, corruption, immorality, and above all the practice and promotion of satanic Voodoo. But that is not the heart of the Father we know! When the firstborn Son of God was told of cruel atrocities committed against the Galileans, He asked the penetrating question, “Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?” The answer, obviously, was No! And when He was asked why the blind man was born blind — “Who did *sin*, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, **but that the works of God might be made manifest in him!**” Oh, how we want to make men’s *sins* to be responsible for the tragedies that befall them!

“Hurricane judgment.” “Tsunami judgment.” “Earthquake judgment.” If you believe in such things, do you know what that tells me? You know a lot *about* God, but you surely don’t *know God!* If that was God’s judgment on New Orleans, who was it that really got the judgment? It was the poor people. It was the people who couldn’t *afford* to get out of the city! Yet the people who were really responsible for the corruption, sin, and degradation in New Orleans were able to get out! The crooked politicians, the crooked lawyers, the crooked policemen, the drug lords, the voodoo practitioners, the pimps, etc. were able to escape the “judgment” in cars, buses, and airplanes! So God decides to judge New Orleans, but all the people who most deserve the judgment are able to flee from His wrath while the poor, struggling, helpless people were left behind to become the recipients of God’s vengeance. Furthermore, the most sinful and vile part of the city, the old French Quarter, was also spared! Is there not something wrong with this picture? I tell you today, the God who came and revealed Himself in Jesus, who came *not to destroy men’s lives but to save them*, is not in the business of massacring people! That is an Old Testament mentality. The only killing business God is in today is the slaying of the old Adamic life within you — the man of sin sitting in the temple of God. And He does that by the power and dominion of His Spirit and the authority of His Word — not by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, pestilence, or earthquakes! Let’s get *spiritually real*, beloved!

In this connection, Mildred Garner penned some spiritually perceptive words concerning the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. “The computer is full of junk about God destroying the World Trade Center and the Pentagon because of sin. And I will agree that they were destroyed because of sin. But when I see the faces of the enemies on television that did this act, I do not see the face of Yahweh. I see the faces of ignorant religion

venting out a wrath that did not originate in the heart of the Father. Read the Bible, read history; all the wars against truth in the past were hosted and waged by blind religion. Blind religion is the enemy of civilization and was the foe that crucified our Christ. Blind religious extremists martyred most of the disciples. Religion without a born again experience is a blind religion. If we have an angry deity that is yet struggling against his enemies to gain his supremacy, we are into blind religion. If we are true messengers of Christ, our message should be in harmony with the truth that God was in Christ *reconciling the world unto Himself*.

“If the disaster in New York and Washington was ordered by Yahweh to punish us, then is not this saying that He sent that bunch of killers to murder 6,633 unsuspecting people? Who is the rogue here? If Yahweh sent Osama bin Laden to kill our people, would this not then suggest that Laden was in touch with Yahweh’s will and we were not? Are these messengers of doom suggesting that we should get behind Osama bin Laden’s effort to judge and destroy civilization and start following him so we can get in tune with Yahweh? I do not think so! What do the children think about their loving Father when they see the horror of this barbarous deed and hear their spiritual leaders preaching that it actually came from the hand of God? Evil men did this. They meant it for evil, but Yahweh will direct our steps to work it out for the good of those that love the Lord, the called according to His purpose” — end quote.

This we do know — God is love, and tragedies always present the blessed opportunity for GOD IN HIS PEOPLE to express, manifest, and demonstrate His beautiful, compassionate, caring, and redemptive nature! Let us all be *sons* in our attitudes and actions that the glory of God may be revealed in the earth. All creation is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God unveiled in His sons, and truly the hour of preparation is upon us as our Father raises up His kingdom in the life of each called and chosen son. He is giving us an *attitude adjustment* that we may unconditionally love all men and all cultures and all nations, not imputing their trespasses unto them! That is the spirit of sonship!

I could only say a hearty Amen when I read the following words from brother Carl Schwing: “Recently I was sent an article about the soon coming judgment of God upon the people of the world. The writer’s words were those of anger, wrath, and destruction. The writer touched upon the ‘manifestation of the sons of God’ but quickly adds that before that event takes place the wicked, the evil, and the unbelieving will be destroyed by the wrath of God. I have also read some of the so-called ‘prophecies’ which are being circulated today: prophecies of doom and horror. Their words do nothing for one’s spirit, they accomplish nothing, and they certainly do not edify the body of Christ. Why are these ‘prophets for profit’ sending their prophecies to the saved of the earth, or to the elect of God? They that know the Lord need not fear those who can burn cities, or plunder earthly belongings, or destroy the body...for their trust is in the Lord, and they are prepared and ready to receive all that the Father has planned. Should not these ‘prophets’ be taking their predictions to those they refer to as the ‘wicked and unsaved’ people of the world, warning them of such massive destruction and terror?”

Maybe you’ve heard the story about a boy who was tending sheep in the fields. The villagers told him to call for help in case a wolf came prowling. After some time the boy thought he would test the system. He yelled out, “Wolf!” and the villagers came running. But there was no wolf. After the boy pulled this prank a few more times, the villagers didn’t trust him anymore. Eventually a wolf really did come, and when the boy cried for help, everyone ignored his calls — with devastating results. More often than the boy in this story cried “Wolf!” when there was no wolf, the prophets of doom and gloom have throughout my lifetime cried “Judgment!” upon churches, institutions, cities, and nations, and there has been no such judgment as they described.

It is easy to anticipate, call for, and predict the manifestation of divine wrath upon men and nations. Most Christians certainly believe they *deserve* the outpourings of divine judgments! And it plays perfectly into our fears, as well as our vindictiveness against the wickedness of men. But it is not the

spirit of the Lamb of God — Jesus Christ the *Saviour!* Once we adjust our perception to expect doom and gloom, religious zeal conjures up all sorts of apocalyptic visions of the “end times.” I have heard hundreds of “doom and destruction” prophecies over the past seventy-five years. For years I kept a folder *full* of them, checking occasionally to see whether any had come to pass. *None* of them have come to pass! Calamities they did not predict did happen, and the ones they prophesied failed to materialize. Why? Simply because those who said, “Thus saith the Lord,” had not heard from the Lord. They were only parroting the theories of the carnal church systems and speaking out of their own imaginations and fears. They predicted all sorts of horrors to come upon mankind, and completely *missed* the one great work God is doing today by His Spirit as He deals with His elect to bring *many sons to glory!*

The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the nature of the judgment that would be administered through God’s many-membered Christ. “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall **bring forth judgment to the nations.** He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. **A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.** He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have SET JUDGMENT IN THE EARTH: and the isles shall wait for His law” (Isa. 42:1-4). To understand the things written in this passage is of eternal importance, for until we do understand them we will continue to place an Old Testament emphasis upon the judgments of God. This passage is about God’s Christ, both Head and body. It reveals the nature of God’s judgments through Jesus and through every son of God who is one in His Spirit. Isaiah’s opening word here, “Behold,” signals to his listeners: **“Prepare for a new revelation about God’s sons and God’s judgments!”** Isaiah was saying in essence, “Christ isn’t coming to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. Christ isn’t coming with a loud clamor or noise. He isn’t coming as a ruthless avenger. Oh, no! He comes as a tender, merciful, compassionate, loving Saviour. You’ll hear Him speak with a still, small voice in your inner man.”

David Wilkerson, though he prophesied judgments upon America, also caught a glimmer of this beautiful truth when he wrote, “I hear a question being asked by many believers today: ‘Why hasn’t God turned America over to judgment? Why hasn’t He dealt with us according to our sins? God has suffered America’s sins for a long time now, so why haven’t we seen His righteous judgment on us?’ We’re a society completely bruised in its morality. We’re also a nation that is depressed and disturbed, with people living in fear and mental agony. There are more psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and counselors than ever in history, yet they can’t keep up with all the people begging for just a single hour of help. This is true even in the church: Christian counseling teams across the land are overburdened by the press of people needing help for their problems. Our children are being bruised by broken families, abuse and molestation. Teenagers are being bruised by immorality, materialism and numbness. Satan has unleashed a flood of evil upon the land, and it has left in its wake a bent and bruised people. Most of the church itself has this same bruised spirit. (This is the law of sowing and reaping I mentioned earlier). If we got what we deserved, America should be lying in ruins, devastated by anarchy. But Isaiah says our tender Jesus would not break a bruised reed! And even as America sits in utter confusion, bent over and bruised by our many sins, we are not yet broken. In His tenderness, our Lord has not let that happen!”

Judgment is God’s strange work. We have had the idea that if God truly “judged” America we would be laid flat under His avenging hand for our many sins. The reality is, that it is God’s judgments in America that will, in our Father’s time, *correct* and *restore* America to righteousness and blessing! Men make judgment the end. But judgment is always a *means* to an end — never THE END! No matter how an unbeliever is dealt with, whether he dies as a result of his sin, or by the direct judgment of God; whether he be cast into hell, or turned into the lake of fire — THIS IS NOT HIS END. All men will be raised up either into a resurrection of life or a resurrection of judgment (Jn. 5:29), but for the latter THIS IS NOT THEIR END. All judgments are limited — confined to a day, or to the limitations of prescribed ages. “Because He hath appointed A DAY, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained” (Acts 17:21). It gives my heart much joy to know that God will judge the world in righteousness BY THAT MAN whom He hath

ordained! He will not judge the world in anger, fury, and vengeance by a tsunami, an earthquake, or a nuclear war! Oh, no! Not in anger — in *righteousness!* Not by a calamity — by *that man, God's Christ!*

The end of divine judgment — no matter its form, no matter its subject — is to bring the whole universe into harmony with His will, nature, and glory. How optimistically did the holy prophets and apostles regard the coming of the Lord in judgment! Note the expectation in Isaiah's voice as he announces: "Yea, in the way of THY JUDGMENTS, O Lord, *have we waited for Thee*...with my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when THY JUDGMENTS are in the earth, the *inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS*" (Isa. 26:8-9). Here Isaiah assures us that the day when God's judgments are in the earth will be a most glorious and desirable day, a day in which the inhabitants of the world W-I-L-L LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS! How opposite to the idea entertained by many that when God's judgments come in the earth the inhabitants of the world will be sent into oblivion or eternal damnation.

If the desire of your heart is anything like the desire of my heart, this is a blessed thought and a wonderful assurance: the *inhabitants of the world WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS!* How my ransomed soul yearns to behold such a thing! Every time I scan the headlines of the morning paper I am seized with an intense longing that the inhabitants of the world will *learn righteousness*. Of times as I watch the evening newscast my spirit is mightily moved within to intercede earnestly that the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. As I drive across our great land; as I walk the streets of our towns and cities, observing the condition of those about: neighbors, friends, relatives, strangers, the young and the old, my spirit groans with unutterable supplications that the inhabitants of the world will LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS! What a marvelous provision of our all-wise and loving Father that, to this very end, He has ORDAINED JUDGMENT to come forth in the earth. Bless His name!

Speaking of the judgment of the Lord, hear the note of triumph and exultation when David speaks by the inspiration the Spirit gives, saying,

Let the heavens be glad

And LET THE EARTH REJOICE;

And let men say among the nations, the Lord reigneth!
Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof;
Let the fields REJOICE, and all that are therein.
Then shall the trees of the wood (people of the earth)
SING ALOUD AT THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD,
Because **HE COMETH TO JUDGE THE EARTH.**
O give THANKS unto the Lord, for HE IS GOOD;
For His mercy endureth forever! (I Chron. 16:31-34).

Why will the sea of humanity *roar*, why will the fields of kindreds and tongues and peoples *rejoice*, why will the trees of the forest, or the people of the earth, *sing out* at the presence of the Lord, when He comes upon the scene to JUDGE THE EARTH? One would think they might weep, or shrink in fear and consternation at the thoughts of His judgments, but why all the *singing?* David says that it is because God's judgments are an expression of *His goodness* and everlasting *mercy*, designed to teach the inhabitants of the world *righteousness!* The earth shall rejoice because this means that we have reached the *turning point* in our degeneration, and have come to the times of regeneration. This is true even now for the elect, but must ultimately reach unto the whole world and the entire creation. His presence, while it speaks of His utmost holiness, and will not tolerate the

continuance of evil, brings the changes needed for deliverance, righteousness, and harmony. And when the divine disciplines have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow in restoration and victory. Oh, the wonder of it!

What a message of hope, then, God's "flying angel company" bears to the leaders of the church world and to all the ends of the earth: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; **for the hour of His judgment is come:** and worship Him!" And exactly that will be the result of the message proclaimed!

Chapter 167

The Three Angels' Messages (continued)

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven...saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and *worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters*” (Rev. 14:6-7).

It is of great interest to note that in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation the Spirit reveals a scene of *cause* and *effect*. The *cause* is found in verses one through five where we see the 144,000 upon mount Zion in the fullness, glory, authority, and power of sonship to God. The manchild is now upon the throne! The overcoming sons of God are now ready to reign upon God's holy hill of Zion! The stage is set. No sooner are God's kings and priests raised up to their place of rulership than the curtain goes up on the first act in the great drama of sonship ministry. May the Holy Spirit aid our understanding to grasp the blessed truth that everything from here on is the *effect* or the *result* of that ministry! As we consider with reverent hearts the great purpose and magnitude of sonship ministry we can now think of all else that follows in the book of Revelation as the RESULT OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD!

Some years ago the Lord gave our dear friend, Danny Crotts, a vision which embodies within it the very message of the above passage of scripture. Danny wrote, “I saw a great mountain, which was an active volcano, with people joined together around the rim. There was an earthquake, resulting in explosions, boiling lava, and fire shooting in all directions. The people were dancing around the fire, praising and worshipping all this, especially the power of the earthquake. I then saw a lightning bolt come down from heaven and strike the mountain, which scattered and destroyed it, also scattering all the people. Out of the thunder of the lightning came a voice, saying, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*”

Ah, how the people of God love to worship the *things* of God more than *God Himself*. Without doubt that is the message in the vision. Many worship the mighty acts of God — following after signs, wonders, and miracles, but do not hear the voice of the Lord and have no true worship of the Lord in spirit and in truth. Others pay homage to personalities, to creeds, to programs, rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances, to organizations, movements, and outreaches — bowing at the false altars of the externals of religion, while falling short of that *true worship* which is focused and centered in HIM ALONE.

This brings us back to the message of the first angel. Remember, dear one, the angel (sons of God) is addressing the *leaders* and *rulers* of the carnal church systems of man! “Having the gospel of the ages to proclaim to those who *sit upon* (rule over) the earth-dwellers and over every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people...saying with a loud voice...**WORSHIP HIM!**” The angel first commands these “kings of the earth” or lords of the earth-realm to **FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM**. But there is an added qualification. “**WORSHIP HIM** that **made** heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

All who have followed these studies in the Revelation for a time realize that “heaven,” “earth,” “sea,” and “fountains of waters” are all wonderful symbols of different realms where men dwell spiritually. “Heaven” signifies that spiritual people that dwells in the heavenly or exalted places in Christ Jesus, those who have ascended spiritually into the high places of the heavens of God's Spirit. “Earth” signifies the carnal-minded Christians who, though saved, think carnally and understand with the natural mind and mind earthly things. These are not occupied with those things which are above,

where Christ sits at the right hand of God, nor are they enjoying those spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. Rather than spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, they seek temporal blessings in the earthlies — blessings of prosperity and health, of houses, lands, bank accounts, automobiles, food, and raiment. Their concern is with God's provision in this perishable realm. They are earth-dwellers.

The "sea" represents the surging, raging masses of unregenerated humanity, the "wicked who are like the troubled sea" tossed about by the base emotions, passions, lusts, and fears of the flesh. "Fountains of waters," from the earthly side, bespeak the **sources**, the well-springs of ideas, concepts, philosophies, teachings, precepts, traditions, customs, culture, imaginations, carnal knowledge, and worldly wisdom which flow out of man's earthly, natural, human life — all the intellectual, moral, and religious influences of *this world* which are the sources from which men draw their life, their natural joy and soulful refreshment, their world views, lifestyles, and relationships.

The message is just this — don't worship anything in heaven or that comes from heaven (the acts of God, etc), don't worship or pay homage to anything of the carnal earth-realm, don't esteem anything in the sea, and don't reverence anything that flows out of the fountains of the soulful, natural life. Don't be captivated or controlled by, enamored with, caught up in, or absorbed by anything pertaining to these — for it is GOD WHO CREATED ALL THINGS — GOD MADE ALL THESE REALMS AND EVERYTHING THEREIN — **WORSHIP HIM WHO MADE THEM!** Or, as Danny Crott's vision tells us, don't worship the mountain, the earthquake, or the fire — worship the God that made them!

If you are star-struck by some charismatic preacher or some dynamic kingdom teacher, get your eyes off of him, for it is God who made him — **worship God who made him!** If your life is centered around a particular doctrine (even sonship, reconciliation, or kingdom), and all you can do is eat, drink, and sleep that doctrine, and especially argue about it, perhaps you are "worshipping" the doctrine rather than the God of the doctrine! This is the spirit of Babylonish religion — to pay homage to great preachers, beautiful edifices, powerful institutions, impressive programs, influential movements and organizations, to position, status, abilities, and talents — always centered in the outward, in the effect rather than the cause. The natural mind is ever seeking something visible and tangible. Throughout the centuries in the life of the church systems they have accumulated a great number of traditions, rites, ordinances, methods, institutions, and practices, each of them supplanting something of the pureness and freshness and glory of the Spirit of Christ. These things have become so universal in the churches of the world, and in the lives of their members, that there is no thought of ever being able to "run" the church and its business without them!

Generation after generation, people have been raised up from childhood in this atmosphere and have absolutely no knowledge of anything else or another way. It never enters the minds of these people that THE CHRIST is the Head of the church, He is the life of the church, and the whole sufficiency for the church, its people, its work, and its needs. Each church must be constantly creating new plans, programs, and activities to keep the people busy "doing something." The idea is to keep the people busy and to keep up the interest, so that they may be kept in that church. In the church world such a church is known as a "lively" church, and the pastor is known as one of the more "successful" pastors. Spirituality has little, if anything, to do with it, for the whole group, including the pastor and the church leaders, is simply a natural body of people, carrying on what *they think* is a church.

If all the multiplied superfluous things employed by the churches today *were suddenly swept away*, it would in all probability *cease to function!* If all the preachers and priests were compelled to lay aside their robes and their trappings, they would lose much of their stature, prestige, and eminence. If they had to tear down their altars and elevated platforms, lay aside their professionalism and showmanship, and throw out their statues, candles, incense, and prayer books, their services would lose their sentimental sense of beauty and pageantry. If the churches had to drop all their rituals,

forms, programs, ceremonies, confirmations, baptisms, communions, special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the churches is NOT IN GOD, but is in the trappings that they have accumulated to themselves through the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able to run His church without the aid of anything in the way of man's contributions, is found to be abhorrent to the average church member.

Oh, my beloved brother, my precious sister, men do not need religion. They need CHRIST! They do not need to know doctrine. They need to KNOW HIM! They do not need to perform ritual. They need to EXPERIENCE CHRIST! They do not need to follow signs, wonders, and miracles. They need to FOLLOW THE LAMB! This is why God sends His "flying angel company" in the power of the Spirit to announce to the leaders and rulers of the church systems that the hour has come when they must **FEAR GOD, AND GIVE THE GLORY TO HIM...AND WORSHIP HIM THAT MADE HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS!** Get rid of all the trappings out of every realm that have been added, and worship the Father in spirit and in truth!

The message of the first angel, that is, the very *first message* to the leaders of Christendom from the manifest sons of God is that they must fear God and give all the glory to Him and worship Him that *made* all the things have been so important to them and which they have been worshipping (esteeming, reverencing) in place of Him. It is the rebuke of the superficiality and blasphemy of *external religion*, and a call back to *reality in the spirit!* And God will deliver this message through His sons when they have found their place in the heights of the authority, power, and glory of Zion. The work is being wrought in them first, for they are the *firstfruits!*

For many centuries now we have been taught to believe that God has in His word commanded us again and again to worship Him, but the real truth is that God has never demanded our worship. God doesn't need anything. Many misunderstandings of the nature of God come from our desire to transfer human attributes to God. God does not seek praise the way humans do. The difficulty with people seeking adoration is that they usually want acclaim they don't deserve. Flattery and insincerity characterize such empty tribute. These have no part in the praise and worship of God! Heartfelt praise of God is not exaggeration or flattery. Nor is it a response to what we feel is our "duty" toward God, that which He expects or demands from us. When we praise God, we are merely telling the truth about His greatness, and in true worship it is our spontaneous response to our experience or revelation of His goodness, graciousness, love, faithfulness, and greatness toward us. It is impossible for us to exaggerate about God's mercy, love, holiness, and power! It is impossible to overstate His greatness. God is deserving of our praise and worship. "*For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise*" (Ps. 96:4). "*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture*" (Ps. 95:6-7). "*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things*" (Rev. 4:11).

But all the praise is not telling God something He doesn't already know. Yet, He doesn't suffer from a sense of inadequacy, *needing* to be reminded continually of how great He is to feel good about Himself! Many years ago the Lord spoke suddenly and powerfully to me, saying, "I HAVE **NOT** COMMANDED YOU TO PRAISE ME OR WORSHIP ME!" I was astonished at this word, incredulous, speechless! According to my understanding I was absolutely certain that God *had* repeatedly *commanded* us to worship Him! I rushed home, got my Concordance, and began a search of all the scriptures on praise and worship. How clearly then the truth dawned on me! Yes — we are commanded to praise and worship — but the command was not issued by GOD! Instead, *men of God*, caught up in the Spirit of God, beholding the splendor and majesty of God, cried out in spirit, "*Praise ye the Lord...O let us come and worship before Him!*" Quickly I discerned the pattern. It is not God speaking in the first person, proclaiming, "I command you — worship me!" Oh, no! There is no such command anywhere in the Word. God speaks of worship and praise, but not in terms of an imperative. It is always the man of God, with the veil drawn back from his vision, getting

a glimpse of the Lord of Glory, as the prophet Isaiah said, “*In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord...high and lifted up,*” — that is the beginning of worship! We could easily understand how God who made us could order us to do what He wants us to do. After all, He is our Creator! We could even understand how He could command us to say what we should say or even to think what He would have us to think. And He does, indeed, do that. But, to go into that innermost closet, that deepest recess of the human heart, that seat of our love and affection, and say that we *must love*, and to command us *to love*; and to say that we *must praise*, and to command us *to praise*; and to say that we *must worship*, and to command us *to worship*, is obviously a contradiction in terms.

Yea, it is more than that! Were God to command us to praise and worship Him He would thereby display the most proud, egotistical, conceited, self-centered, narcissistic, self-aggrandizing, and vainglorious personality in the universe! Have you never met an egoistic, self-seeking person reeking with the odor of their own self-importance? I have known men who were obsessed with their importance and power who manipulated others to constantly fawn before them and heap flattery upon them. There is something in me that has always detested such and found them among the most despicable specimens of manhood. Shall we now attribute such contemptible characteristics to our great and glorious God? Can you imagine saying to anyone, “Thou shalt love me!” “Thou shalt adore me!” “Thou shalt praise me!” “Thou shalt not cease in telling me how wonderful I am!” We have the idea that God is good and knows He’s good; that God is holy and knows He’s holy; that God is great and knows He’s great; that God is omnipotent and knows He’s omnipotent; therefore He is justified in commanding our respect, love, praise, and worship. But that is humanism — God profiled in the image of man!

The question follows — What is worship? Ah, worship is simply man’s *response* to the REVELATION OF GOD! When we see God we will worship Him and our worship will be in direct proportion to the clarity of our vision of Him. When I see my sweet, beautiful wife I adore her and tell her how lovely and wonderful she is — not because she commands me to — should I praise her because she requires it my praise would be feigned. In like manner, God has no need to command us to worship — He reveals Himself for what He is. The response of all who behold the King in His beauty is the same — the revelation redounds in blessing and honor and glory unto God because we discover Him to be *worthy!* Worship is man’s response, not God’s command. And the response of the man unto whom the Lord has truly unveiled Himself is as natural and spontaneous as breathing.

So here in our text it is not our almighty Father commanding men to worship Him. Rather, it is the “flying angel company,” the sons of God, the redeemed ones, the processed ones who have been given the fullest revelation of God who now send forth their word to the rulers of religious Babylon who have set up all their man-made idols for the people to bow down to. And their word is “**WORSHIP HIM THAT MADE HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS! WORSHIP HIM!**” This is the cry out of the heart of men and women who have seen Him face to face and know that HE is the *only reality!* To reverence or serve anything other than the Father Himself in spirit and in truth is idolatry and abomination! And yet the truth of our text runs deeper than this. For not only is it a command from the sons of God to worship God, it is also through them a MIGHTY REVELATION OF GOD TO THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH WORLD — for only the revelation of God can evoke the response of worship from the hearts of men! Oh, the depth of the mystery!

BABYLON IS FALLEN!

“And there followed *another angel*, saying, ***Babylon is fallen, is fallen***, that great city, because she made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8).

John, who describes this scene, had seen some strange sights in his day. There was that time just before the crucifixion of Jesus when the apostle Peter with one powerful sword stroke clipped off the ear of the servant of the high priest, whose name was Malchus. John had watched with wonder as

Jesus reached down and picked up the severed ear, stepping forth and replacing it on the head of the servant, healing it so that it was as normal as the one on the other side of his head. He could hardly believe his eyes! He had witnessed five little loaves of bread and two small fish multiplied to feed a crowd of more than five thousand people — with twelve baskets of leftovers! He had seen hopeless cripples running and jumping up and down in joy at being healed, dead people raised to life again, storms instantly quieted by a single command from the Master! And, if tradition can be trusted, John even experienced being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and crawled out without a blister!

Yes, John had definitely seen some amazing sights. But I do not doubt that, as unusual and astounding as were the things John's eyes had beheld, including the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, watching the vision of three powerful angels flying across the sky in formation, John must have been excited. Not only did he see them, but he *heard* them as well, for each had a message to announce to the world. After the first angel delivered his message to the "kings of the earth," or the rulers of the earth-realm, John heard the voice of the second angel reverberating across the sky. *"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink of the wine of her impure passion!"* (Rev. 14:8, RSV). That's all the angel said, but my, what depth of meaning there is in the words!

This truth regarding the fall of Babylon is one of the most important and significant truths of this present hour in which we live. This truth is first introduced in the book of Revelation here in our text. It is connected to the proclamation of the "gospel of the ages," and the proclamations of the "three angels," and is also the subject of much of the remainder of the Revelation. One of the names of Babylon is "Mystery," as well as "Babylon the great." This great "city" or "organized system" is referred to as "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." And because she is a mystery, spiritual discernment and understanding is required to know who she is and our responsibility in relation to that harlot system.

Throughout the entire history of the church, from time to time a remnant of the Lord's people have received the revelation of the Holy Spirit that "Babylon is fallen" just as the angel declares in our text. She is "fallen" not only because the word of scripture says so, but because the HOLY SPIRIT HAS REVEALED THAT FACT. Now, for something to be "fallen" does not mean that it no longer exists, or that it has disappeared from the earth. A thing can be "fallen" and yet continue to exist in that fallen state. Actually, "fallen" describes the state or condition of something that *does* exist! People used to speak of a "fallen" woman as a woman who had left the purity of her life and become a prostitute. We all know that Adam and all mankind in him is in a "fallen" state according to the scriptures and the revelation of the Holy Spirit. In chapters seventeen and eighteen we read of the "judgment" of the harlot, Babylon, and that she will be "burned with fire" and symbolically "cast into the sea" to be found no more. Those scenes speak of the *destruction* of Babylon, but not her "fall." Babylon remains to be judged and destroyed, but Babylon "fell" long centuries ago when the church apostatized from the truth and became the fallen woman, the great harlot and the mother of harlots. Can you not see the difference? The harlot system of religious Babylon is in a fallen state as much as anything in the universe is fallen. She doesn't appear to men to be fallen, for she claims to be "the church" and her outward appearance is that of the representative of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved, make no mistake about it, BABYLON IS FALLEN, and the whole church system of man is religious Babylon! She is an unclean, perverted woman! Until we see clearly this difference between "fallen" Babylon and "destroyed" Babylon we will miss the message of the second angel!

Irrefutable confirmation that this is the true meaning of the statement "Babylon is fallen," is found in Revelation 18:1-6 wherein we read, *"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage (container) of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her fornication, and the kings of the earth*

have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double...

It must be made clear to our hearts that these verses present us with a description of Babylon in her “fallen” state — she is full of devils, she is possessed by every kind of foul religious spirit, and is like a cage full of unclean and hateful birds, or manifestations of unrighteousness and spiritual impurity. Because of this fallen condition the Lord’s people are admonished to “come out of her” in order that they might not “be partakers of her sins” and “receive not of her plagues.” If her fallen state signified her collapse or destruction, God’s people would no longer be in her because she would no longer exist as an institution, nor would they be leaving her so as not to receive of her plagues, for the plagues would have already been poured out. But “fallen” Babylon has *not yet* been rewarded for her iniquities, *nor* has she been burned with fire, *nor* has she received double for all her sins, *nor* has she been cast into the depths of the sea never to be found again! Armed with this knowledge we can now understand the great truth that this cry, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” refers not to the judgment or destruction of the system, but rather to the *spiritual condition* of that system in the present.

When the second angel delivers his message, there is a mighty move of the Spirit of God and the scales begin to fall from the eyes of the leaders of Babylon who have already awakened to the fact that they should fear God and give all the glory to Him, and worship HIM, not the religious traditions, exercises, works, and practices they have valued so highly. Though they realize there needs to be a change in focus, they still have not seen the system for what it really is — a corrupt, fallen *whore!* Now the revelation breaks powerfully within their consciousness as to just how carnal, corrupt, abominable, and devilish that whole religious system is! What a revelation that is! And beloved, it *takes* a revelation from God to see Babylon for what it is! The second angel’s message, or the *second authoritative word* from the manifest sons of God to the Lord’s people who have served as *slaves* in the captivity of religious Babylon is just this: **“Babylon is fallen, is fallen!”** That is the mystery. The destruction of the Babylon system finally takes place in chapters seventeen and eighteen of the book of Revelation — *because it is fallen!*

The firstfruits of His redemption, the called and chosen elect of the Lord, who are the sons of God, are those who now have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying, and hearing, they have obeyed the Lord, forsaking Babylon. And as the elect of God forsakes Babylon, we then come to Zion, according to the word of the Lord: *“In those days, and in that time saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come...and weeping they shall go, and seek the Lord their God, THEY SHALL ASK THE WAY TO ZION with their faces thitherward (or toward the presence of the Lord), saying, Come, and let us join ourselves TO THE LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people hath been LOST SHEEP: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and they have turned away on the mountains (the kingdoms of men): they have gone from mountain to hill, THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR RESTING PLACE. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord...the hope of their fathers. REMOVE OUT OF THE MIDST OF BABYLON...”* (Jer. 50:5-8).

Where do we go, when we come out of Babylon? We go to Zion, the holy and blessed hill of the Lord’s habitation. Why have the Lord’s people gone astray as **lost sheep**, running from mountain to hill, from church to church, from revival to revival, from move to move? Because their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and they all have forgotten their resting place **in God** and **in His habitation of Zion!** Why have the enemies of the Lord’s people “devoured them” and troubled them among the religious kingdoms of men? Because God’s people have “sinned against the Lord” in finding a counterfeit habitation in Babylon. And what is God’s answer to this transgression? **“FLEE**

YE OUT OF THE MIDST OF BABYLON!” And inasmuch as the Lord has been calling His firstfruits company out of religious Babylon, we know from that that He is restoring His people in a right and proper relationship with Him in preparation for the manifestation of the sons of God. And we know also by this that in due time GOD WILL DELIVER ALL HIS PEOPLE OUT OF BABYLON, AND HE WILL BEGIN WITH THE SHEPHERDS — those who led the people astray will now lead them *with tears of repentance and great brokenness and weeping* back to Zion! Aren't you glad!

THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations *drink of the wine of her fornication*” (Rev. 14:8).

In the ancient world all the major religions of the gods of Babylon, Greece, and Rome joined pagan worshippers to demons through sexual intercourse with religious (temple) prostitutes and sodomites. History reveals that such vile creatures, because they were in the service of demons, under their will, and actually indwelt by demon-deities, were called by the ancients, “holy ones,” meaning “sanctified” or “set apart ones” unto the false god. They were “sanctified” or “set apart” by the will, presence, and nature of unclean spirits. Christians who had once engaged in those shameful practices before being delivered from the adversary’s clutches by faith in the Lord Jesus and the washing of regeneration knew that the practical result of their sanctification unto the Lord was abstinence from fornication (I Thes. 4:4). The indwelling Christ, who of God is made unto us “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” enables each to “know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of sensuality even as the pagans who know not God.” We know that our bodies are the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” and that fornication (physical or spiritual) is a formal act of turning ourselves over to the control of an alien power. Uncleanliness is actually “SANCTIFICATION UNTO THE FLESH” — separation unto the flesh and sensuality! The calling of the believer, therefore, is to purity of life that he might be wholly sanctified *unto the Lord* in attitude and action, in body and spirit.

The “fornication” of religious Babylon is a *symbol*, not the fornication of the flesh, but something spiritual, a joining on a religious plane to that which is not Christ. Women in the Revelation are likewise symbolic, either positively of the bride of Christ, or negatively of the soul, or of religious organizations and activities which are *soulical* rather than *spiritual*. These are those ministries, and multiplied millions of believers, who daily sow their seed, deposit their spiritual life of Christ, into man-made religious systems, mingling the reality of Christ with the traditions and commandments of men, joining themselves to carnal programs, promotions, methods, and worldly religious activities, as well as with the political systems and governments of the world, satisfying their own soulish appetites and lusts in the name of the Lord. It is *spiritual fornication!* The church is imitating the world! The church schedule is packed with flesh-appeal programs and activities that run day and night. They feel that unless every night of the week is taken up with some sort of activity, the ministry is an ineffective thing. They have the strange idea that nothing is being done unless someone is talking! So they fairly swarm to conferences, seminars, workshops, committee meetings, platform discussions, concerts, plays, programs and outreaches of many kinds.

It is distasteful to have to admit it, but the plain truth is that the vast majority of Christians live their lives in *soulish lusts*. The further truth is that God’s purposes are not accomplished by intellect and soulical activity! The church systems go forward today like a little Samson shorn of his locks of power. It parades up and down, boasting of its accomplishments, and like Samson, it knows not that the Spirit of God has departed from it. But even as Saul and his armies tremble in fear before the mighty Goliath, the Lord is raising up a little David with a sling shot of the spirit of sonship to meet the enemy with all of his stratagems and come off with a mighty victory! The David company is still in preparation, far out in the solitude of the green pastures of a living word, and beside the still waters of the quickening spirit, learning by faith and obedience to slay their bear and kill their lion. But we are gaining new victories every day and learning within ourselves the power of God and the ways of

His kingdom! Saul's armor will not do! The sons of God are being prepared to step forth in the majesty of the name of the Lord God of Israel! The preparation does not take place with the seven brothers who appear so tall, handsome, articulate, charismatic, and accomplished, nor in the hustle and bustle of the streets of Bethlehem, but *alone with God* in the pastures of HIS choosing, outside the camp, in the secret place of the Most High!

Amid all the religious ruckus of the hour, and all the fuss of those who run after many lovers, fornicating with the flesh, the world, and the carnal mind, there is a *little flock* that has climbed the mount with Jesus. They care not for the flamboyant humbug of the gaudy harlot's house, but, having beheld the glories of the kingdom afar off, they are pressing through surging waves of flesh-oriented believers to *come apart* to receive instruction from the King of the kingdom. At His feet they hear the call to the heavenly mark and find a door opened for them to enter in and lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! They lean hard upon Christ! They keep themselves unto Him, and to Him alone! They are not enticed by the heady wine of the harlot's house, with its numbing of the spiritual senses and its unrestrained passion and sensuality. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pant their souls after God! The spirit of sonship to God dwells within them! They are partakers of His mind! They have been given the knowledge of His will! They comprehend His great plan and purpose in the earth, in His sons, and throughout the unbounded universe! They have laid aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset them! They are running the race with patience! They esteem the hope that is set before them higher than all the pleasures of Egypt and greater far than the prestige of Babylon! They are patient in tribulation, knowing that through much tribulation we shall inherit the kingdom! They continue instant in prayer to God, and He comforts them and upholds them with the right hand of His righteousness! To them the voice of the Father speaks in words of everlasting hope and assurance, "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Isn't it wonderful!

Jonathan Mitchell stated it so well when he wrote, "The figure of the *drinking of the wine* speaks of participating in something that has an effect upon you. Here it signifies participating in the strong passion of her prostitution, which effected a departure from God and an entering into her sins. It causes a drunkenness, a stupor, to come upon the peoples who participate with her. They cannot think clearly, and are led astray like the fool."

The wise man said, "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is **deceived thereby is not wise***" (Prov. 29:1). This is not talking about a glass of wine with your meal. "Deceived" infers inebriation, intoxication, besotted, liquored up — *drunk*. It could be rendered, "*whosoever is **inebriated thereby is a fool***." It is inebriating wine, wine that excites the passions leading to fornication — spiritual uncleanness. Furthermore, Babylon's wine is called, "The wine of the *wrath* of her fornication." Does "wrath" mean the harlot is practicing her fornication in a state of anger, rage, vindictiveness, and vengeance? Not at all! The word "wrath" in our text is from the Greek word *thumos*, and surprisingly Strong's Concordance gives as the basic meaning of this word, "*breathing hard, passion*." This word, and another Greek word, *orge*, meaning "*desire, excitement, passion*," are also used of the "wrath" of GOD. Why haven't the preachers told us this before! Now, I ask, who ever heard of wrath being sweet and intoxicating *like wine*? And who would ever think of the sensual pleasures of fornication as being angry, vengeful, full of fury and violence! But when we consider the true meaning of the word *thumos* it becomes very clear — "For all nations have drunk of the *wine of the **passion*** of her fornication." What a difference that makes! People who have sex are caught up in *passion* — not *anger*! The King James translation makes no sense at all. The correct rendering signifies that the people of the nations have been "high" on the passion and excitement of the harlot activities of Babylon!

The apostate church has been given false teaching and has become drunk with it. She doesn't even know the truth because she's drunk! When people are drunk they lack perception; they're deceived;

they cannot see or reason clearly. As long as men are inflamed by the heady wine of Babylon's seductions, they are not free to either know or love the truth. Those who are drunk on the false teachings in Babylon are so totally confused that they mistake "heresy" for "orthodoxy." They are so drunk on these false doctrines that they suppose that eternal damnation in hell-fire for the vast majority of men who have lived and died on this planet is the pure, unadulterated Word of God! In their eyes *you* are the heretic if you suggest otherwise! They are so drunk that when they read of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, with a street of gold, a river of life, the tree of life, and the throne of God, they mistake the *symbol* for the *reality* and drunkenly imagine that this city *is heaven as a place* and that they will one day own a mansion, a robe, and a crown somewhere on Hallelujah Boulevard! They are so drunk that in their stupor they are quite sure that the Bible clearly teaches that they are going to heaven in a "rapture" and everyone else will be "left behind" to face the horrors of the antichrist and the great tribulation. I do not hesitate to add that you *have* to be drunk to find that teaching in the scriptures! Others, in their state of intoxication, confuse law and grace, thinking that we are still under the Old Testament laws of meats and drinks, holy days, sabbaths, and various other things. Many, many nations have committed fornication with the wanton harlot. I love my own country, the United States of America, but she is in bed with the harlot just like most other countries. Almost everyone you meet is religious, but you have only to discuss spiritual matters for a very few minutes to discover just how drunk they are on the teachings of Babylon! America is not serving God, she is consorting with the harlot's house. There is more freedom of conscience and worship in America than in many nations, and for this we are indeed thankful, but she's still part of the harlot system for her fornications have infiltrated all nations. The wine that all nations have drunk is the wine of false teaching and false religious practices!

The symbol of the drunkenness of the nations is one that is found frequently in the Old Testament. If men are drunken they are no longer themselves. They are turned into something less than human and their drunkenness brings in its train misery, sorrow, poverty, degradation, and shame. One writer has pointed out that it is very interesting to note that in Japanese they have, to describe different types of drunkenness, the different names of animals. If a man is just filthy drunk, the Japanese call him pig-drunk; if he's just so drunk that he wants to cut capers, they call him monkey-drunk; if he's just so drunk that he wants to make love to every woman he sees, they call him rooster-drunk; if he wants to fight everyone he sees, they call him lion-drunk, and so on. This symbol of the bestiality or fleshliness of drunkenness is found throughout the whole of the Bible.

The ministers of Babylon give their flocks to drink of the wine of the *passion* of her fornication — a mixture of truth and error, of spirit and flesh, of the ways of God and the ways of the world, which like any intoxicant, benumbs the sensibilities, and causes him who drinks to turn from purity, truth, and singleness of heart. Babylon, the great Old Testament kingdom which offered the worship of idols with gross sensuality, is used by the Spirit in our text to symbolize the church systems of man, which, like the Jewish nation in the days of Christ, mix the philosophy, methods, and spirit of the world with the truth of God, and offer this wine to men in the place of the living word of God and the mind of Christ. The church which does this, realizes its inability to reach the souls of men, and employs the flaming passion of the harlot to seduce the people, utilizing all kinds of flesh-appeal activities, religious forms, programs, entertainment, social and political action, and in some countries even the coercive power of the state, to suck men into the orgy of her sin. There is a form of godliness, but no power therein. "Babylon is fallen, is *fallen*," cries the angel!

We have passed through a time of great darkness. But thank God, the first rays of light of a new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the exhilarating freshness of the morn. But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not awakened. They know not of the dawn. They have not yet heard the messages of the flying angel company. And the scripture describes them and their shepherds in very uncomplimentary terms. The heads of the churches are called "the drunkards of Ephraim" (Isa. 28:1-4). Then in Isaiah 29:9-11 we are told, "*They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your heads...hath He covered. And all vision hath become unto*

you as the words of a book that is sealed.” And when these drunken shepherds spread tables for their flocks, instead of those tables being loaded with good wholesome spiritual food, the prophet says, “**ALL tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is *no place clean***” (Isa. 28:8).

But those who are of the Day, who are not lovers of the drunkenness of religious teachings and promotions, nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. “*We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others*” (I Thes. 5:5-6). All who in this significant hour have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father’s business! It is time to forsake the shame and error, and time to look up, time to arise and shine. The day is at hand. The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. “*Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean*” (Isa. 52:1). Because the church today has not received of God’s enlightenment, we find Christians in the pathetic state of darkness. Because Christians today, whether baptized in God’s Spirit, or not, have stopped far short of God’s fullness, and are still spiritual babes, they, with few exceptions, do not discern the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. Their human minds comprehend the natural side of things, but deep spiritual realities are veiled from their view. They have not arisen above the mists of night. But the Day which we have now entered calls for all who will to awake, and to go forth, beholding the more glorious scene of an **abundant entrance into the kingdom of God!**

The following words by Ray Prinzing bear eloquent testimony to this precious truth. “May God indeed ‘*keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words — she lieth in wait at every corner. She says, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows — come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves*’ (Prov. 7:7,12,14,18). What an allegory portraying the whole religious harlot system of Babylon, lying wait at every corner (the church of your choice on every corner) to flatter with their words. They speak of their peace offerings, their quiet communion times. They profess to have paid their vows — fulfilled their good works, done their Christian duty, made their vows to God, offered their sacrifices, and embraced a message of love, tolerance, etc. until they become swampy, without any identifiable marks of purity and holiness. Mix all the sounds and practices of the world into their religion — a little something for everybody, but without reality for anybody. O beloved friend, ‘*Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yes, many strong have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death*’ (Prov. 7:25-27).

“There are so many things stated in these passages, which the discerning heart is able to see in many of the religious hucksters of our times. What keen discernment we need when we read of the one seduced by the strange woman (harlot) by the way. ‘*With much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the **flattering** of her lips she forced him*’ (Prov. 7:21). How often this has happened even on the most natural basis. By the time they had heaped so much flattery on you, how well you did the job, how necessary you were for the cause, so indispensable, only God could have sent someone like you to them, they had you talked into doing something you had neither inclination, time, energy, or anointing to accomplish, and it was hard to fulfill your promise. Snared with flattery!

“When God has drawn us out, separated us unto Himself, making it clear that Babylon is *fallen* and that we are to flee from her, then someone comes that feels they are called to start another group, and they begin to ‘butter you up,’ how your talents are needed, your revelation is needed to bring a balance, you can be that solid one which will spur the new ones onward, and on and on they go with your flatteries — until, unless you discern what’s happening, you are caught up with ‘*their vision*’ and compromising your own God-given vision. We are not, let us make it very clear, we are not saying you should not be part of some group, nor attend meetings, etc. What we are saying is, we must discern GOD’S WILL FOR OURSELVES, and not allow flattery to snare us into a course of action

that is not directed of Him. Simeon 'came by the Spirit into the temple,' (Lk. 2:27) not because someone flattered him on how essential he was to the plan of God.

"Might even go on to point out, some will use flattery to cause you to share your deeper revelations with them, only so that they can use it against you, and turn and rend you with it later. As a leech they will draw out of you that strength and vitality, until you are weary and exhausted. Subtle indeed is the warfare, but God is helping His elect discern when to just keep silent" — end quote.

Chapter 168

The Three Angels' Messages (continued)

“And the *third angel* followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (Rev. 14:9-10).

Have you ever had the nagging suspicion that God might actually enjoy seeing the people who dwell in religious Babylon receive the just rewards of their carnality and delusion? The motorist who has had another car whiz past him in a cloud of dust and leave him as though he were standing still can hardly stifle his satisfaction when, five miles down the highway, he encounters that same automobile sitting quietly on the shoulder of the road illuminated by the blue flashing lights of a State Trooper's car while its owner receives his richly deserved ticket. Most of us smile inwardly when the conceited roadhog finally meets someone who can whittle him down to size!

Does God feel the same way? No, He does not! God loves all His people no matter how deceived or wayward they may be. He loves them no matter what they do. And even though He cannot excuse their sin, He does not vindictively punish any of them, though He does have precise measures of judgment unto correction by which to deliver their souls. That's why He showed the apostle John a vision of three angels flying through the sky announcing His appeal and warning to all the Babylon dwellers. The first angel addresses his message to the leaders and ministers of Babylon, commanding them to fear God and give all the glory to Him: for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship no longer the externals of religion, but worship HIM who made all things. The second angel brings a wonderful revival of spirituality among some of God's people in Babylon, and the knowledge of the truth and spiritual experience thus obtained prepares the way for the next step, which is the discovery that the “churches” they have so cherished as the body of Christ are in reality a part of the great religious Babylon of Revelation and are in a “fallen” or apostate condition, “a hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

The third angel's message is directed toward those in Babylon who remain unaffected by God's dealings with the leaders and ministers, and unmoved by the moving of His Spirit among the people. It is a warning of the righteous judgments of the Lord to come upon the incorrigible in Babylon for their correction. Nearly all Bible teachers and believers through the ages have supposed that this message of the third angel somehow constitutes God's “final warning” to all the sinners of the world concerning their eternal doom in the fires of hell and damnation. But such is far from the truth! Each of the three angels' messages is sent to the sinners among God's people, not the sinners of the world! The entire book of Revelation is directed to the *churches*, to show unto *His servants* the things that must come to pass through God's dealings with His people. This “wrath” of God, this “indignation” of the Lord, this “torment with fire and brimstone,” this “smoke” that ascends bespeaks the judgments of God upon Babylon and the “fiery purgings” sent to cleanse and purify all His people who have been contaminated with the abominations of the religious systems of man! That is the mystery.

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same *shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up...and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image...*” (Rev. 14:9-11).

May I remind the reader that this beast is the *second beast* John saw in chapter thirteen of the Revelation, the beast *out of the earth*, or out of the soulical religious realm of man, for that is the beast which commanded the people to make and pay homage to the image of the first beast. That identifies it as religious Babylon. The worshippers of this beast are those who receive its mark upon the forehead, or so indelibly impressed in their mind until they can only think and understand according to the teachings, doctrines, traditions and promotions of the beast; and receive its mark in the right hand, signifying their works and service on behalf of the beast. Those who are so captivated by this servitude that neither God's word nor the moving of His Spirit can dislodge them are ripe for the correcting disciplines of God. These judgments are characterized as *the wrath of God*. What terrifying words! We tremble before them. How can there be any hope, or any escape for an altogether rebellious people from so terrible a thing as the *wrath of God!*

Let us notice, in the first place, that this torment is primarily *internal*. Every one that at this point in time worships the beast, so the text reads, and receives a mark in his forehead or in his hand, he shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is prepared unmixed in the cup of His anger. It is my deep conviction that these words refer to the spiritual and internal suffering of those who remain in Babylon. The "wine of the wrath of God" is without doubt a figure. The meaning is that these worshippers of the beast shall receive a wine to drink, the spirit, or alcoholic contents, of which is the wrath or the passion of God. Thus it signifies a *dealing of God!* The wine is from the cup in the hand of the Lord! It is the Lord Himself who gives them to drink! Even as natural wine affects the spirit of man, so shall this wine of the wrath of God affect the worshippers of the beast. Even a child could understand that any "torment" that would come from "drinking" some substance would be a torment *within* oneself. Is that not true in the natural of people who drink too much alcohol, take drugs, or are poisoned by something ingested? By drinking this "wine" the worshipper of the beast shall receive the wrath of God *as a burning fire within his soul*, so that this wrath of God burns him from within, in his conscience, in his mind, in his soul, in his emotions; troubling him, leaving him no rest day nor night. It shall be *spiritual torment* day and night! Even as the greatest joy and the most profound peace springs from union with God in the spirit, so shall the most terrible anguish of spirit result from man's resistance to the wooings of God's love and the corrections from His hand.

Just as in verse eight where we read of "the *wrath* of her fornication," the Greek word for "wrath" here is *thumos* meaning, according to Strong's Concordance, "*breathing hard, passion.*" Anyone knows that wine inflames the *passions*. The word does not denote wrath in the conventional sense of rage, violence, vengeance, or judgment, but rather of fever heat or strong passion. It is associated with God's anger, and men of passion can certainly be angry, but anger is not the same as rage, for even in a punitive way passion may be expressed in terms of *love*, as when a parent is moved with passion and stirred to action to sternly discipline a misbehaving child. So it is clear that God's "wrath," as revealed in the book of Revelation, has to do with passion, or feeling very strongly about something. Thus God's disobedient children, who ignore or resist the wooing of His Spirit, are made to drink of the "*wine of the passion of God.*" God's wrath or passion is not that which is vindictive and vengeful, but rather that which is impassioned, fervent, zealous, enlivened, glowing, vigorous, intense, burning, and dynamic.

God has a passion to make right what is wrong, to cleanse and restore His people and creation, like any Father who wants his son to grow straight and strong. He has a passion, therefore He will spare nothing, not even the rod, to accomplish His great purpose. The wrath of God is the wrath of a Father and in His wrath He remembers mercy! His purpose in wrath is always corrective and redemptive! Multitudes of religious people are full of anger, bitterness, self-righteousness, condemnation, censure, denunciation, vindictiveness, judgment, anathemas, and damnation — the wrath of man — but now *God's wrath* comes! It is the wrath of our Father and our Redeemer! What a revelation that is! Oh, the wonder of it! How sublime the very thought! How awesome the implication! How divine and glorious the outcome!

However, as the love of God does not cancel out His wrath, so His wrath does not cancel out His love! Every parent who has ever disciplined a child understands this! Wrath and love work together to correct what is wrong and make it right. Strictly speaking, the wrath of God and His love are not equally *eternal attributes* of God. God IS love, the scripture testifies, but nowhere does it infer that God IS wrath! You do not see in any listing of God's attributes that wrath is included. Neither is wrath listed as one of the *fruits of the Spirit*. When sin and error are finished in God's universe His wrath will end, but His love will abide eternally upon all His creatures and upon all the works of His hands. God *reacts* to sin by wrath — stern measures of discipline and correction. The wrath really is the love of God in reverse! According to the Word of God His wrath *is but for a moment* — but His love is *unending*! In wrath God remembers mercy — because GOD IS LOVE!

Men have been given a wrong view, a mistaken image of God! Religion preaches and serves a God who is a monster, who is exacting, mean, cruel, and vicious. They say that God is love, but in their hearts they believe that God is vindictive, implacable, harsh, and ultimately unmerciful, because they believe that God's judgment against sin and error is eternal torture in the fires of hell *without one degree of mercy*. They have a distorted, deranged notion of God's *justice*, too, for He will send to this eternal hell men who never had a chance, who never heard the name of Jesus, who were ignorant and undiscerning, who were careless and unconcerned, who were guilty at most of merely fleshly, temporal sins, although they did not hate God or deliberately walk in rebellion against Him — they merely had the misfortune of not *knowing Him*. But then, the way the churches tell it, the vilest man who ever lived, who hated and blasphemed and abused and murdered, if on his deathbed, at the last gasping breath of his life, he simply says, "Father, forgive me; Lord Jesus, save me," this one gets a one-way ticket to heaven! Now that, my beloved, is classical *fickleness* — not *justice*!

THE CUP OF HIS INDIGNATION

"The same shall drink of the wine of the passion of God, which is poured out without mixture into the *cup of His indignation...*" (Rev. 14:10).

The Psalmist Asaph wrote by inspiration, "*For in the hand of the Lord is a **cup**, and the wine is red...the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth (realm) shall...drink them*" (Ps. 75:8). John the Revelator has recorded more concerning this "cup" of God, "*And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and **great Babylon** came in remembrance before God, to give unto her **the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His passion***" (Rev. 16:19). "*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For **her sins** have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered **her iniquities**. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in **the cup** which she hath filled fill to her double*" (Rev. 18:4-6).

It is significant to note that in the whole book of Revelation the term "cup" in every instance refers either to the "cup" of Babylon's abominations and filthiness of her fornication (Rev. 17:4), *or*, to the "cup" in the hand of the Lord from which HE gives Babylon to drink of the wine of His passion, even the "cup" of His indignation. Nowhere is this cup of His wrath and indignation given to the wicked sinners of the world to drink or to the nations of earth! Nearly all the Bible teachers get this one wrong! The cup of God's wrath is poured out without mixture (nothing added, it's all HIM) upon the RELIGIOUS KINGDOM OF MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, the great whore that sits upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with her defiled wine (supposedly spiritual life). And while "Babylon" is first and foremost a spirit and condition within the human soul, it finds its greatest expression outwardly in the visible manifestation of the religious systems spawned out of the soulical, religious nature of man. All men's actions and activities are but outward manifestations of an inward state of being, in soul or body.

Women in prophecy are churches. In Revelation 12:1 we find the true church of Christ described as a woman in heaven, clothed with the sun. In Revelation 14:4 we find that the 144,000 sons of God who follow the Lamb were “not defiled with women,” that is, man-made churches which are merely counterfeits of the one and only true church. And in Revelation 17 we have introduced “the great whore” which in verse five is said to be the “mother” of harlots. A mother must have offspring. This mother has “harlot” offspring. She is the “mother of harlots,” which is but another way of expressing the fact that she has many daughters who have followed her in the ways of harlotry. It is an undeniable fact that outwardly the Roman Catholic Church identifies herself as the perfect fulfillment of this prophecy by proclaiming herself to be “the mother of all churches.” The daughters are harlots because they partake of the same fleshly, carnal, worldly nature as their mother, the “great whore.” All, both mother and daughters, are harlots fundamentally because they are man-made institutions, whose husband is human instead of divine. The Christ of God is the one and only lawful husband (Head) of the one and only church, the *spiritual organism* known as His body. But apostasy persists in substituting in place of this spiritually created, God-designed *organism*, an organization patterned after worldly institutions, structured and controlled by the will and cunning of men, named with a name other than the name of the Lord, chartered by the State, riding upon the back of the scarlet colored beast of human government. All members of the organization are therefore prostituting unlawfully with their human head (head-quarters) which is usurping the place which belongs to Christ alone!

The Roman church is the mother of all, because all are modeled after her false system. And not only are these Protestant daughters modeled after their mother as to elementary form and nature, but all, from the Lutheran Church, the Reformed Churches, the Church of England, etc., right down to the youngest Charismatic organization, are propagating, in varying degrees, the false doctrines of their mother while, like their mother, they profess to dispense the Word of God, pure and unadulterated. They baptize like their mother, they take “Communion” as the members of the Roman church receive the “Eucharist,” they proclaim eternal damnation in hell for the lost, eternal life in a physical place called heaven with literal golden streets, trees, river of life, and mansions for the saved; they celebrate the pagan holidays of Easter and Christmas, and keep other religious holidays as does their mother. Time and space forbid a detailed discourse on all the harlot ways in which the harlot daughters follow their harlot mother. And we are not unmindful that a merciful and compassionate God has used all these things, even the mother, in the salvation of souls and in bringing blessings to humanity, for, after all, there *is* a “little light” and the “voice of harpers” in Babylon, and even the “voice of the bridegroom and the bride” have faintly been heard in Her! (Rev. 18:20-24).

But there is a higher walk, an undefiled way, the way of personal union with Christ in the power and glory of the living Spirit, apart from all the outward trappings and traditions of religion. All who find this blessed place have obeyed the command, “*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues*” (Rev. 18:4). Those who have come *unto Him* without the camp no longer worship the “beast” of man’s carnality and ego, nor the “image” of the beast, the Babylon systems of this world; nor do they any longer feed upon the pronouncements of the “false prophet,” the erroneous and distorted message flowing from the religious systems, nor do they bear that “mark,” that way of thinking, upon their foreheads or in their hands (their service and actions). These have been “beheaded” for the witness of Jesus, severed from their own head, or the carnal mind, and severed from the earthly headships (head-quarters) of the religious systems of man, taking upon them the mind of Christ in and by the anointing within.

Our text says that all the beast worshippers will drink of the *wine* of the *passion* of God, and they will drink it out of the *cup* of His indignation or anger. This, as we know, is symbolic language, for no one will literally have to drink wine out of a cup in God’s hand! The language employed here is drawn from Jeremiah’s prophecies concerning the literal city of Babylon. “*For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me: Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword*”

*that I will send among them. Then took I the **cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me**" (Jer. 25:15-17).*

Jeremiah did not literally take a cup out of God's hand and make all the peoples of the nations drink of that wine. What a "communion service" that would have been! Perhaps he symbolically poured out a cup of wine upon the ground, but I rather think this was all accomplished in a spiritual way. But the result of this "wine" was to confuse the understanding of the nations that God was judging. "*They shall...**go mad,***" the Lord said. Ah, Babylon in our day is already in a "confused" state. That is the *meaning* of Babylon — CONFUSION! Oh, what confusion in the religious systems of man! Thousands of conflicting creeds, names, organizational structures, and disciplines, each clamoring that they, and they alone, are the repository of all truth and the way to salvation and heaven. Now when God gives them of His wine He will **confuse their confusion** — what a thought that is! I'm sure you've heard the old cliché, "I've got my mind made up — don't confuse me with the facts." It is my conviction that the "wine of His passion" out of the "cup of His anger" will be the truth so sharp and piercing, in such power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost, that the citizens of Babylon will be shocked, astounded, shaken, broken, reeling to and fro, staggering like drunk men under the influence of the impact of God's rebuke!

Let us not think of God's "anger" as an emotional response, as if God has a hot, uncontrollable temper as men do, and rashly retaliates against those who dishonor Him. God says to men today as He did of old, "*You thought that I was altogether such an one as you are.*" But God is not like a man! "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord*" (Isa. 55:8). God is all-wise and sovereign and does not suffer from temper tantrums or fits of frustration or rage. His "anger" is His sovereign will expressed through His passion to bring correction and make things right, even as His judgments are the essential corrections which bring men into alignment with His holiness. It is all executed by His hot, burning, passionate love nature, and all is positively designed for man's good, and unto His own praise and glory. Aren't you glad!

TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB

"And they shall drink of the wine of the passion of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be *tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb*" (Rev. 14:10).

We now recognize that in this chapter we have spiritual realities set forth in symbol, just as the writer sets forth spiritual realities throughout the entire book of his visions on Patmos. The rarest of gems are never found on the surface of the earth, and the greatest treasures of divine truth are never found openly on the surface of the scriptures. And so is it with our present subject! What a frightening thought on the surface: "...tormented with fire and brimstone...in the presence of the Lamb." But let us search *beneath the surface!* The Greek word used here for "tormented" is *basanizo* which is derived from the word *basanos*, and Strong's Concordance states that both words bear principally the same meaning. *Basanos* is the Greek word for what is commonly known in English as the "touchstone." It was a gritty black stone from Lydia whose proper usage in olden times was to test or try the genuineness of gold. The pure gold rubbed on the stone would leave a peculiar yellow mark, different to that of other metals or alloys. Today we test gold by acid or fire. Therefore the touchstone acquired a symbolic significance: a test or criterion for determining the quality or the genuineness of a thing; to test for purity or truth. The noted professor of Greek, Dr. Strong, admits it is only by analysis that the thought of torture has been derived from the original. How beautiful the truth, and how different from the distortions of Babylon, when we read the text in this light: "*...and he shall be **tried and tested** with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy messengers, and in the presence of the Lamb.*"

We test wood, steel, and stone in order to find out what they are capable of supporting. We test our ability to read, to run, to think, to drive a car, but no one therefore calls them evil. We find out

something about ourselves, even if that something is not always complimentary. Everything in life is tested in some manner! How important the truth, generally overlooked by Bible teachers, that this testing takes place, not in some far-away torture-chamber, but “in the presence of the holy messengers (ministers of God), and in the presence of the Lamb.” God will certainly not torture sinners up in heaven before the throne of God! Yet, if we took it *literally*, and interpreted it with the *carnal mind*, that is what would be implied. This again points to the fact that it is not the sinners of the world that are being “tested” here, rather, it is the Lord’s own people who are being tried and tested in the consuming Holy Ghost fire of God, and in the presence of Him who comes as a *refiner’s fire*, and as a purifier of gold and silver! “In the presence of the Lamb” indicates that it is a spiritual work of testing within God’s people who dwell in the *mixture* of Babylon, yet they are the Lord’s. It is the Lord Himself and His saints that do the testing!

Jesus, then, is our “touchstone,” and the Word of God, which He personifies. All the Lord’s people must measure up to Him — HE is our *standard, gauge, yardstick, criterion*, “...till we all come to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” and HE is our Judge and our judgment-seat before which we stand! Gold is what was tested on the touchstone, and gold signifies the divine nature. As we rub our “touchstone,” what mark is being left thereon? Is the genuineness of our “gold,” or *divine nature* being revealed in us? Do we leave the mark of sonship thereon? Or do we still, in some measure, reveal the character of the Babylon dwellers as an alloy, truth mixed with the traditions of men, spirituality mingled with carnality, and divine nature commingled with human identity?

Some argue that because we believe God’s judgments are not unto condemnation, but are corrective and redemptive; and because we teach that the fire and brimstone are not the flames of an eternal hell of torture and damnation, but are Holy Ghost fire for man’s purification, we teach a “hell redemption.” We are accused of believing that the lake of fire can accomplish in a man what the mercy, gospel, and blood of Jesus could not accomplish. Many years ago Charles G. Finney opposed the ultimate salvation of all, and the work of purifying fire, by ridicule. Finney was an accomplished attorney and a master of the invective. He said that those who were saved after this “age of grace” ends would unceasingly sing, “Thanks be to the hell that saved us by our own suffering!” Just how much weight is there to that criticism? It is a marvelous truth that CHRIST ALONE can save, and ONLY THE BLOOD OF JESUS can take away man’s sin. There is no other way! How we rejoice that it is so! Yet, without an understanding of the relationship between the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus and the all-consuming, purifying fire of God, we can never comprehend the *whole truth!*

Throughout history God manifested Himself in various forms of fire on many different occasions. We find some of these manifestations in the making of His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:17), the burning bush (Ex. 3:2-4), the pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21), on mount Sinai (Ex. 19:18), in the flame on the altar (Jud. 13:20), and God answering by fire (I Kings 18:24,38). Sacrifices and offerings were made by fire (Ex. 12:8-10), and fire often meant the acceptance by God of a sacrifice made (Jud. 6:21; I Kings 18:38; I Chron. 21:26).

The scriptures affirm that “our God is a consuming fire” (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). Fire in the scriptures is often used symbolically and typically to signify the glory, power, and holiness of God. Make a mental note here of the fact that on mount Sinai the glory of God appeared as “a devouring fire” (Ex. 24:16-17). As we search the scriptures, you’re going to see that fire again and again. The prophet Habakkuk, for instance, says: “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And *His brightness was as the light*; He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power” (Hab. 3:3-4). According to various Bible helps the word “horns” in this passage refers to bright beams. One translation calls them lightning-like shafts of splendor. The Bible tells us that in these fiery, lightning-like shafts lies the hiding place of God’s power. That alone is enough to let us know that experiencing God’s glory is more than having a warm “spiritual” feeling! It’s an encounter with the

very nature, power, and being of God because His nature, power, and being *is* His glory! He says, "Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of (God's) loins even downward, fire; and from His loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber" (Eze. 8:2) Moses saw God's glory on another occasion, for we read that when the tabernacle was completed and set in order, Moses and Aaron moved back with all the hosts of Israel and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and the Shekinah presence of God was with them — the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. The pillar of fire *was* the Shekinah that filled the Most Holy Place! You will recall that when Solomon built the temple the glory was transferred from the tabernacle to the temple, and it was the smoke from His fiery presence that filled the whole house!

Again and again God is revealed expressing His glory, power, and holiness in the form of fire. For instance, in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah we are told that the wickedness of those cities had increased so that the cry of it had reached unto heaven, and God announced that He was coming down to destroy. When He did, it was in the form of fire. Again in the case of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10) we read that when these two men offered strange fire before the Lord, fire came out from the presence of the Lord and devoured them. On the other hand, we find instances such as Elijah on mount Carmel, where God expressed His delight in the form of fire. On mount Carmel God's glory, power, and holiness leaped forth in the manifestation of fire and consumed Elijah's offering in commendation and vindication of the righteous position of the prophet. John the Baptist announced that he baptized with water, but that the One coming after him would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. On the day of Pentecost God's glory, power, and holiness were manifested in tongues of fire resting upon every believer. Thus we see that the Holy Ghost is God's power in anointing, and the fire is God's power in purification, for the prophet Malachi had prophesied that the Lord would come as a "refiner's fire" and that "He shall sit as a *refiner* and *purifier* of silver; and He shall *purify* the sons of Levi, and *purge* them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:2-3). Thus we see that the blood of Jesus *cleanses*, and the fire of God *purifies*. It is infinitely necessary that every member of God's elect understand the correlation between these two actions of God!

Perhaps one of the most outstanding illustrations of the principles we are trying to make clear is found in Isaiah 6:1-8. The prophet is standing in the temple area at the hour of the evening sacrifice, when in spirit he sees the Lord high and lifted up. He at once falls to his face and cries, "*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.*" Whereupon a seraphim takes a coal from off the altar, draws it across Isaiah's lips, and says, "*Thine iniquity is taken away, thy sin is purged.*" It is significant to note that this coal came from the brazen altar, the place of sacrifice and sin offering. In Leviticus 9:24 we read that the fire on this altar was kindled directly from God. In other words, God's glory, power, and holiness expressed itself in the kindling of the fire on the brazen altar where **sin** was to be dealt with. O that I possessed the tongue of an angel that I might articulate the wonder of this scene! I do know that the connection is drawn here between the sacrifice of the altar and the fire of the altar. Like a horse and carriage, the two go together. They are two aspects of a whole. In Leviticus 6:12-13 we read that this fire of the altar was never to go out. Therefore, the fire on the altar, in every sense of the word, was **God's** fire. It was for failure to recognize this that Nadab and Abihu got into trouble when they thought they could produce better fire. Man's fire cannot purify from sin, but God's fire can! It was the hour of the evening sacrifice, therefore these coals on the brazen altar at the moment were coals of God's Holy Ghost fire, but furthermore they were coals which had been **touched by the drippings of sacrificial blood!** Can you not see the mystery? **THE BLOOD WAS IN THE FIRE!** The result was that when God's fire touched the lips of Isaiah it resulted in purging and cleansing — the two-fold, intensified cleansing, purifying power of the blood and the fire!

Behold the sin of man! Behold the fire of God! For these two to come together without sacrificial blood to intervene leaves man lost and undone. For those two to come together with the presence of sacrificial blood means mighty deliverance and quickening. On mount Moriah Isaac made a statement and asked a question. His statement was: "*Behold the fire.*" His question was: "*Where is the lamb?*" Send the call to heaven above, "*Where is the lamb?*" Ask the angels, ask Gabriel, ask

Abraham, ask the patriarchs, ask the prophets, *“Where is the lamb?”* and for four thousand years the heavens were silent. Then one day the last of the Old Testament prophets stood clothed in camel’s hair, and, with unerring vision, pointed across the way to an approaching figure and declared, ***“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!”*** At last Isaac’s question is answered. It is the answer that set a world singing. It is the answer that turned night into morning. It is the answer that turned tears into diamonds of hope. It is the answer that opened the graves in resurrection. It is the answer that arrested the onward march of a ruined race into the gaping jaws of sin and death, and made it possible to ascend the stairway of the skies, back to the heart of God. And we read that as a High Priest Jesus took His own blood, the blood of the Lamb, into the Holiest of all in the heavens of God’s Spirit, sprinkling His blood upon the heavenly mercy seat, and there now He appears in the presence of God for us. And it is there, Paul tells us, that He *dwells in the light (the fiery Shekinah) which no man can approach unto* (I Tim. 6:16). Oh, the mystery of it! Where is the blood of Jesus today? **THE BLOOD IS IN THE FIRE!**

In the Old Testament type we enter the most sacred spot on earth. The “Holiest” was a square apartment of ten cubits (15 feet) in breadth, length, and height — a figure of the spiritual dimension of the fullness of God. The Holy of holies must be entered with bowed head and unsaddled feet for Yahweh upon His throne is there. How awesome the presence-chamber of the Lord of Glory! Here no human voice is heard, only the voice of God. Here no seat for man is found, for in the western end and facing eastward stood the THRONE OF YAHWEH. Yahweh alone sits on that throne of glory, mercy, and righteousness, between the cherubim. Upon the throne, flaming out in awful brightness, rests the holy Shekinah. Here no created light, as the sun, nor artificial light as a candle, or the seven-fold lamp of the Holy Place, illumines the apartment, yet it is full of light, and the light is brighter far than the noon-day sun, for the fiery glory of God fills the “Holiest” with its own divine radiance, flooding the room with light too dazzling for human eye to behold. Here all is divine and we breathe another atmosphere than that of this creation!

In that Most Holy Place the divine attributes were displayed in perfect reconciliation; mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. For into that secret place entered once a year Israel’s priestly representative sprinkling the blood of atonement *upon the mercy seat*, yes, UPON THE THRONE OF YAHWEH, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. It was upon that mercy-seat that God was to be found, and His presence manifested in flaming fire. And according to Yahweh’s promise, *“There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from off the mercy-seat,”* the covenant-keeping God took His seat upon that throne of grace, accepted the blood of atonement, and propitiated the sins of all the people of Israel. Surely there is not a reader drawing breath who fails to perceive at least in part the wonder of what is transpiring here! Let us behold the scene! Our God is a fire. The fire of the brazen altar was kindled by the Lord Himself, the very fire which He is. This divine fire dwelt upon the mercy seat, between the cherubim. The priest enters, sprinkles the blood of atonement upon the mercy seat. The fiery presence of God receives that blood of atonement, and **NOW THE BLOOD IS IN THE FIRE!** Oh, the wonder of it! No, my beloved, we do not believe in a “hell redemption” or a “fire redemption” apart from the precious, redeeming blood of Jesus. Oh, no! You cannot meet the holy, consuming, purifying fire of God *apart from* the holy, cleansing blood of Jesus — for **THE BLOOD IS IN THE FIRE!** You get the fire, you get the blood. But never forget — you get the blood, you will also get the fire!

Fire is God and God is fire. If you’re going to have a relationship with God, sooner or later you will have a relationship with fire! Tradition would say that the fire and brimstone in the book of Revelation bespeaks God punishing and torturing men with fire. That’s not what this is talking about! Such talk only reveals men’s ignorance of the things of God, the ways of God, and the word of God. The traditional idea is that God is torturing the wicked with fire and then sitting back and watching the whole thing, as Nero sat and watched the Christians burn at the stake. To the Romans it was just great sport! But that’s crazy — would you really want to serve a God like that? Think about it!

Every man's state of being and every man's work will eventually be tested by fire. The fire will try every man to determine what is in him, and the fire will try every man's work of what sort it is. If you and I build into our spiritual life and activities wood, hay, and stubble, the fire will find it out, and the wall will come tumbling down. Every child of God is building his spiritual life upon the foundation that is Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation that can be laid, or is laid. Either we are building the quality of gold, silver, or precious stones or the weak and unprofitable things of wood, hay, and stubble that are soulish self-efforts and carnal. If the works that I do are gold, then surely it must mean that I am building out of the spirit! Am I led by the Spirit of God? Or am I fulfilling my own ambitions, satisfying my own ego? There is a vast difference!

The heart of man, even of the believing man, is often found to be desperately wicked in this regard. It is not difficult to find men who glibly make great claims of being led by the Spirit of God to go here or there, to do this or that, but many, alas, are involved in gaining a following and building their own kingdom, though they imagine they are building *for* God. Beware the man who tells you that *he alone* has the truth, that *he* is God's prophet, God's man of faith and power, that he is the one sent to seal the saints, that he alone bears the message of the hour, that you will not hear the deep secrets of the Lord from any other source, and his words alone hold the *key* to life and immortality, to sonship and the fullness of God. These people still move in the wicked spirit of the Babylon system, working overtime to build up their own Babylonish Kingdom. Such are false apostles, false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the messengers of Christ. These are self-deceived egoists, not discerning the Lord's body.

God has not made me a ruler or a judge of my neighbor's motives, but it does not require an exceptional gift of discernment to conclude that much of the work done in God's name is in reality the wood of a deceitful heart, the hay of spurious revelation, and the stubble of carnality. All work, whether carnal or spiritual, will be subjected to the testing fire of God! If it is gold, silver, or precious stones it will stand the test. If it is the wood, hay, or stubble of self-effort or self-promotion it will be burned up and destroyed. If any man's work can abide the fiery testing of God's fire and brimstone, then that man will receive a reward for the profitable work he has accomplished. But if any man's work abide not the fire, but rather is consumed by it, then that man will suffer humiliating loss. All that he has done through a life-time of supposed service to God will all go up in smoke before his eyes, and he will suffer dreadful loss. "*He himself shall be saved,*" the scripture says, "*yet so as by fire*" (I Cor. 3:15). These words are worthy of deep meditation and prayer. Their deep and powerful meaning can never be comprehended apart from the quickening of the spirit of truth. I believe I have the spirit of the Lord when I say that the fire of God will not only consume the combustible works of such a person, but it will also *consume the man of sin in him, the carnal mind, the fleshly nature, the Adamic personality* (II Thes. 2:3-10). Unless the carnality *within* the man which inspired all the unprofitable works is also burned up and destroyed, how can we say that HE has been *saved by fire*? Just getting rid of the works is not enough!

More than three centuries ago when the Black Plague swept through London, England, more than 68,000 men, women, and children were sickened with the putrid fever, suffered nameless agonies, passed into delirium, sometimes with convulsions, and then died. Before the end of the terrible nightmare of anguish and death, what was thought to be an even greater tragedy occurred. The city caught fire, the whole heavens were ablaze as the Great Fire destroyed more than 13,200 homes and 89 church buildings. Most of the city, which was built largely of wood, lay in ashes. Wonder of wonders! As soon as the last dying embers cooled and the smoke cleared, the inhabitants of the city discovered that the Plague had been stayed! Not another person died of the epidemic. The Plague never returned. The fire had killed the bacteria-carrying fleas and rats that caused the Plague. It took a fire to do it! Fire is a great cleanser, purifier, and changer, the finest purifier.

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for fire is *pur*, a derivative of which is the Latin word *pyra* (pure) and the English word *pyre* — the place for the burning of a corpse. PYREX also comes from the same root, *pyr* or *pur*, meaning a fire, and *rex*, meaning a king — that which is king, thus ruling

over the fire, hence a “heat-resistant” glassware. All our English words having to do with that which is pure are related to the Greek word *pur*, indicating clearly that that which is pure is so because it has been cleansed BY FIRE! Consider: PURE, PURity, PURify, PURification, PURitan.

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, the scriptures affirm. I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden’s gate, why do we always try to get out of the fire? Why do we evade the fire? Why expend so much energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire? Fire, in the scriptures, often symbolized two things — judgment and cleansing. But God is not schizophrenic in His nature — one side of His character disposed to forgive, save, heal, redeem, deliver, and restore, while another part of His nature is bent on vengeful destruction and the sadistic torture of His enemies. His action in fire, as His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, and balanced, directed toward the purging that will lead to restoration. His fire cleanses the believer that He may qualify for God’s highest. His action of fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, penitently receiving the gracious gift of life. This reveals clearly how it is that in God’s great scheme of redemption and restoration THE BLOOD IS IN THE FIRE!

The crude idea that the loving and righteous Creator would decree endless torment in undying flame for His creatures who are the work of His hands, and who were created for His pleasure, does dishonor to the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is incredible that any man who has tasted of the goodness of the Lord could ever believe that the compassionate Saviour of mankind could ever have intended us to read such a meaning into His words. The eternal fire is the truth, the righteousness, the love of God; in a word, it is the nature of God. Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol of the presence and action of God. “Our God is a consuming fire,” says the scripture, and the apostle adds, “God is love.” It is no straining of metaphor to say that the love of God and the wrath of God are the same thing described from opposite points of view. Every father who has had to put the rod of correction to his son understands this! How we shall experience God’s love depends upon the way we come up against it. God does not change; it is man’s moral state that changes. The wrath of God is a figure of speech to denote God’s unchanging opposition to sin; it is His righteous love operating to destroy evil. Nothing can live in that devouring flame that is of the nature of a lie or wars against the spirit of holiness. Oh, if there is 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 shame and wrong from which our souls have suffered. It is not evil which will have the last word, but good; not sorrow, but joy; not hate, but love; not warfare, but peace; not Satan, but Christ! It is not *men* that God is consuming in His fire, it is what is *in man* that is consumed so that all men shall in that glad day be saved “*so as by fire*,” for THE BLOOD IS IN THE FIRE!

Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. When of old God came down on Sinai, its upper peaks were veiled with impenetrable folds of smoke, like the smoke of a furnace. And in the heart of the smoke there was the appearance of devouring fire. There is dread here! Bounds had been set to keep the people back; but a special message must be sent to warn them against breaking through to gaze, lest the fire should break forth upon them. But there was no harm as long as they kept without the barriers; and when Moses entered into the very heart of it, it did not singe a hair of his head, and injured him no more than when it played around the fragile acacia bush, which burned with fire without being consumed — not a leaf shriveled, nor a twig scorched. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, but not everything will burn even in this fire; gold, silver, and precious stones abide the fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God’s love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings (Isa. 33:14).

WHAT A BURNING

What a burning, what a burning
As all goes up in smoke and flame.
Everything in Adam's nature
Bows the knee to Jesus' name.
Burn, O earth; consume within me
All that's there unlike to God;
That the new earth may be planted
As the kingdom of the Lord.
Let God's fire-like word consume
These religious heavens too,
Till no longer they receive
Refreshing drops of heaven's dew.
Lord, send forth Thy fiery judgments,
Great hail stones of talent weight;
Let them fall as truth descending
On man's wicked, sinful state.
That on whom so e're they fall,
Thy will the vile to powder grind.
Not one atom of the old
In our new earth will we find.

— Reba McMurry

Chapter 169

The Three Angels' Messages (continued)

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast...the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be *tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy messengers, and in the presence of the Lamb*” (Rev. 14:9-10).

“*Tormented with fire and brimstone...in the presence of the Lamb.*” What an amazing divine paradox! The Lamb — precious embodiment of the very character of innocence, patience, meekness, gentleness, holiness, sacrifice, and redemption — being made **TORMENT** unto His people and to men for whom He died! The very thought seems incongruous. You see, dear ones, **IT IS NOT THE NATURE OF A LAMB** to torment anyone. It is simply not in the nature of the lamb to want to hurt in any way. Really! What could a lamb do to torture anyone? It has no capability for such a thing. And so it is with the **LAMB OF GOD**! The Lamb of God has no desire, no ability to inflict torture in any way — His desire is entirely redemptive — that men might have life and have it more abundantly!

I cannot imagine, as the churches teach, One with the nature of a lamb packing poor lost souls like brick into a kiln, standing there blowing the fires of hell through them forever. Yet that is how this passage is interpreted by almost every church on earth! No wonder the church systems of man are called “daughters of the harlot” in the book of Revelation! Where did such hideous ideas originate? They originated with the “mother of harlots,” the apostate church which began to form early in the centuries after Christ. The great apostasy actually began with the so-called “Church Fathers.” Some who read these lines are familiar with Tertullian’s words (around the year A.D. 200) concerning those in torment, “How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs...groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness.” Such a grotesque representation, if we say this reflects the attitude of our Lord, attributes to the Lamb of God the character of a monster worse than Adolph Eichmann!

Ah, the torment comes not from the Lamb. In our previous Study on this subject, we pointed out that the word “torment” comes from the Greek word *basanizo* which actually refers to the “touchstone” and the principle “*to test, to examine the quality of a thing.*” Jesus is our touchstone, the standard by which all men and their works are tested! Because of the ancient custom of testing persons by torture, as for instance, when the chief captain told one of his men to examine the apostle Paul by scourging (Acts 22:24), the word gradually took on a secondary meaning, *testing by torture*. In whatever measure that applies here, these are tormented “in the presence” of the Lamb, but the torment lies within the bosoms of the tormented. To be “rubbed against the touchstone” is not a pleasant experience! The scripture does not say that the Lamb torments them! If you think it does, you are mistaken. It states that *they are tormented in the presence* of the Lamb. What a thought! **TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE**. The Lamb is merely present. He does not torment. The condition is within themselves.

Because the carnal Christians, who are worshippers of the beast, are wrong and resistant to the spirit of the Lord, rebellious in their hearts against the truth, selfish in their minds, and fleshly in their desires, they are **condemned in their consciences** by the very **presence** of the pure, heavenly, spiritual, selfless, sinless, sacrificing Lamb of God. It has been said that hell is at its fiercest when it sees heaven, and not till then. When these realize the presence, or the character of the Lamb, they are tortured in their consciences, for in the Light of the Lamb they see themselves for the wretched little devils they are. The very **presence of truth** torments the deceived and those who love the lie. The very **presence of holiness** is torment to the immoral and corrupt. The very **presence of**

unconditional love greatly disturbs and agitates the one full of condemnation, legalism, and judgmentalism. The very **presence of peace and joy** torments those who see religion as something stern, exacting, and demanding, that must be endured with a long face and a sour countenance. The very **presence of the life of the Lamb** is the most awful torment to all the opposing forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil, until all the deceit and hostility has been taken out of them, and they come to know the Lord in the power of the spirit.

Let it be thoroughly known that John has not changed the subject here — we are still in the scene involving the Lamb upon mount Zion and the 144,000 who are with Him. The LAMB is on mount Zion! The manifest sons of God are on mount Zion! To be “in the presence of the Lamb” is to stand before mount Zion, just as Israel of old stood before mount Sinai. Mount Sinai was ablaze with the awful fiery presence of Yahweh. Mount Zion is ablaze with the fire and brimstone of the holy presence and glory of the Lamb! When the worshippers of the beast have been exposed for a sufficient time to the “holy angels” or the “holy messengers” who are the manifest sons of God, and to the full, blazing glory and majesty of the Lamb, the Lamb will overcome them; His love, truth, righteousness, and power will conquer their hearts; the carnality, deceit, rebellion, waywardness, and the spirit of Babylon will be taken from them and they will at last **enjoy** the Presence of the Lamb!

When the maniac of Gadara encountered the Christ the devils cried out, saying, “Art Thou come hither to *torment us* before the time?” (Mat. 8:29. It was not that the devils supposed that Jesus was there that day to cast them into eternal hell-fire — it was simply torment for a possessed person to stand in the *presence* of the Christ! It is torment for any enemy of God to be ushered into the presence of God. Anyone who is unacquainted with God and happens to come into a group that is worshipping and praising God, is in torment all the time he is there. Yet no one there is tormenting him! But the sooner such a person can leave, the better he likes it. Such an atmosphere is hell to that person. Why is it so hard to get an unsaved person to attend an evangelistic crusade, or to get your dear fundamentalist friend to come to a gathering of the sons of God? They are unhappy and miserable in such a setting! They are tormented when the saints are worshipping and moving in the Spirit of God! They are estranged from the life of the Spirit, from the glory and power of God, from the truth of His present kingdom and purposes, and cannot relate to the unveiling of Christ in the midst of His body. This all makes them uncomfortable and unhappy.

Suppose a few filthy, vile men and a few immoral women from a house of prostitution were *forced* to sit in a large congregation of singing, shouting, worshipping saints. *This certainly would be torment to most of them!* They would be tortured in the flames of the blazing glory of God in that place! If they were not held in their seat *by force*, most of them would rush out of there. I have been in meetings where I witnessed three responses to the glorious manifestation of the Lord’s presence. First, the saints who loved the Lord rejoiced and adoringly worshipped. Some who were not believers, but whose hearts were tender toward the Lord, came under deep conviction and, weeping and broken, gave themselves into the loving hands of Jesus. But others, filled with self, haters of righteousness, I have seen jump up and literally *run* out of the meeting — **TORMENTED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB!** Yes, they would *rush*, even *run* to get away from the power of the Holy Ghost!

A person under deep conviction of the Holy Spirit is tormented. Tormented with what? He is tormented with the fire of God’s holy presence, the fire of His penetrating, burning word. He has no peace or rest, day or night. His soul troubles him continually. When some who read these lines were under deep conviction for your sins and past life were you not tormented by the Holy Spirit, the presence of God? And you had no rest day or night! When you were finally broken by the Holy Spirit’s dealing and repented, you cried and shed many bitter tears of remorse and also tears of joy. I have seen religious people go through the same torment as God was drawing them out of the systems of man and bringing them into new truth and experience in Him. In some cases it took months or even years of struggle, fears, and inner conflict and torment before the Lord conquered our hearts and firmly planted His new day in our lives with great peace and joy and praise in our

mouths! And I do not doubt that it will take many dealings along with the mighty working of His power to win the hearts of the Babylon dwellers who persist in worshipping the beast!

To all the fleshly and carnally minded religionists HIS GLORY IS A LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE — divine, cleansing, purging, purifying, consuming fire! In ages yet unborn God shall expose *all men* to the sweet abiding presence of the Lamb. They will come under such severe processings, under such profound conviction that they will be tormented and have no rest day or night until their hearts are conquered. And when they do yield to Him who is worthy, their wonderful Creator, Father, Redeemer, and Lord, many fountains of tears will flow with weeping, thanksgiving, and praises unto the name of the Lord. I believe it! God hasten it!

NO REST DAY OR NIGHT — FOR AGES OF AGES

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night*, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:11).

The best way to arrive at the true meaning of a word is to study carefully the way it has been used. If we are to study a Greek word, we must go to the Greek text and not to a translation, nor to a definition which has been derived from an interpretative translation. If, in the original text, the word appears in different forms, surely these forms must have some special significance. A singular form cannot have the same meaning as the plural. Since both forms are used they should be distinguished when they are translated. In English, for example, anyone knows there is a difference between the expression *a dog* and *dogs*. Yet in certain places in scripture the singular form is translated by exactly the same words as the plural form and thereby the true import of the words is hidden. For example, compare the following passages where “for ever and ever” appears: “*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*” (Greek: for the aion of the aion). “*To Him be glory... for ever and ever*” (Greek: for the aions of the aions). “*Unto all generations for ever and ever*” (Greek: for the aion of the aions). In I Corinthians 10:11 we have the expression: “the *ends* of the aions.” Then in Hebrews 9:26 we have, “the *end* of the aions.” How can a period that is definitely said to come to an end be *endless*? How can a group of periods, each said to come to an end, be *for ever*?

I am aware that some people will oppose us on the grounds that the Greeks of today use the phrase “the aions of the aions” as meaning eternal, everlasting. A Greek gentleman told me several years ago that “the ages of the ages” is how they express eternity in Greek, and that when the book of Revelation says, “and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ages of ages*” it means **forever**. Ah, that sounds convincing, conclusive, final, and unanswerable, does it not? Who can argue with a Greek? But, precious friend of mine, in studying Bible language we are studying ANCIENT GREEK, not MODERN. The Greek language in two thousand years has changed to such an extent that the ancient tongue is altogether unintelligible to a modern Greek. The fact is, for over a thousand years, up until the year A.D. 1453, Greek was almost unknown or forgotten in most of Europe. Even in Italy, which formerly had been dominated by Greek, it became almost unknown. Ancient Greek has been a dead language for 1500 years! Anyone who knows anything at all will at once see the utter ridiculousness of this form of argument. Ancient and modern Greek are as different as day and night.

As well might we teach our children the English of 2,000 years ago, and then expect them to be proficient in modern English, as to apply modern meanings to ancient Greek. The older the English, the more unintelligible it becomes. The spelling changes, word meanings change, sentence structure changes, until finally one is hopelessly lost in a morass of undecipherable hieroglyphics. Even in the four centuries since the translation of the King James Bible, what changes have taken place! “Thee” and “thou” have been replaced by the more familiar “you” and are no longer used except in classical literature and religion. “Let” meant to “restrain, hinder, or prevent” in King James’ day; now the word means the exact opposite, to “permit or allow”! So with Greek. Ancient Greek is a dead language,

while modern Greek is a living language, with about as much similarity as there is between German and English. And if you want to know what an ancient Greek word means you must first of all examine its *usage!*

It was the false doctrines of the apostate church that caused the meaning *eternal* be placed upon the Greek phrase “the ages of the ages.” And don’t think for one moment, dear friend, that religion doesn’t influence language! The English word “hell” once meant “a dark hidden place,” and people “helled” their potatoes when they covered them to preserve them through the winter. But church dogma has through the years caused the word to take on an altogether different connotation. Ask any church member, or even an unbeliever, for that matter, what “hell” is and they certainly won’t tell you it’s a dark hidden place for potatoes! Word meanings *do* change! And religious dogma has effected many such changes!

So *usage* is the fundamental key to unlocking the meanings of ancient Greek words. That the expression “for ages of ages” cannot mean an endless succession of ages, or eternity, is clearly revealed by comparing Revelation 11:15 with I Corinthians 15:24-28. Many, many other passages could be cited also. In Revelation 11:15 our Lord is said, in the Greek text, to reign “for the ages of the ages.” But in I Corinthians 15:24-28 His reign is said to **end**. He only reigns **until**, and then He delivers the kingdom up to the Father. So, comparing the two passages, Christ does *not* reign “for ever and ever” though He *does* reign “for the ages of the ages.” Therefore, “for the ages of the ages” is a limited, specific time involving ages. It cannot denote eternity! As the Son, God reigns unto the ages of the ages through a process of subjecting, subduing all things unto Himself. When that work is completed and there is nothing more in all God’s vast universe to subdue and reconcile unto Himself, God reigns no longer as the Son, but His *indwelling life* in all things and all creatures will constitute His government, for God will be ALL IN ALL! Oh, the mystery of it!

Endlessness is expressed in the scriptures by simple phrases like “no end,” “endless (indissoluble),” “incorruptible,” “immortal,” “perpetual,” etc. Had the Holy Spirit wanted to convey unendingness in reference to man’s torment in the fire and brimstone in the presence of the Lamb, He could have used words that plainly denoted that, rather than words which plainly denote **time periods (ages)** as “for the age,” “for the ages,” “for the age of the ages,” “for the ages of the ages,” etc.

Notice, my beloved, that these are tormented *day and night* for the ages of the ages, and have no rest *day nor night*. The very terms *day* and *night* and *ages* show beyond question that we are dealing with the realm of **time**. There is no *day* nor *night* in **eternity!** Both are creatures of time. There is no way of knowing how long a time this will be, but since it unquestionably speaks of day and night and ages, it does therefore belong to time and no endeavor must be made to equate it with eternity. Ages can be long dispensations covering centuries or millenniums, or ages can transpire within ourselves as we move from one dealing of God to another in our experience. I know brethren who have lived under the age of law, the age of grace, and the age of the kingdom within their own experience during the short span of a few years. I have passed through a number of “ages” within the scope of my experience with God, and I have become a different person, and been related to God in a different way, in each of those ages!

Once we understand that the Greek word *aion* and all the forms and compounds of that word denote *time*, how clear everything becomes! And how ridiculous the ignorant pratings of men! In an effort to harmonize the scriptures with the false doctrines of the apostate churches, the translators rendered “for ages of ages” as “for ever and ever.” This one little mistake once and for all exposes their folly. Even in English we can see that “for ever” cannot be endless if “*and ever*” may be added to it. Eternity cannot be added to! You cannot make “for ever” any longer by adding another “ever.” Only time may be compounded. Eternity is absolute *timelessness*. Eternity is without beginning or end. There cannot be more than one eternity, nor can one eternity be added to another eternity, nor can an eternity end. Ah, but ages are time and time, my friend, *can* be added to and it *can* and *does* and *shall end!* When the Greek speaks of “ages of ages” it is speaking of aggregated periods of time —

not eternity! And you cannot get eternity by compounding all the time periods of the past and the future, for time *began* and time *ends*. The ages and all the time and times combined do not equal eternity. There simply is no such thing as “the endless ages of eternity” as the preachers love to say, for the phrase is a complete contradiction of itself. No one who is sane and reasonable can maintain otherwise. To do so is to contradict all the known facts and to contradict God’s own word.

One final thought before we pass on to another passage — a strict adherence to the tense of the verb makes our text read, “*They have no rest day nor night who are worshipping the beast...*” It denotes a continuous action, as long as they persist in worshipping the beast, while the testing of God is upon them, they have no rest day nor night. Their state of agitation, trouble, restlessness, and distress is co-extensive with their continuing to worship the beast. Can we not see by this that just as soon as they repent, take a new mind, turn from their worship of the beast, and yield under the mighty hand of God all the confusion, vexation, and torment is washed away by the quickening stream of HIS LIFE. Isn’t it wonderful!

THE PATIENCE AND FAITH OF THE SAINTS

“Here is the *patience of the saints*: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

The Lord’s called and chosen elect must have patience concerning the work of God in us, in all of the Lord’s people, including those now imprisoned in Babylon, and indeed in all of creation! Once we hear the “gospel of the ages,” the good news of God’s great plan of the ages, and see the fiery dealing of God with men “for the ages,” it is **here** that we learn the great need for *patience*! Oh, yes! “**Here** is the patience of the saints.” If you’ve taken a trip with young children, you’ll recognize the question, “Are we almost there yet?” It’s an annoying question for parents, especially when it comes about twenty minutes into a day-long drive. But the Lord’s children are not innocent of such questioning either! “O God, aren’t we there yet? Haven’t we been through enough? Isn’t it time for you to do something about the shame of the church and the sin of the world? Are the sons about to be manifested? Do we have to endure this night much longer? Isn’t it time for our change? Is the work about finished? What about the words that have been spoken to me by prophecy, and in visions and revelations? When will I begin to see them come to pass? Will I make it in to the high calling before I go by way of the grave? Are we almost there yet?”

The three most common words heard among believers in time of crisis are: “Lord, *do* something!” It is completely contrary to our nature as human beings to stand still and do nothing when we face perplexing trials. In fact, waiting patiently for God to act is probably the most difficult thing about the walk of sonship! Can you imagine how Jesus felt for thirty years in Nazareth working in the carpenter shop — waiting for His sonship to be revealed while the world was rushing onward to hell! The Father raised up patience in His life, for even at the last minute, before His glory was shone forth, He said, “Mine hour has not yet come.” Even those with deep dealings of the Lord in their lives sometimes panic when the Lord doesn’t move according to their timetable. We are prone to give God deadlines and time limits. We cry, “Lord, when are you going to do something about this? If you don’t act now, it will be too late!” But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, God is *never* too late! Mary and Martha found that out when their brother, Lazarus, died and was buried! “Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died.” “Martha, I AM the resurrection and the life!” He always acts — not according to our schedule, but His.

The Lord is calling a people unto Himself in this new kingdom day who will truly trust Him for all things. Indeed, He often leads us into situations that are frightening, critical, difficult, in order to teach us His ways. He tests us to reveal in our hearts whether we are able to stand still and see the salvation of God! Every called out one should pray that the Lord will open his eyes and show him the eternal truth of these words of scripture: “The steps of a good man are *ordered by the Lord*: and He delighteth in his way” (Ps. 37:23). The Hebrew word for “ordered” here means “prearranged,

step by step, fixed, ordained by God.” This means it is God, not the devil, not some freak accident, not our lack of faith, but God Himself who leads us even in the difficult places. We may cry out, “Lord, why are you allowing this to continue?” But the truth is, not only does He allow our circumstances, He *arranges* them! And that is hard on the carnal mind!

I firmly believe that every step I take is ordained by our heavenly Father. And if that is indeed true, then I know that God will never lead me to the brink of a difficult situation only to abandon me. He wouldn't say, “Okay, Preston, I've directed you up to this point. Now you're on your own!” No! Our wonderful Father is absolutely faithful to every one of His sons, in every situation and circumstance. Whenever God requires anything of a person, there is always a reason for it. The reason so many people fail to attain to great heights in the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's *purpose*, and therefore they fail in the faith that lays hold upon the great heights that are in Him. His word to you today, precious one, is just this: “Will you be the one who will not waver — who won't charge God with forsaking, abandoning, and failing you? Will you stand still in your crisis, in your testing, when it seems that all the Lord has promised has fallen to the ground, leaning upon the faithfulness of your Father, trusting Him to reveal His power in you?” That is the stuff sons of God are made of!

A dear brother shared the following. “In this fast-paced age, to tell someone to wait brings some difficult problems. A child sees all his presents for his birthday and yet must wait until the date arrives. Oh, the excitement that he feels, for he contemplates the pleasures hidden just under those pretty wrappings for him. In like manner we know some joys of the kingdom. They are like the outer wrappings of the child's gifts. We anticipate the full glory of the kingdom of God, but also know that must wait. The first picture the word 'wait' sets before our eyes is as the child and his presents. Time holds him back from receiving what is his. He sits and with anxiety waits for the hour when he will be free to possess them. His waiting is an exercise in *patience*. Our waiting upon the Lord has this element, yet is much greater! When we wait upon the Lord, we twist together with the One for whom we wait. The boy aims his sight on receiving what is his by the promise of a birthday. Time passes, and with each moment of thought upon his gifts, he is uniting to his ownership of them. He sees the big wrapped box in the corner and thinks, 'This is *mine*. I wonder what it is?' Whatever it is, he unites to his possession of it. So also do we wait upon God!

“In the spring of 1979 I attended the graduating ceremony of the Bible school I attended before God sent me back to Missouri. Now, they had a guest speaker at their meeting. He was recognized as one who hears from God and shares what's on his mind for the moment. As he came to the podium, before him sat the young graduates. Without an introduction or even an hello, he began to speak in a mild voice the word God wanted these to hear. His voice became louder and more intense with each sentence. Finally, his concluding statements were at the top of his vocal range, yet without breaking the richness of his voice. He went through several Old Testament characters attaching the word *wait* to each one. He said, 'Abraham, God has called you to birth the son of promise, but you must *wait*. *Wait* you must! Isaac, you must *wait* for the time for Rebecca to come. You must *wait!* Jacob, *wait* and *wait* and *wait* for Rachel your love. And *wait* you will to have your name changed to Israel. You will *wait!* Joseph, you must *wait* for the day of deliverance. Yes, Joseph, you must *wait!* *Wait*, yes *wait* David you shall to be King David, you will *wait*. *Wait!* *Wait!* You must *wait!*” — end quote.

To all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God, who hunger to see the fullness of God revealed in His elect; to all who yearn to see the leaders of Babylon repent, to see the slaves of Babylon come out of her with great rejoicing, and to see the end of God's fiery dealings with all His people until His bride has made herself ready; to all who long to see creation set free from the bondage of corruption, and all peoples and all nations marching up to Zion to learn the ways of the Lord and to walk in His paths; to all who hope in Christ for the perfection, completion, and fulfillment of **all** He has promised those who follow on to know Him in the Day; to one and all I say **“wait!”** “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him” (Ps. 37:7). “But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. 8:25). “Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith

and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12). “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:35-36).

That much time is required for God to work out His purposes is clear from the three angel’s messages. The first angel proclaims the “gospel of the ages,” bringing the revelation that not all things will be concluded at once, but step by step, age after age, until all things are subdued, reconciled, and restored into God again. The third angel reveals that even the dealing of the Lord with His people in Babylon requires precise time cycles (ages of the ages) through which He accomplishes His great work unto victory. Patience is often lacking when God does not seem to finish His work in our lives, or in others, or in the church, or in the earth as quickly as we think He should. But every son must understand this great truth — God seems to use *delay* as a choice process in the development of character and faith! *Wait!* Be *patient*, saith the Lord! Every promise of God *shall be fulfilled* in His appointed time, when every necessary preparation has been completed in each son and in every purpose. God will finish His work and show forth His glory in us, and deliver all the captives. He *will* do it! He *is* doing it! The work of God in us today is setting the stage for God’s great tomorrow. Not one thing shall fail of **all** that He hath spoken! “HERE is the *patience of the saints...*”

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth*: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).

These words have been often misunderstood, and preached at many a funeral. They have been wrongly interpreted — interpreted *literally* rather than *spiritually*. It has been generally thought that here we have a proof that the soul or spirit is blessed immediately after death. “From henceforth” was taken to mean: from the time they depart from this earth, immediately after physical death. Of course, this is true in itself. The dead shall be blessed, and shall rest from their labors as they enter into that eternal spiritual realm from whence they came. But it is *not true* that this word refers to that fact! In the first place, we might remark that in that case it would be very ambiguously expressed. Instead of “from henceforth” an expression like “from death on,” or “immediately after death,” would have been much clearer. In the second place — and this is a far weightier objection — the expression “the dead which die in the Lord” is a very strange statement indeed if the Holy Spirit is speaking of physical death. How can a *physically dead* person **die**?

Nowhere in all the word of God can we find a more definite and profound statement than that given us in these meaningful words. Call to remembrance here that we are dealing everywhere in the Revelation with symbols, and when the voice from heaven says, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,” it cannot in its spiritual meaning signify the death of the physical body. It is my deep conviction that it is not a *blessing* to die. Death is our *enemy*, says the Lord, and death is the last enemy to be destroyed. I prefer not to go to heaven by means of physical death. There is no need to give me that story, “I’m homesick for heaven,” because just as soon as you get sick and it appears it might be time for you to go there, you’ll spend every dollar you’ve got to keep from going there. A brother related the story of a friend of his who was a hypochondriac, she was always sick; if you mentioned some disease, the next week she had it. One day he went to the hospital to visit this dear sister. He walked into the room and said, “How are you doing, sister?” “Oh, brother,” she responded sobbing, “I’m homesick for heaven,” and she sobbed some more. “I wish the Lord would just take me on home.” The brother placed his hand upon her head and prayed, “Father, in Jesus’ name, just kill her right now!” At once she cried out, “No! No! No!” The message is clear — she wasn’t as homesick as she thought she was. Death wasn’t as *blessed* as she supposed. And after her moment of truth the dear lady never went back into the hospital for years!

I make the following declaration with confidence, knowing that only in a couple instances in all of scripture is there mention of the spirit returning to God or entering into the presence of Christ following the death of the body — the testimony of scripture is clear that *it is not necessary to die physically in order to get to heaven!* To the apostle Paul it was given to reveal the great truth, ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings IN HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus”*** (Eph. 1:3). The word “blessed” is the Greek word *eulogeo* which means “to speak well of.” We think of blessing as something good that we receive from the Lord, be it a spiritual feeling, spiritual gift, or a temporal blessing of provision, healing, etc. But that is not the meaning of this Greek word! *Eulogeo* is something which is ***spoken***, “to speak well of,” and it is especially instructive to observe that it is the word from which comes our English word “eulogy.” A eulogy is something one says over a person who is dead! And do we not usually speak “good things” over a deceased person? Old uncle Joe may have been a scoundrel, but when we say a few words at his funeral we try to think of the one good thing he said or did in his lifetime, and that is what we share. I remember when I was a kid in the Pentecostal Church, at the funeral of some unspiritual, obstinate old man the preacher would preach him “straight into heaven.” Ah, yes, a eulogy — speaking well of! And what a blessing, what a eulogy the apostle spoke over the saints when he said, ***“You are dead, and your (new) life is hid with Christ in God.”*** That is indeed a wonderful eulogy! And when the almighty Father Himself eulogized us in the passage quoted above HE PLACED US IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD — so, my beloved brother, my precious sister, you have already died and gone to heaven!

One has to be *born* into the kingdom of God, and by that birth a man is translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son. But just as one must be *born* into the kingdom of the Son, one must *die* to get out of this present evil world! ***“How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also (now) live with Him”*** (Rom. 6:2-8). ***“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world...”*** (Col. 2:20). ***“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him”*** (II Tim. 2:11). My God, what beautiful words! To die this death in the Lord, man must die to himself and to all that he has from Adam, all that is outward, human, and possessing him. Oh, happy death indeed that sweeps away all that is not of the spirit! Oh, blessed death, bringing the soul out of itself, into God, into marriage with the spirit! Blessed death, the beginning of true life, the Christ life! What a wonderful revelation is ours when we discover the great truth that ***we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God!***

There’s not a thing that I like about physical death. I don’t think it’s our friend, and I am certain it is our enemy and has to be overcome. So when the Spirit says, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,” what I see implied here is something more than physical death. It is the *dead* which *die* and the place where they die is *in the Lord*. The Spirit is speaking of the death of the “old man,” death to the self-life. By “the dead” are meant those who *have died* and *are dead* in Christ — “in the Lord.” It signifies those who *are crucified with Christ*, who have afflicted their soul, and crucified their flesh. They have been crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto them. ***“Whosoever taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me”*** (Mat. 10:38). ***“If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me”*** (Mat. 16:24). ***“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts”*** (Gal. 5:24).

It will be useful to us to notice that there are many deaths referred to in the scriptures, each one being, fundamentally, nothing more than a separation from something. All humans in Adam are born dead, dead in “trespasses and in sins” (Eph. 2:1), that is, in their minds, by wicked works they are dead to God, dead to the spirit, dead to truth, dead to righteousness, thus separated from God, out of fellowship with Him. And then for such as come into the blessings of salvation, this original death is counteracted by another death, which is a separation from the world and sin and self, and leads to union with Christ in the spirit (Rom. 7:9-11; Gal. 2:19-20). Then there is the death we all know so well, physical death, which is the separation of the spirit from the body. After one is regenerated, there are many deaths all along the way, that is, if one is to follow the Lord all the way into perfection

and the fullness of God. Paul said, "I die daily" (I Cor. 15:31). By this He meant his ongoing and complete separation from all that adhered to him of his own will, his own way, his own mind, his own desires, his own thoughts, his own ambitions, his own plans, and separation from all that might defile, from every vestige of the world, the flesh, even religion, for he spoke of being *dead to the law* by the body of Christ. He had given up all, with his nature changed from glory to glory as he was transfigured into the image of Christ.

And we conceive that this is what is meant by "dying in the Lord," we conceive that it means a *separation* from all that falls short of the glory of God, in order that the nature, character, wisdom, power, and glory of the Lord alone may be manifested in one's life. A literal rendering of the verse would read, "*And I heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Write thou: **Blessed ones, the dead ones, those who are dying in the Lord from henceforth...***" If we can lay aside the tradition of the theologians we will see by these words that the expression, "*the dead ones, those who are dying,*" *points clearly to those who have died with Christ and now continue to die daily.*

When we have talked about the ongoing death to the carnal mind and the self-life we have sometimes imagined *restricting* and *restraining* ourselves, *denying* ourselves all kinds of pleasures, desires, emotions, and actions. But that's not dying to Self! That's an effort at restraining the outer man which in the final analysis *changes nothing!* Sixteen hundred years of the law of Moses demonstrated infallibly man's inability to either restrain or reform the Adamic nature. Death to the self-life comes only by the raising up within ourselves of a new dimension and higher power of Life! It was the apostle Paul who taught us the wonderful truth that it is the *law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death* (Rom. 8:2). I have some corruptible flesh with corruptible desires and things that would take me captive to the law of sin and death. But I'm looking past it! I'm looking at Him who is invisible, the Christ life, my inner son. I'm looking at Him who is mighty within me, who is able to subdue all things unto Himself, who is able also to keep me from falling and to present me faultless before the throne of His glory! I'm not dwelling upon my flesh, for the outward man *is perishing*, and there is no covenant with that dying man. But there is a promise to *Isaac*, there's a promise to the *seed*, to the *new man* who is the nature and image of God in my spirit, and I'm looking unto Him who *is my life!* These things I write and these blessed hopes I set before you that your spiritual eyes might behold the blessed truth that WE DO NOT DIE IN ORDER TO LIVE — WE LIVE IN ORDER TO DIE!

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may rest from their labors...*"

The only way we can rest from our labors of self-effort is to truly be *dead in Christ*. Dead men don't labor! I think that's good news! It's a *blessing* to be dead in Christ! He has blessed us with a eulogy! The eulogy is not about the old man who is perishing and passing away, but the new man who is seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus!

Chapter 170

The Three Angels' Messages (continued)

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may rest from their labors*; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).

Perhaps you have heard someone make the statement, “I’d rather burn out than rust out.” I think I understand what they mean by that approach to serving the Lord, but when it comes to the life of sonship neither alternative is viable. When we consider the pattern Jesus established in His sonship ministry we see revealed an altogether different attitude. Although He grew weary from ministering to the needs of the multitudes, there is never any indication in the Gospels that our Lord either “burned out” or “rusted out.” It wasn’t a matter of His zeal or His lethargy, for it wasn’t His will or His initiative at all! As a son He did only and always those things that the Father sent Him to do. He did only what He saw His Father do and He spoke only the words that He *heard* from His Father.

Jesus described Himself both as “Lord of the Harvest” and “Lord of the Sabbath.” His life portrayed the delicate balance between the outward *labor* of ministry and the inward *rest* that recognized that it was not He that did the works, but the Father who dwelt in Him. He knew that all His labors in the “harvest field” had to proceed out of Sabbath — that is, complete rest in His Father’s will, direction, and working. An understanding of how Jesus calls us both to His “yoke” and to His “rest” will help us as well to walk as sons of God in all that we are called to do!

The *religious realm* can cause one to be so caught up in its programs, activities, and works that it literally becomes a bondage. Well do I remember former years of pastoring churches when every weekend was crowded with such a whirlwind of feverish activity, meetings, visitations, etc., that come Monday morning I was completely exhausted mentally and physically, needing *another Sabbath* to rest and recuperate from the one I had just been through! I suppose I will make some enemies, but I must tell you the truth nonetheless. How much eager-beaver religious work is done out of a carnal desire to make good, draw the crowds, satisfy the people, and appear successful! How many hours of prayer are wasted beseeching God to bless and prosper projects that are geared to the glorification of men! How much hard-earned money is poured out upon men who, in spite of their tear-in-the-voice appeals, nevertheless seek only to make a fair show in the flesh, building bigger and bigger castles in the sand!

I have no hesitation in saying that a charismatic personality and a shrewd knowledge of human nature is ALL that any man needs to be a success in the religious circles today, including the “spirit-filled” ones. The church systems, for the most part, have accepted the monstrous heresy that noise, size, activity, and bluster signify that something significant is being accomplished for God. The simplicity that is in Christ is rarely found, nor intimacy with the Father, nor the power of the Holy Spirit. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations, committees, board meetings, basketball tournaments, religious splash parties, Sunday School picnics, puppet shows, building fund drives, business men’s banquets, so-called prayer breakfasts at which precious little praying is done, outreaches, concerts, dramas, revival meetings and a world more of feverish *activities* which occupy time, energy, and attention, but can never satisfy the deepest longings of the heart. The shallowness of the average Christian’s inner experience, the hollowness of his worship, the immaturity of his walk, his incredible ignorance of God’s great plan and purpose, the emptiness of his words, and that servile *imitation of the world* which marks the religious systems’ promotional methods all testify that the whole program, instead of being the divine out-ricing of the Christ life, is naught but part and parcel of “the cares of *this world*.”

So now man WORKS...and WORKS...and WORKS...diligently pursuing religious observances, external forms, and activities of all sorts, and for all his effort he is able only to produce a pitifully small harvest of reality, eking out but a meager spiritual existence! How incredibly busy he is scratching and picking up the grub worms, insects, and scraps out of the dirt of his little *chicken yard!* Oh, to escape religiosity that we might learn to walk with God in the Spirit! And we rejoice to see how God is causing His elect to flee this realm! By the thousands they flee! And let me assure you, my brother, my sister, I have no intention of assuming the burden of paying for men's programs, building men's kingdoms, or joining in their efforts to save the world, when God already has a plan for the salvation of all nations which will work, while men's efforts have failed. To hear some preachers tell it, by their glowing reports (hype) you would think that they had almost completed the job of world evangelization, and with only a few more millions of dollars, another TV network, an expanded relief program, and a few more crusades the kingdom will be here! The sad truth is, however, that the tidal wave of sin, sorrow, sickness, pain, ignorance, delusion, and death is greater in the earth in this hour than at any time since Noah entered the ark. But to remain continually bombarded by the appeal of all this activity and not become caught in its snare, is an escape that only God can work in us and maintain for us!

Some years ago I received a letter from a precious friend of ours, Connie Asbill, which I am impressed by the Spirit to share at this time. She wrote, "Somewhere in my files I have a letter I wrote to you two or three years ago that never got mailed. It was about a dream Lorain had had probably twenty years ago in which she had to swim across a river to reach some set destination on the other side. It's been so long ago, she may have forgotten it by now, but, evidently, it never left me, for just about the time I wrote that letter, it surfaced and began to tug at me. In the dream, Lorain went into the water and began to swim. She found it very hard work until she got out into the middle of the river; suddenly, a force came up from beneath her and began to transport her along to the other side. She made the point in relating the dream that she was still going through the same swimming motions, but now it was no longer work. It looked like the same thing, but it wasn't the same thing because of the force that had come up beneath her to make sure she made it to the other side.

"Recently, Mike wrote to me and asked what *entering into rest* means to me. When I began my reply to his question, I found Lorain's dream working its way into the discussion. As I wrote, I wondered if you would be at all interested in seeing what that dream has spoken to me in the intervening years. So, what follows in this letter is an excerpt I have lifted directly from my letter to Mike which is sitting on another screen right now in my computer waiting for me to transfer it. Here is what I have written Mike about rest and the meaning I see in Lorain's dream from long ago:

"What is my concept of entering into rest? Well, basically, I think I would have to say that rest is something that happens inside, no matter what is happening in the circumstances surrounding us. It is a cessation of struggle under the legalistic code, among other things, and involves, I think, a death of ego which allows the true self, which is the spiritual self, to fully emerge. 'He that hath ceased from his own labors hath entered into rest.' The term 'his own labors' means to me 'soulish labors,' which, of course, is why Jesus said, 'Come unto me all ye that labor (under the law) and are heavy laden (with burdensome demands for which no grace has been given to bear) and I will give you rest.' And in another place He calls this 'a rest unto your *souls*.'

"The soul rests that the spirit may fully work. And, as a dream Preston Eby's wife once had seems to teach, we can be doing the same thing *on the outside* (i.e., still outwardly going through all the motions we were going through before) while experiencing rest *on the inside*. In Lorain's dream, she was swimming laboriously across a fast-flowing river, and was finding the work of that swimming exhausting; but when she got half way across it, suddenly a force came up beneath her and began to bear her along. To any observer

standing on the riverbank watching, she would appear outwardly to be still swimming in the same fashion that she was before. But now, you see, it had become easy: not because she was supposed to sit down in the middle of the river and do nothing, but because now grace, as an enabling force, had been given to allow her to do the work without having the sense of working!

“We see this in the life of Jacob when, for seven years he worked for Laban to win the beautiful Rachel for his wife. He was reaching for the kingdom, so to speak, for the inner marriage that brings word and life together to make of the twain one. That first seven years was labor! Well, we know that he got Leah because that was the proper order of things; but, note, that he also got Rachel. He had to keep working for another seven years to earn her, but those years seemed to him as nothing, the scripture tells us. The first seven years (the first half of the trip across the river) were hard; the last seven years (the last half of the trip across the river), although they comprised the very same work, were easy! He was under the works of the law throughout the first seven years and had nothing but the fruit of the law to show for it; but he was under the works of grace for the last seven years. Under the first, he worked to get what he wanted; under the second, he got what he wanted so he could work!”
— end quote.

George Warnock, speaking of the difference between the toil and drudgery of Israel’s wilderness experience and the bountifulness and blessing of the land of Canaan, in its spiritual application, wrote, “In the Land we come to a prepared place...there is nothing in this realm that we can do by our own efforts. It is entirely the work of the Spirit; and because we are in union with the Spirit we are in union with the Son...doing only as He is doing...speaking only as He is speaking...thinking only as He is thinking. It is a place where we constantly ABIDE in the realm of the Spirit...flowing streams...brooks of water...fruitful vines and fig trees...corn and wheat and honey...houses built that we did not have to build...orchards planted that we did not have to plant. What a glorious day when the Body of Christ begins to enter into her heritage, and God’s people begin to realize that we no longer work *for* God (for we are co-workers *with* Him)...and we no longer launch crusades and programs for God...and we no longer build New Testament Churches...and we discover that what God has in mind for His people *has already been prepared by the Spirit of God in the earth, and we simply become JOINED UNTO HIM and ABIDE IN THE LAND!*

“Of course, when God’s people walk in this Way they will be recognized by the religious order as a strange, peculiar people...as it was with Jesus. If He would do the Father’s will...then He must leave the big meetings, and go out of His way to talk to a woman in need at the well of Samaria. It meant ignoring the pleas of His very close friends, as they implored Him to come and heal their brother Lazarus who was sick. It meant healing a man on the Sabbath day...when He could just as well have waited till the next day so as not to antagonize the religious order of the day. But when objections were raised Jesus replied, in effect, ‘Healing a man on the Sabbath day? Would you accuse me of that? That was not my plan at all! The Son can do nothing according to His own desire. I saw the Father healing the man on the Sabbath, and I only do what I see the Father doing. It was the Father, not I, who healed the man...for He has been working right up to this time, and now I am working together with Him. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.’

“It meant staying away from Jerusalem on the feast days, when He might have gone there as a miracle worker, and made a name for Himself. It meant setting His face to go to Jerusalem at the wrong time...when everyone there knew that it would mean certain death. In short, it meant choosing the cross according to the will of God, rather than taking His proper place as the Messiah. But He walked in the realm of a PREPARED LIFE...prepared by the Father, and as the Father showed the Son what He Himself was doing, these things did the Son likewise. Men only saw the visible form that came into being, and marveled at His miracles, at His wisdom, at His teachings, at all the wonderful works that He performed. But the Father simply showed the Son what He Himself

was doing in the realm of the Spirit; and because the Son was abiding in the Father, He simply walked through the Land that God showed Him, and brought into open manifestation what the Father had already accomplished” — end quote.

What a revelation that is for every son of God! We are living in the hour when the purposes of God are being brought into sharp focus and fine-tuned in the understanding and heart of every member of God's called and chosen elect. There is a beautiful and significant type in the order of creation as recorded in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. On each of the six days of God's labor there was an “evening” and a “morning” marking the beginning and the conclusion of the work and purpose of God in each day. On the seventh day we read of no evening or morning, for the seventh day bespeaks a *completed creation*, God resting in Himself, the never-ending day of the fullness of the glory of the Lord.

But further, the “evening and morning” mark the duration of a “day,” a work accomplished, a purpose fulfilled; and each new evening and morning indicates a “going on” to another work, which work will also ultimately end, to give way to yet another work. Each day begins *and* ends. Typically, this reveals to us how each moving of God's Spirit accomplishes His purpose for that time and then becomes history...and God marches on. I am convinced that one of man's great faults is that he always expects the future to be just a repetition of the past. If God moved in a certain way once, they were sure the next move would be in the same manner or form, or very similar, so they called their all-night prayer meetings and implored, “God, do it again!” I do not hesitate to declare to you that such a prayer is utterly void of understanding and can never be answered, for God does not repeat the work of a first day, or a second — He marches on!

Let all who have received the call to sonship know that every “day” of the Lord's “labor” ends, the way God has moved in your life in former times will end, and there is nothing you can do about it. You may even feel that you have “backslidden” or “failed God” in some way because that anointing has lifted and nothing works anymore. But all the old orders end, all the religious institutions organized into powerful kingdoms out of bygone times of refreshing are now just empty shells and ready to collapse. And — let something else be equally clear — God has a NEW ORDER arising, a NEW DAY is dawning, there is a growing consciousness that we are standing on the threshold of a glorious new moving of the Spirit in the earth, TOTALLY UNLIKE ANYTHING WHICH HAS BEEN SEEN IN AGES PAST, INCLUDING THE SONSHIP MINISTRY OF JESUS IN GALILEE! I do not say that a revival shall break out! A revival means the reviving of that which was once alive, but has died and needs reviving. This new day is far more than the reviving of some old order, including the old order of the “New Testament Church.” That church was built on the “first day,” and God isn't going to do what He did on the first day over again! This is a *new day*, the birthing of a *new order*, the unveiling of a *greater glory*, for now *His kingdom shall come, many sons shall be brought to glory*, and His will shall be done in earth as it is in heaven as the power of His endless and incorruptible life becomes manifested in full and complete redemption through a firstfruit company — even those who break through into HIS SEVENTH DAY OF DIVINE FULLNESS!

I am sure that all can agree that the “early church” with all its gifts and glory and power did not bring the kingdom of God to subdue the nations and all things, nor did it deliver the groaning creation from the bondage of corruption. Its glory was eclipsed as the Headship of Christ and the power of the Spirit were usurped by the bishops and fleshly errors, eventually taking the form of Mystery Babylon, giving way to that which even secular history records as the “Dark Ages,” and in turn paving the way for the arising of Islam. Islam's divine mandate was to judge this corrupt church, which it did in those early centuries, and God has used Islam as an instrument of His judgment upon apostate Christianity to this present day.

The Reformation in Martin Luther's day cannot even be classified as a “revival,” but merely a “reform,” as the name indicates; it, too, was unable to defeat Satan, subdue the nations, bring in the kingdom, and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. All the mighty revivals of church

history have failed to deliver the groaning creation! The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have not done so either, nor shall they, for they have added their own brands of error and shame to the religious scene. All the methods and programs of religion, all the missionary and evangelistic crusades, all the deliverance ministries and healing campaigns, have in turn failed to turn this old world around from its pathway to destruction. The Bible Societies, door-to-door witnessing, tons of gospel tracts, satellite television networks, prayer meetings, and all the other feverish activity by the world's churches have not gotten the job done. *None of the six days of labor*, nay, all of them together, have not brought the blessedness of God's rest to creation! And why? we may ask. The answer has not far to come — the sad fact is that much of this activity has been the product of **man's self-effort** and **soulish zeal** as he has planned and schemed within himself to work **for God** and by his work to accomplish God purpose! How unmistakably accurate is the prophecy spoken by our omniscient Father when speaking of man's rule over the earth He said, "*Six days SHALT THOU LABOR.*" And before man could even get out of Eden to subdue the earth his rule and his labor became tainted by deception and sin! All of man's grandiose schemes, efforts, works, programs, and endeavors to convert the world and bring the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God upon all nations have not only been an incredible failure but, if for an instant we may descend to baseness of speech, they have been a colossal "flop," for sin and sickness and deception and delusion and death and sinners abound more today than at any time in the history of the world!

The religious works or labor of man are like an ox which turns a millstone and walks a hundred miles per day. When he is loosed, he finds that he is in the same place! Carnal religion takes men on many journeys, leads them into multiplied pursuits, programs, outreaches, and labors of various kinds, but when the day is done they have made no progress into God. They have no doubt produced something which in some measure has blessed someone, but in their own experience nothing has been accomplished but walking in circles. In vain have they labored!

Some may think that we have strayed far afield from the subject of our text, but such is not the case. "*Write thou, **Blessed ones, the dead ones, those who are dying in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that **THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABORS!*****" Ah, the message is just this — God is raising up a people who die to themselves, who die to the ways of the flesh and the carnal works of religion, who die *in the Lord*, that they may rest from **their labors**. Not rest from the Father's work, just as Jesus did not rest from the Father's work, but they rest from THEIR WORK, that only the Father's work be done. That is the key! This is the ministry of sonship! Blessed are those who are dying in the Lord from henceforth, that they may rest from their own labors! And this, my beloved, is the only hope of creation!

We have passed through many "days" of God's dealings, revival after revival, move after move, revelation after revelation, and blessing upon blessing. And how we praise God for each of them! Each has had its evening and morning. Each has come and gone. Thank God! the first rays of the light of a NEW DAY are even now painting the eastern sky! Thank God! a few of His chosen ones have arisen in the Spirit to behold the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn! This is a day of days, as the six days of the old creation were but one day of creation, so this seventh day has been preceded by "days" of unfoldment, yet it is but one day in which God brings mankind into rest with Him in His glory. Not all have arisen to greet the dawn, only a few, God's firstfruit company, are now dying in the Lord and entering into the rest of His more glorious day. This seventh day is not like any other day in one important way. We have seen that God's Sabbath has no evening or morning. All the days of "labor" have this evening and morning, for they need it, and good as are the days when God's work goes on within us from evening to morning, cycle after cycle, while yet we need them, FAR MORE BLESSED IS THE ETERNAL DAY OF REST IN HIS GLORY WHEN HIS WORK IS COMPLETED AND WE AWAKE IN HIS LIKENESS!

This blessed realm of His fullness, of perfection, is the day of which John prophesied in spirit, saying, "And there shall be no night there" (Rev. 21:25). No night! *No darkness*, no ignorance, no error, nothing in part, no dusk, a day filled with the effulgent glory of the Lord. No night! An *eternal day*,

where the Sun of Righteousness never sets, a day with no end. Of this day it has also been revealed: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there...and they shall see His face: and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there...for the Lord God giveth them light..." (Rev. 21:3-4; 22:3-5). Ah, beloved, such is the seventh day, a walk with God, uniting earth to heaven in blessedness, God and man dwelling and resting together, joined in one spirit. If we know it not, let us wait for it: to those who wait with patience and faith, it will surely come, and will not tarry.

When the fullness of His seventh day is realized in the body of Christ, then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, 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 Gentiles (nations) SHALL COME TO THY LIGHT, AND KINGS TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF THY RISING" (Isa. 60:1-3).

The seventh day is not merely a period of time; the seventh day is the REALM OF GOD'S REST, and finally, the seventh day is A PEOPLE. In Genesis 2:3 it is stated of the seventh day: "And God **blessed** the seventh day, and **sanctified** it" He did this because in it **He rested**. When God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, He set it apart unto Himself and lifted it up above all other days, specifically above all the days of "labor." But in Exodus 31:13 God identifies the day with a people, showing how the one prefigures the other, and how the twain are one. "Verily **my Sabbaths shall ye keep** (lit., ye shall rest in my rest): for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that **ye may know that I am the Lord that doth SANCTIFY YOU.**" Here the *day* and the *people* are *both so sanctified to God* that they become ONE. As we enter into God's rest, so that His rest becomes personified within us, WE BECOME HIS REST, HIS HOLY DAY, HIS SABBATH.

The fourth chapter of Hebrews makes it plain that God's Sabbath Day is not just a Mosaic law concerning one day of the week, nor is it the natural land of Canaan that the people of Israel looked forward to entering, nor is it just a thousand year period of the "kingdom age" many are expecting. The Sabbath Day is a relationship to God, a place where HE IS ABSOLUTE LORD and where the fullness of God is manifested in His people. It is a place of full redemption, release from the curse, where man is again admitted to the garden of Eden, the kingdom of heaven on earth, forever free from the slavery and toil of the flesh and the world. In Hebrews 4:1-11 the shrouds of heaven are drawn aside and our wondering hearts bow in holy awe before the things that are there revealed. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit the apostle penned these blessed words of divine instruction:

*"Now since the same promise of rest is offered to us today, let us be continually on our guard that none of us even looks like failing to attain it. For we too have had a gospel preached to us, as those men had. Yet the message proclaimed to them did no good, because they only heard and did not believe as well. It is only as a result of our **faith and trust** that we experience **that rest**. For He said: As I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest: not because the rest was not prepared — IT HAD BEEN READY SINCE THE WORK OF CREATION WAS COMPLETED, as He says elsewhere in the scriptures, speaking of the seventh day of creation, And God rested on the seventh day from all His works. In the passage above He says, "They shall not enter into my rest." It is clear that some were intended to experience this rest and, since the previous hearers of the message failed to attain to it **because they would not believe God**, He proclaims a further opportunity when He says through David, many years later, "today," just as He had said "today" before. **Today** if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest (this shows that the "rest" he speaks of is neither the seventh day of the week, nor entrance into the land of Canaan!), we should not find God saying, at a much later date, "today." There **still exists**, therefore, A FULL AND COMPLETE REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD. And he who experiences HIS REST is **resting from his own works** as fully as God did from His. Let us then be eager to **know this rest for***

ourselves, and let us beware that no one misses it through falling into the same kind of unbelief as those we have mentioned” (Phillips translation).

In these words “enter into my rest” is the revelation of a deep spiritual mystery and a prophecy of what Christ should bring. The statement, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God,” would be better translated, “There remaineth therefore A KEEPING OF THE SABBATH UPON THE SABBATH” (see Greek-English Lexicons). The word “rest” is translated from the Greek *sabbatismos* — Sabbath. This Sabbath is spoken of as **remaining** in contrast to both the weekly Sabbath and the rest of Israel in Canaan. Read the passage quoted above carefully, and this is clearly evident. If God’s Sabbath was that land of rest that Joshua brought the people of Israel into when he took them over Jordan, then David would not have prophetically spoken of “another day.” From the days of Joshua to King David the people of Israel kept both the weekly Sabbath and enjoyed their rest in the land of Canaan. Yet they failed to ENTER HIS REST! Those were mere shadows and symbols; the real Sabbath rest remained, waiting its time, till Christ the true Joshua should come, and open it to us by Himself entering into it, and enabling us by the impartation of His own victory to also enter in.

Christ is the only one to proclaim, **“Come unto ME, all ye that LABOR and are heavy laden, and I WILL GIVE YOU REST. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find REST UNTO YOUR SOULS”** (Mat. 11:28-29). Paul presents the truth of this powerfully in his epistle to the Colossians, wherein he says, **“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath: which are a SHADOW of things to come, but the body (substance, reality) is of Christ”** (Col. 2:16-17). The Amplified Bible brings it out so beautifully, **“Therefore let no one sit in judgment on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a New Moon or a Sabbath. Such things are only the SHADOW of things that are to come, and they have only a symbolic value. But the REALITY (the substance, the solid fact of what is foreshadowed, the body of it) BELONGS TO CHRIST.”**

Commenting on the passage in chapter four of Hebrews Bill Britton wrote: “Verse ten goes on to tell us that anyone who is *still working at his own works*, in his own power, operating by the natural mind, has not yet entered into God’s rest or God’s Sabbath. Then we have a solemn warning in verse eleven, ‘Therefore,’ he says, meaning, because of what we have just been saying, ‘let us labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.’ Those Israelites that wandered forty years in the wilderness have provided us with a vivid example of how we also can miss the glorious and eternal reality of the kingdom of God if we exhibit the same kind of unbelief. ‘LABOR to enter into His rest.’ How strange the wording of that statement! How can we labor to enter into rest? How can we work toward coming to the place where we stop working? When you try to lay down your own labors, when you attempt to turn loose of the control of your own life and give it over into the hands of God, when you cease to try to perfect yourself and put on the mind of Christ by your own initiative and energy, you will find it to be THE HARDEST WORK YOU HAVE EVER DONE! Yet, this is what the Spirit is calling for. This is how the Spirit is leading and directing us. Labor to enter into rest!”

We labor and strive and struggle to be what God wants us to be. We labor to be perfect, to overcome, to grow up into Christ, to put on the mind of Christ, to do the will of God, to put on incorruption and immortality, to be a son of God. Ah, beloved, how we labor to come out of the bondages of Babylon, to break her traditions and hold over our minds and hearts. How we labor to do everything except what God has commanded us to do! We are to LABOR TO ENTER INTO REST. We are to labor to stop laboring and LET GOD WORK. And in the new creation of the seventh day HE WORKS BY RESTING IN US, by communicating Himself to us in sweet fellowship and in blessed relationship. Would you have God work mightily within you? Would you be changed, transformed, conformed to His image? Don’t work at it! Labor at *resting with God*. Enter into His holy presence, enter through His tabernacle door, enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise; allow Him to draw you onward and inward into the Holiest of all and abide there in

intimacy of fellowship and in vital union with Him and you will discover by wonderful experience how it is that God works by entering in and resting within you. As you cease from your own labors and rest in trusting faith He comes in to dwell in the power of a divine life — to be what He is IN YOU!

The following words by Stephen Kaung bear precious confirmation to this beautiful truth. “Someone else reminded us of the very first sleep mentioned in the Bible and what happened. For this we must go all the way back to Adam. In the beginning God creates Adam; but He cannot find a helpmeet for him; consequently God puts Adam to sleep! Please notice, though, that this is not an unproductive sleep; it is not a sleeping which accomplishes nothing. On the contrary, in Adam’s sleep much is accomplished. God is the One who puts him to sleep; and while he is asleep, God is at work. God takes a rib from Adam and *builds* — He builds a woman with Adam’s rib! Oh, how beautiful if we can see it. Two contrasting pictures are drawn for us here. In the one case are those people who busily engage themselves in all sorts of undertakings; who, with extremely good intention and infinitely hard work, try to do something for God, but all in their own power and wisdom; and the result is, vanity. In the other case can be found those beloved ones of God, those who truly know God. With them, though, it seems as if God puts them to sleep; it seems as though God makes them rest; and while they enter into the rest of God, *God* does the work! And as they are resting in God, He builds a woman. Now we know that Eve is a figure of the church, she is a type of the house of God. Brothers and sisters, we must enter into the rest of God. As we continue in His rest, believing and trusting that God has accomplished the work already — that He is the One who has already done the work — then, at that very moment, in sleep He giveth; and the house of God is verily built!”

God is bringing forth a SABBATH PEOPLE, a people that IS HIS REST in the earth. As God brings His rest into us, and brings us into His rest, causing His rest to be personified in us, even righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, let the nations rage, let the people imagine a vain thing; let the storms of trouble blow, let sorrows spread as a cloud over the land, let the kingdoms of men tremble and fall, let the whole economic and political structure collapse and darkness cover the earth...God’s SABBATH PEOPLE ARE AT REST and unafraid, because they DWELL IN HIM. When men’s hearts fail them for fear in looking after those things that are coming upon the earth, these shall remain calm, cool, and collected, ready to give an encouraging word from the throne to him that is afraid. These saints so become ONE WITH HIS REST that they are undisturbed by the pressures without. They are upheld by His mighty hand, and they shall become a beacon of light to those who stumble in darkness. God is preparing His Sabbath people for the day of trouble and they shall stand in the midst of the land and many shall come to the brightness of their rising. “YE are the light of the world,” Jesus said. That is the same as saying, “YE are the DAY OF THE LORD!” You are God’s Sabbath Day ordained to bring rest to all the weary, troubled, tossed, fearful, and tormented of the world! Christ *in you* is the hope of this glory!

THEIR WORKS FOLLOW THEM

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; *and their works do follow them*” (Rev. 14:13).

Rest from “our labors,” *His works* raised up in us — these are the works that “follow us,” just as signs are said to *follow* those who believe! The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that this glorious gospel “at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them which heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with *signs* and *wonders*, and with divers *miracles*, and *gifts of the Holy Ghost*, according to His will...” Then we read, “These *signs* shall *FOLLOW THEM* that believe...” (Mk. 16:17). When John writes that “their *works* do follow them,” the Greek text reads, “their deeds, business.” Their business is *the Father’s business*; thus we could say of these sons, THEIR MINISTRY FOLLOWS THEM. It is not that they are out “beating the bushes” trying to stir something up for the kingdom of God. Rather, like Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who “walked with God, and was not, for God took him,” the “taking” was the result of his walk with God, it was just naturally that which “followed.” When we cease from our own labors, becoming

workers together with God, results will automatically follow such a resting and relationship with the Father.

Yes, blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from *their labors*. But they do not rest from *work* — for the Father works and the sons do what they see the Father doing. Man is formed for action, and action is essential to his fulfillment. A heaven of rest, where we do nothing but float around in white nightgowns strumming harps and fellowshiping with the saints from the ages, but without work, which, sad to say, is about the highest idea many around us have of the Christian heaven — and not a few of our popular hymns sing too much of that sort of heaven — how soon it would bore and weary us! How little would any son of God in the image of the Father care for such a place! Better far the struggle and challenges of this present walk with God than such meaningless indolence! But no! Such a view is an idle unspiritual fancy and delusion. We are called to be kings and priests unto God, and “they shall reign for the ages of the ages,” says the Spirit. Methinks that reigning is *work!* Reconciling the world is *work!* Subduing the nations is *work!* Restoring all things is *work!* Delivering creation from the bondage of corruption is *work!* To every son of God the Master says, “The *works* that I do shall ye do also; and *greater works* than these shall ye do; because I go to my Father.” Ah, yes, *greater works...because I go to my Father*. These are works out of His resurrection power and His exaltation to the Father’s throne! These are the works that will deliver creation from the bondage of corruption; not just healings and bread and fish multiplied to feed the natural man, but *miracles of incorruption and immortality* that lift creation out of this gross material realm into the life of the Spirit! These are the works that “follow them” who have died in the Lord!

I am sure most of my readers are familiar with the old song, “Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown?” There is no scripture to indicate that the saints will wear “starry crowns,” but there is scripture that is greater by far! It is the privilege of all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to dwell upon the bright hope of this marvelous promise, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever.” There are untold trillions of stars throughout the billions of galaxies known to astronomers. A few years pass away and all things earthly gather the mold of age and the odor of decay as the desert winds blow the swirling sands over the crumbling ruins of ancient empires. But the stars shine on in their glory as in the beginning! Centuries and cycles have gone by, kingdoms have arisen and slowly pass away. Yet the stars’ brightness is not dimmed, nor their force abated. The dew of youth still seems fresh upon them. No faltering motion reveals the decrepitude of age. These shine on in undiminished glory through all the ages of time, for they are the lights of ***the ages***.

Thus shall those wise and blessed sons of God shine who turn the inhabitants of the world to righteousness. Thus shall their ministry and their years roll on from age to age until that wonderful age of the ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times wherein everything in heaven and on earth and throughout all realms is gathered together into one in God’s Christ and God becomes All-in-all. What glories lie beyond this, we cannot yet know, but sonship does not only entitle one to residence in God’s limitless and eternal domain, but to the ownership and rule of that domain. Ah, the sons of God are **heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ their Lord**, who is the heir of **ALL THINGS!** Heaven is not a mansion over the hilltop, nor the gratifying of the needs and desires of this vessel of clay. It is not that which will bring creature comfort. It is not a state of eternal creature enjoyment and rest. The celestial realm is something infinitely higher! It is eminence, power, majesty, glory. It is becoming the same kind of Being as the One who made the worlds, and will bring, not inactive rest with fluttering wings and strumming harps, but activities and accomplishments far surpassing that of earth’s mundane limitations. And it includes kingship and priesthood over God’s eternal and infinite domain. It is dominion and power and influence far beyond that which carnal minds can contemplate or even imagine. Oh, that it were possible to lift men up above the shadows, and give them just a glimpse of something higher! The words of our text are just a seed, but my, what a mighty tree of truth grows from the simple statement, “***Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.***” As we learn to rest from our own soulish works, to become laborers together with God in His great kingdom work, we enter a stage of action, we become active agents in the greatest

development program ever conceived. A whole universe awaits our touch and guiding hand! Let us be about our Father's business!

Chapter 171

The Firstfruits, The Harvest, And The Vintage

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the winepress of the wrath (passion) of God” (Rev. 14:14-19).

We speak the truth in saying that it takes little discussion to convince us that the Harvester in the scene above, or at least He who supervises the reaping of the earth, is none other than Jesus Christ our Lord. We are acquainted with the expression, “the Son of man,” or, “one like unto the Son of man,” or, “one like unto a son of man,” as the Greek text reads here. The expression is used again and again throughout the Gospels and it is always used of our Lord. It was the name with which Jesus loved to call Himself. It denotes the all-overshadowing glory of Him who was made flesh, made a man, made like unto His brethren, and who now has been highly exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

It appears from a close examination of our text that it is God Himself who ordains the harvest, that our Lord Jesus acts as the *supervisor*, and that the work of reaping proper is left to the angels, or the messengers, His servants. That is also the impression we receive from other parts of scripture. In Matthew 13:39 Jesus explains, at the close of the parable of the tares among the wheat, “the reapers *are the angels*.” And in Matthew 24:31 we read, “And He shall *send His angels* with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” So in the scene that the beloved John beholds in holy vision the angels, or messengers, are likewise acting as servants of the one like a son of man. Two of these messengers come out of the temple, out of the most holy place within the body of Christ which is the temple of God; the third messenger in the scene comes from the golden altar, sent forth by the very prayers and worship of the holy priesthood of God. Two of these act as messengers proclaiming that the time is ripe and that it is the exact hour for the harvest of the earth to be gathered in. One of them carries the command directly from God; and he announces to the one like a son of man that it is time to reap and that the hour is come for harvesting.

These details are of great significance! In the first place, we are given to understand that this is an important hour. The harvest is ready, fully ripe, and it must be gathered! It is a very significant hour indeed! All of God’s work in the whole body of Christ, in the entire church of Christ, must be finished, consummated. The second messenger brings a similar message to the messenger who must gather the vintage, the clusters of the vine of the earth. He comes out from the altar and has power over fire. This reveals a mighty *energy* of God at work to reap the vine of the earth and cast it into the winepress of the passion of God! It is impossible to bring the vastness of God’s working into the realm of our human understanding. It is infinitely necessary that all who read these lines yield to the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God that the sacred secrets contained in these sublime vistas may unfold deep within our heart and spirit.

ONE SITTING UPON A CLOUD

“And I looked, and behold a *white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto a son of man...*” (Rev. 14:14).

Since the clouds form and float in the physical heavens, in its spiritual meaning the location of this scene is in the invisible heavens of the Spirit of the Lord. Jesus, when on earth, spoke of Himself as “the Son of man.” And since this one “like a son of man” rides upon a singular cloud and wears a singular golden crown on His head, this one pictures our Lord Jesus Christ who is Himself “the Lord of the Harvest” (Lk. 10:2). The book of Revelation is the *revelation of Jesus Christ*. It is a wonderful thing that throughout this book our Lord Jesus appears again and again under many different figures and symbols. Each time He has a habit of disappearing, but always returns. Even in the days of His flesh, He appeared and went away and came again on various occasions. Just a little while after the star had shone and the angels had sung, by divine direction, He fled to Egypt. But ere long, came another message, “Arise and take the young child and His mother and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead which sought the young child’s life.” Again, “when Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee,” another retreat. But read on: “And leaving Nazareth He came and dwelt in Capernaum.” When John the Baptist was silenced, Jesus left His obscure village and came to the front. In removing John, the adversary snuffed out a candle, and behold, the sun rose!

Next, He went down into a tomb, and that seemed to be the end. But He entered that tomb, not as a captive, but as a conqueror; and after lying there three days like a warrior taking his rest on the field of his triumph, He appeared in the power of resurrection as Lord of heaven and earth. He ascended up to heaven in a cloud and again disappears, and seems to have gone away forever. But in chapter two of the Revelation John sees Him in the midst of the candlesticks having eyes as a flame of fire, with feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. He disappears and appears again as the Lamb in the throne. The Lamb disappears and He reappears as one sitting upon a white horse and He goes forth conquering and to conquer. He appears again as our great high priest ministering on behalf of His elect at the golden altar in the temple of the heavens; and so He disappears and appears again and again as He marches on in triumph accomplishing His great purpose in the earth, in His people, and throughout the eternal heavens!

And now, in our present vision, we stand in spirit with John and behold Him riding upon a cloud! And notice — it is not the dark storm-cloud of judgment, as many suppose, but the *white cloud of glory*. From the dawn of history the way in which God has displayed His glory has been in the form of a cloud. The *glory cloud* of God’s presence has taken different shapes and different sizes on various occasions. When it was time for the children of Israel to begin their exodus out of Egypt, the glory of God took the form of a pillar of fire enshrouded within a cloud. “*And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people*” (Ex. 13:21-22).

What did the glory of God signify every time it appeared? The glory cloud of God signified the unique and manifest presence of God! It always told the people of Israel, when it appeared, that Yahweh was uniquely present and manifest in this place, at this time, for a special purpose. When the glory of God as a cloud led the children of Israel out of Egypt, it signified to the people that God was with them in a very real and sovereign way. “*And the Lord went before them in a pillar of a cloud.*” God was **in** the cloud! The almighty God Himself dwelt in that cloud by day and in the fiery pillar by night. That strange pillar of cloud and fire was the visible manifestation of His presence and glory! While Israel walked in the light of His fiery presence, no calamity could harm them, no enemy could attack them, no evil could befall them, nor plague come nigh their dwelling. God was with them in sovereign power in all their marches! “*And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat*” (Lev. 16:2).

When the cloud came down out of heaven and rested on the top of mount Sinai, it signified that God in a unique sense had come out of the realm of invisible spirit to meet with the children of Israel in His manifestation on the earth plane. When they saw the cloud move into the most holy place in the tabernacle and later in the temple, it signified again that God in a special sense was taking up residence within that worship structure within the nation of Israel. The light that shone in the Holiest of all behind the temple curtain of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, laced with threads of gold and figures of cherubim, was not the beams of the seven-fold candlestick of the holy place, nor even the radiance of the sun in the outer court. It was the glory light of God's own divine majesty! Through time the Israelites called that glory cloud of God the *Shekinah*. The word *Shekinah* means "to dwell." And since the glory cloud always signified that God was present at the place where the cloud appeared, to dwell in a special sense, they called it the *Shekinah* or *dwelling glory* of God!

The truth that I would now draw to your attention is the fact that it was this same *Shekinah*, this very same glory cloud, which the eleven disciples beheld in spell-bound astonishment on the crest of the mount of Olives that blessed day when the Lord Jesus ascended into mid-air and suddenly a *bright cloud*, like a chariot of God, bore Him speedily away, concealing Him from mortal gaze. That cloud intrigues me! "*And a cloud received Him out of their sight.*" "Received Him out of" is one word in the Greek meaning "to take under." It signifies to take up by placing one's self underneath, in the style of a hiker carrying a backpack, or as a waiter holds a tray. It is one of Luke's medical terms. Weymouth in his translation puts it thus: the cloud "closing beneath Him, hid Him from sight." Do you get the picture? Jesus was *riding upon the cloud* and that is why it hid him from their view. He was on top of, or upon the cloud, just as in John's vision on Patmos! And don't tell me that was the sort of cloud which spills the rain and from which the lightning flashes. Oh, no! That cloud is the cloud of the glory of God, the *Shekinah*, described in Ezekiel 1:4 as "a great cloud...and brightness." It was this cloud which Ezekiel saw while he was with the exiles in Babylon by the Chebar Canal. The glory cloud is described as the "chariot" of Yahweh, composed of myriads of celestial beings, the spirits of just men made perfect, the armies which are in heaven, the heavenly hosts of the spiritual world. "Behold," declares the prophet, "the Lord *rideth up the cloud*, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it (the cloud)" (Isa. 19:1). The Resident within the shimmering cloud of glory is just the Lord Himself, the source of the dazzling light, for it is HE who causes the celestial host to shine forth, thus forming the cloud and manifesting His glory thereby.

Surely we can see by this that the cloud which hovered over Israel in the wilderness; the cloud which rested upon the glorious tabernacle of old; the cloud which dwelt between the gleaming cherubim in the most holy place; the cloud which filled Solomon's temple until the ministers could not minister by reason of the blazing glory; the cloud which came upon and enveloped the virgin girl Mary as the power of the highest "overshadowed" her when she came to be with child; the cloud which enveloped the Son of God and revealed the glory of His sonship on the mount of Transfiguration, and out from which the Father spoke just as He did in the tabernacle of old; that cloud, precious friend of mine, **is the very same cloud** that received the Lord Jesus into its midst and out of the sight of mortal eyes! The cloud that received the firstborn Son of God out of the sight of those startled disciples certainly was no ordinary rain cloud which happened to be blown across a torturous sky. It was the blazing *Shekinah* cloud which had always revealed the divine majesty of God from time immemorial! It was the cloud of myriads of holy ones from the other side, out of the heavens of God's Spirit, even the great "cloud of witnesses" by which we too are compassed about. And this is the cloud John beheld in spirit that day on Patmos, and the Lord of glory was *riding the cloud* just as He did in ancient times and from eternity. Contrary to what some believe, I do not see that we, the living saints on earth, are either that cloud or the one like a son of man riding upon the cloud. We clearly have an altogether different role in this enthralling drama, and we will come to that later on.

Now, lest we should miss the deep mystery this unveils, I would emphasize again that the one cloud points unerringly to the singular glory of the Head of the body of sons, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Here I wish to point out a most significant point of scripture which has entirely been overlooked by

most Bible students and nearly all preachers and teachers. All the way through the scriptures, from the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel, to the ascension of Jesus from the mount of Olives, God consistently manifested Himself in ONE GLORY CLOUD. There was always just ONE SINGLE CLOUD! The Lord Jesus ascended in **one single cloud** of God's glory — the very **same** cloud in which He had manifested His presence to His people on earth throughout the long ages of time! Now this cloud was composed of many "droplets" of water, as it were; that is, many celestial beings, but together they composed only one cloud. They all represented only one manifestation of God!

It is when we come to the prophecies concerning the Son of man **coming in His kingdom** that we see a distinct difference! For suddenly in addition to one cloud we are introduced to a **plurality of clouds!** Let us see! Christ departed this earth in *one cloud*. He comes again in *many clouds!* It was the blessed seer of Patmos who announced: "**Behold, He cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see Him**" (Rev. 1:7). Daniel in vision beheld Him thus: "**I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man came with the clouds of heaven...and there was given unto Him dominion**" (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus Himself prophesied, "**And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory**" (Mat. 24:30). And again, "**Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**" (Mat. 26:64). Finally, the apostle Paul relates this dramatic experience: "**Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds...and so shall we ever be with the Lord**" (I Thes. 4:17). In the CLOUDS! More than one cloud. Many clouds. A great company of clouds!

Why are there many clouds attending Christ's coming in the fullness of His kingdom, and what are these clouds? Let us not forget for one moment that we are dealing with the *cloud of God's glory, presence, and power* — the Shekinah — the cloud of His "dwelling." When the firstborn Son of God was in the world John said of Him, "**We beheld His glory**" (Jn. 1:14). Peter reveals to us what is really meant by their beholding the glory of the Son. "**For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory (out of the glory cloud), saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount**" (II Pet. 1:16-18). Ah, it is clear — the glory cloud that enveloped Jesus and His disciples upon the holy mount was the glory of HIS manifest sonship! "**This is my beloved SON.**"

How very significant that at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry He said, "**Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also shall be one in us...and the glory which Thou gavest me (manifest sonship) I have given them...I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...that they may be with me where I am (in His relationship of sonship to the Father); that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me**" (Jn. 17:20-24). And this is the crux of the whole matter! From the dawn of creation's light until Jesus stepped upon this planet, God manifested to His creation in a *singular way* His own glory. He, the eternal God, exhibited His presence in the form of one glory cloud! But as Jesus approached the cross, and the glorious events to unfold thereafter, He disclosed the grand truth that God purposed from eternity to SHARE HIS GLORY WITH A VAST COMPANY OF SONS...the glorious body which is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all!

"**For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God**" (Rom. 8:18-19). "**But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord**" (II Cor. 3:18). "**When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory**" (Col. 3:4). "**That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you**

unto His kingdom and glory" (I Thes. 2:12). "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing **many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). "I...also am a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the **glory that shall be revealed**" (I Pet. 5:1). "But the God of all grace, who hath **called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus...make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you**" (I Pet. 5:10). Oh, the wonder of it!

What, then, are those clouds with which, and in which, the Christ comes? Why, bless your heart, WE ARE! He comes with and in many clouds! There is only one other group or plurality of objects of which it is stated that Christ come "with" or "in" them, and that is — the SAINTS! The Holy Spirit of inspiration is very careful to tell us that He comes "with" clouds. And He also tells us that He comes "with" His saints! "To the end He may establish your hearts...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **W-I-T-H ALL HIS SAINTS**" (I Thes. 3:13). Jude says, "And Enoch also...prophesied...saying, Behold, the Lord cometh **W-I-T-H TEN THOUSANDS OF SAINTS**" (Jude 14). The Amplified Bible is helpful when it reads, "Behold, the Lord comes **W-I-T-H MYRIADS OF HOLY ONES.**" But the interlinear reading from the Emphatic Diaglott gives the clearest of all renderings from the Greek text, "**Lo, comes Lord I-N HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF!**" "Myriads of HIMSELF!" All of them begotten out of His life, all of them partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, filled with His mind, matured in His life. **Myriads of Himself**, of His own kind, born of His seed, a many brethren company of *sons of God*. The apostle Paul once expressed the truth in this way, "When He shall come to be glorified **IN HIS SAINTS**, and to be admired **IN ALL THEM** that believe **in that day**" (II Thes. 1:10). John the beloved sees this same scene in wonder-filled vision and speaking in prophetic language writes, "Behold, He cometh **WITH CLOUDS**; and every eye shall see Him." Oh, the mystery of it!

If only I could make men see that our Lord Jesus Christ is *the cloud*, that is, the glory of the Father, and each son of God is *putting on the cloud* which He is. In the Old Testament days God was revealed in the cloud of His people out of the invisible realm of spirit. But now God is raising up His glory upon a people right here on earth! There are, in fact, many callings and various orders of the Lord's people in both the heavenly and the earthly realms. God has sons, Christ has a glorious bride, and there is a vast household of servants of the Lord on many planes and in different orders. Each and all of these constitute dimensions of the revelation of the Lord! It is a vast kingdom, and just as there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars, and the stars themselves differ in glory, so are there many clouds of glory. There are small clouds, large clouds, bright clouds, covering clouds, rain clouds, and many more. And when He comes, on whatever plane He comes in the revelation of Himself, He comes with these clouds!

These things I write and these truths I set before you that your spiritual eyes might be lifted far above the dimness of tradition to behold the realities in the heavens of the Spirit of our God. And may our Father help all who read these lines to understand that though the Lord Jesus has shared His glory with us, His younger brethren, yet He retains a glory of His own just as we each possess a sphere of glory that pertains to us. Oh, child of God, have you not considered that the glory of God is infinite, it is something you can give away, you can share, you can impart, and yet it is not diminished? It is like the loaves and the fishes that Jesus multiplied, five thousand can be fed and there is more at the end than there was in the beginning! Oh, yes! Jesus has given us His glory, He has multiplied His cloud upon us, and yet He is more glorious than before! And there are those times, as with Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, when the Lord Jesus appears in His own singular glory and reveals Himself in the majesty of His Headship. He has, on occasion, appeared to me, and spoken to me, out of His own identity and personality, apart from that of my precious brethren. It was just the Lord Jesus Himself! I have known many brethren who have been so visited by, spoken to and ministered to by the Lord Jesus Christ. Is that not what John saw that day so long ago when He beheld one like a son of man upon a white cloud? Not many clouds, this time, but one cloud — His very own person, purpose, and glory!

THE CROWNED ONE

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto a son of man, *having on his head a golden crown*” (Rev. 14:14).

The most common term rendered “crown” in the New Testament is the Greek word *stephanos*. Our popular name “Stephen” is derived from this word, and this crown was usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches, or the like. It was granted to winners in the Pan-Hellenic games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service — especially of military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having “won” the maiden as his bride. This crown always denotes A VICTOR’S CROWN — the crown of an OVERCOMER! How appropriate that we should read of the chief overcomer, the Lord Jesus, that He has upon His head a *golden stephanos*. A GOLDEN STEPHANOS! A GOLDEN VICTOR’S CROWN! Gold speaks of the divine nature, and how true that both He and we are only able to fully overcome by the life and power of the divine nature! Truly He overcame all things, including the last enemy which is death, and has been highly exalted to the throne of His Father and now offers a place with Him there to all His overcoming brethren!

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 particular areas of authority and dominion. “*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.

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 *vicegerent* — 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. This 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 and destiny 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, 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 tomorrow nor 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 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 never took that right by force — but He receives the right when I yield it up unto Him.

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!**” 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, as 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 who was slain! It is HE who has earned the crowns, for HE and He alone is our salvation, our life, our righteousness, our wisdom, our power, *our all!* He Himself is our FULL AND TRUE REWARD! The Lord Himself is OUR CROWN!

I think that it is a scene sublime 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*” (Rev. 19:11-16). Yes, my beloved, this is our Lord, even Jesus the Christ, and He comes wearing MANY CROWNS! Here the Victor who is King of kings and Lord of lords makes His glorious appearance crowned by all those making up His heavenly army. 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!

And yet, wonder of wonders, in our text we see the one like unto a son of man *having on His head a golden crown*. One crown, not many! What can it mean? It signifies His own glory, the glory that He gives us, but the glory that is uniquely HIS, as the Firstborn among many brethren who in all things **has preeminence**. I know no words, be they many or few, that could be more meaningful than these, for HE IS THE KING ETERNAL, THE ONLY WISE GOD, AND OUR SAVIOUR! He is crowned in His own right long before we cast our crowns before Him!

THE ANGEL OUT OF THE TEMPLE

“*And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice unto him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe*” (Rev. 14:15).

Earlier in chapter fourteen we met three angels, each bearing a message to the inhabitants of the earth-realm. *Another angel* now appears, the first of a second series of three, and styled “another,” not by comparison with Him who sits upon the white cloud, but by comparison with the three angels previously spoken of in the sixth, eighth, and ninth verses of the chapter. He is called an “angel” with reference to his *mission*, not with reference to his nature. He is not a shining personage with wings flying through the atmosphere. The symbol stands for the issuing forth of the **word of God**. Each messenger represents the coming forth of a powerful proclamation of the Spirit! This angel, or messenger, is said to come *out from the temple* — that is, out of the *naos*, out of the innermost shrine of the temple, the most holy place; out from the deepest depths of the divine spirit, and out from the manifest presence of the Lord in the temple of His body — and this truth is important, for it shows that this is a message, a word, a revelation, a proclamation coming forth right out of the heart of God in His called and chosen elect. This word is as a prayer, as a prophecy, as a mighty declaration by the Spirit unto the Lord Jesus Himself, just as one might speak by the Spirit on behalf of a sick man and command, “Lord Jesus, *heal him!*” Only this command to the Lord is thus: “*Send forth Thy sickle and reap... for the harvest of the earth is ripe!*” Is not this the very fulfillment of the instructions the Lord Himself has given us — “*The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: PRAY ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that HE would send forth laborers into His harvest*” (Lk. 10:2).

The wise man said that there is a time for everything. The day, the hour, the moment has now arrived; and, as usual in the Revelation, the message of the Spirit is communicated by a messenger. The intimation that the hour is come is grounded upon the fact that the harvest about to be gathered in is *fully ripe*. Some versions render it “overripe,” but the translation, though literal, may suggest a wrong idea. God’s time for working is always right, not wrong; and not late, but right on time. The word points to the issue of *urgency* — the hour has fully come and there can be no delay! The word in the Greek actually means *dry, hard*; the soft juices of the ripening state have been absorbed and the time of its fullness has come. Thus summoned by the Spirit to the work, the Lord Jesus enters upon the reaping without delay. “*He that sat on the cloud cast His sickle into the earth; and the earth was reaped.*”

SEND THY SICKLE

“And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, *Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe*” (Rev. 14:15).

“*Send Thy sickle and reap,*” are the words of the messenger. This is the literal rendering of the Greek, and the word used is intended by the Spirit to lead our thoughts to the words of the Lord Jesus, “*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest.*” Again, “*The Son of man shall send His messengers, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend...then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (Mat. 13:41-43). So also the matter is stated in a parable peculiar to Mark. “*So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately He sendeth the sickle, because the harvest is come*” (Mk. 4:26-29).

We have failed to understand the word “send” in reference to the sickle because we also failed to understand that the sickle is a **symbol** standing for a people. As diamonds are dug from the depths of the earth, so the truth is dug from the depths of the mind of the Lord. Therefore let us UNDERSTAND! The “One sitting upon the cloud” is our Lord Jesus Christ. “He” also is the reaper. The “angels” with their proclamations signify the utterance of the revelation of the Lord by the Spirit out from the temple of His body. The One like a son of man uses a “sickle” to harvest the “grain” of the earth. He is not the sickle, but He *uses* the sickle. Therefore the elect of God are not the One

sitting on the cloud, for the mystic “sickle” signifies the actual instrument of reaping, that is, the laborers, the messengers, the called and chosen elect of God, the new corporate man, the manchild, the 144,000, the manifest sons of God ordained and sent forth to gather the harvest. The symbols change a little from scene to scene, but that is always how it is with the symbols in parables, as you will clearly see upon a study of the parables of our Lord in the four Gospels.

THE HARVEST

“Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for *the harvest of the earth is ripe*. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Rev. 14:15-16).

We will understand a great mystery when we understand that every age ends with a harvest. Harvest is the time of maturity and fullness when each seed, having sprouted, releasing its life, and having passed through all the various stages of growth and development, finally **reproduces itself** many fold — a vast harvest! Harvest is a time of reaping rather than sowing — a time of gathering fruit. The harvest of the kingdom of Judah serves as a type of the harvest of this, our age. Our Lord’s words to His disciples as He sent them forth, during His ministry to that church-nation, should be carefully remembered, as giving proof that their special work then was **reaping**, and **not sowing**. He said to them, “*Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest: and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal*” (Jn. 4:35-36). As the chief reaper in that harvest (as He also is in this one), the Lord said to the under-reapers, His sickle, “*I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men (the patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings) labored, and ye entered into their labors*” — to reap the fruits of those centuries of effort.

In the Israelite harvest, the Lord, rather than to make goats into sheep, sought the blinded and scattered sheep of Israel, calling for all who *already were His sheep*, that they might hear His voice and follow Him. These sheep were the *final product* of all God’s dealings in that age. They constituted the FULLNESS that the revelation and life of that age could produce. They became the *embodiment* and *personification* of all the truth God had planted in men’s hearts from the days of Moses until Christ. They were indeed the **grain**, the **fruit**, the **harvest** at the end of the age!

Another and larger sowing took place at the dawn of our present age. On a certain day some Greeks approached the disciples of Jesus with the request, “Sirs, we would see Jesus.” This request was promptly carried to Jesus by Andrew and Philip, to which our Lord gave this strange and very remarkable reply, “*Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*” (Jn. 12:24). In this cryptic statement Jesus likened Himself to a seed, the “grain of wheat” that was sown in the earth to fall into the ground and die. Jesus, the Son of the living God, would be sown as a seed and be raised again. Jesus was the first of a new kind of God-man, and not only was He raised out of the tomb of physical death, but in centuries yet to come THIS SEED would produce a vast harvest of God-men in His exact image and likeness.

No seed is raised from the earth as just a singular seed, there is always an increase, the natural law of progression being “*first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.*” Only one seed was planted in the earth, and the Christ who came out of that Jewish tomb was **not the harvest** — merely the **blade** breaking the ground. The multitude that will appear in the time of harvest, first the firstfruits, then the full harvest, will be *the seed of the seed*, the increase, everyone bearing the image and likeness of that CHRIST SEED which was planted in death. It is HIS LIFE that sprouted even higher on the day of Pentecost and has been developing in the body of Christ throughout the past twenty centuries. The “much fruit” will be a vast company in the time of harvest in whom the fullness of His life has been perfectly formed. John, his soul aflame with inspiration wrote, “*Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*” (I Jn. 3:2). When He shall appear, when He shall be revealed, unveiled, we SHALL BE LIKE HIM! Wonderfully LIKE HIM!

EXACTLY like Him! In His image! In His likeness, in the omniscience of His wisdom, in the purity of His truth, in the omnipotence of His power, in the immutability of His love, in the faithfulness of His purpose, full of His grace, His kindness, and His unending mercy! Since Jesus, the Son of God, is the **seed** which was sown, and the **life** that has grown, nothing short of this can be the **harvest!** The corporate body of Christ shall be **like Him** for He shall be perfectly formed in them all! That is the mystery. That is the harvest.

Commenting on this response of Jesus to the Greeks, George Hawtin wrote, "I am certain that the Lord's reply was an enigma to those men to whom He spoke. The Greeks looking for Jesus could hardly be expected to comprehend a mystery so deep and eternal. They made their earnest request, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," and He responded with His mysterious dissertation. We are not told whether Jesus ever consented to have those Greeks interview Him, but in answer to their request He gave them the oblique reply about the grain of wheat falling into the earth to die, then to be raised again and bring forth a vast harvest. His message to them was simply this: If they saw Jesus at that time they would see only one seed, one grain in the image of God — the man Christ Jesus. But there would be more, much more to CHRIST than appeared to them that day! A whole universal field of ripened grain was to follow in His likeness, born of that original seed, imbued with the very same life, raised in the same resurrection, who would be "the sons of God" and "the Christ" even as He is a son of God and the Christ of God."

Jesus testified, *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth (pruneth) it, that it may bring forth **more fruit**"* (Jn. 15:1-2). The church, the vineyard of God! Surely this truth alone is sufficient to settle it in our hearts that the church's day **must end in a harvest of many sons brought to glory!** If we are the planting of the Lord, then NOTHING SHALL PREVENT THE GREAT HUSBANDMAN FROM BRINGING HIS CROP TO MATURITY!

If we have considered the matter as we ought, we will surely see that this is not the hour to be looking for doom and gloom and for the devil to take over the world, or for Jesus to come and "evacuate" His saints away to heaven. The devil has run rough shod over the earth for six thousand long years, since that fateful day way back there in Eden. The night has been long and dark. But, thank God! a new day is now dawning in the earth. The night is almost over. The devil's day is not dawning — the day of the Lord is upon us! The day of the great antichrist is not knocking at the door — it is almost over! How truly the creation groans, and travails in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God! Oh, the foul lives, the defiled consciences, the troubled minds, the broken hearts, the sick bodies, the crying oppressions, the multiplied miseries of our race! What a world of sin and woe is contained in this one word — *war!* What famines and pestilences, storms and earthquakes, floods and fires, revolutions and massacres inflict pain, sorrow, and death upon millions of the inhabitants of the world! The deepest and truest compassion for the sufferings of humanity must prompt the cry, *"How long, O Lord?"* And far away in the depths of my spirit today I hear the glad cry of the messenger from out of the temple, *"Thrust in Thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe!"* And apart altogether from the joy and glory that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ, the saints must long for His unveiling **THAT CREATION ITSELF MAY BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION, INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD!**

While we thus stand, as it were on Pisgah's heights, and view the grand prospect just before us, our hearts rejoice in the Lord's great plan, with unspeakable joy; and while we realize that much of God's church is still in the wilderness of humiliation and testing, and that the hour of her actual triumph still lies before us, yet, seeing the indications of its rapid approach, and by faith already discerning the dawn of the New Day, we lift up our hearts and rejoice, knowing that the great husbandman is faithfully and assiduously watching over His vineyard and that He fully expects and daily works toward a vast and glorious harvest! Don't think for one moment, my precious brother, my dear sister, that the harvest pertains exclusively to the manifest sons of God. Oh, no! They are but the

FIRSTFRUITS! They are not, in fact, the harvest itself — the harvest is that which *follows* the gleanings of the firstfruits! We must not confuse the two. We will speak more about this in a moment, but suffice it to say, the harvest concerns the church of Jesus Christ. Our wonderful and glorious Head has a marvelous plan for His church, and He *will* sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and He *shall* present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; for it *shall* yet be holy and without blemish before Him. Oh, what fullness of blessing and cause for joy and thanksgiving this truth contains!

It's harvest time! "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He may *send forth* laborers into His harvest." *Speak* to the Man on the cloud that He *send forth* His sickle into the earth, and reap: for the time is come to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. That is what I am praying for in these days. I am praying for the sons of God. I am praying for the church, the body of Christ. I am praying for all who know Him and love His appearing. I am praying for *you*, my beloved. I am praying for a mighty harvest in these significant days!

FROM FIRSTFRUITS TO HARVEST

What is the harvest? The vast majority of Bible commentators say that it is God's wrath and judgment upon the nations. Generally they refer to the "blood flowing even unto the horses' bridles" as the portrayal of horrid war and great massacre. I have no hesitation whatever in telling you that the harvest is *not* a work of judgment! That is proved by its being the same in kind as the firstfruits which have preceded it! Such as the firstfruits are, such is the harvest. Let me explain.

The picture in the first part of chapter fourteen of the Revelation is that of the Lamb upon mount Zion and the one hundred and forty-four thousand with Him. As John beholds the scene, he is told that the 144,000 upon mount Zion are those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, who have the Father's name written on their foreheads, and they are *redeemed from among men*, being the FIRSTFRUITS unto God and to the Lamb. The term "firstfruits" is drawn from the well-known offering of "firstfruits" under the Old Testament law of Israel, in which the first portion of any harvest was gathered prior to the full harvest and dedicated to God, in token that the whole belonged to Him, and was recognized as His. These firstfruits were chosen because they were the very first of the grain in the field to ripen. Hence it always implies that something of the same kind will follow it. If there was a field of wheat, the firstfruits, the very first of the ripened grain, would be offered up to God, following which the entire field of wheat would eventually come to the same condition of maturity, though not offered up to God in the same special way for His unique purpose. Thus, the 144,000 are the *firstfruits* of God's redemption, the very first of all the Lord's people to enter into full and complete redemption in spirit, soul, and body, and into the full likeness, image, and stature of Jesus Christ as sons of the Father! Many have supposed that the manifest sons of God are to be eternally unique, different from all the rest of God's people. But such cannot be! The firstfruits are not firstfruits because they are *different*, nor because they are *better*; they are firstfruits simply because they are FIRST!

They are firstfruits — meaning that following this the full harvest will be brought before God, gathered into His barn (kingdom), for the *harvest* must come as well as the *firstfruits*. It is significant to note here that just before the ministry of the three angels we are shown a wonderful picture of the firstfruits with the Lamb upon mount Zion. So what follows the messages of the three angels? Ah, immediately we see the dramatic picture of the gathering in of the full harvest! "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and *reap*: for the time has come for Thee to *reap*; for the *harvest* of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the *earth (realm) was reaped*" (Rev. 14:15-16). The reaping of the "earth-realm" can mean nothing else but that the Lord's people who have dwelt for ages in the carnal church systems of men have at last shaken off the shackles of religious Babylon, have been dealt with mightily by God, and been purged, cleansed, purified, refined, tested, tried, and transformed into the image of Christ! What a harvest that will be! In our

text only the **fact** of this great moving of God is revealed; in chapter sixteen, however, under the outpouring of the “seven last plagues,” we are shown in great detail the precise **processes** of God by which this wonderful work is accomplished! It is indeed wonderful!

Between the firstfruits and the harvest we have the three angels’ messages. The Holy Spirit bears witness within my spirit to the truth that the great purpose of the three angels’ messages is to PREPARE THE HARVEST FOR REAPING! This is the positive side of God’s dealing with His people. It is a three-fold word sent to the Lord’s church unto all the ends of the earth, breaking up the fallow ground, and preparing the hearts of all to experience the fullness of redemption already revealed within the firstfruits! On the other hand, the “seven last plagues” signify the working of God’s left hand, His hand of correction and purging, with consuming fire, by which all the roots, stones, and weeds of the false teachings of man and the ways of the flesh and the world are rooted out of men’s lives so that there can be indeed a bountiful harvest!

In this great hour God is calling, separating, dealing with, and consecrating His firstfruits. And soon there will follow the harvest! What can we do in this significant time? All who have received the call to sonship are yielding themselves under the mighty hand of God. How we yearn for the full manifestation of the firstfruits! How we long for the eventual harvest! And yet we cannot *make* any of this happen! But we can rest patiently with the great Husbandman of the vineyard, in full assurance of the mighty working of His life within. As the apostle James has exhorted us, “*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming (Gr: manifest presence) of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming (manifest presence) of the Lord draweth nigh*” (James 5:7-8).

Chapter 172

The Firstfruits, The Harvest, And The Vintage (continued)

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, *Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.* And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Rev. 14:14-16).

This beautiful vision is reminiscent of some of the parables of our Lord. The first parable given by Jesus is the one commonly called the Parable of the Sower. It is one of the *kingdom parables* setting forth the principles of the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. Jesus says of it that it is the parable of parables and unless it is understood other parables cannot be. You must realize that all the parables in the Gospels are about the kingdom of heaven and this parable is the first. It is the starting point of Christ’s teaching about the mystery of the kingdom.

We read, “And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: and some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among the thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit...who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside. But he that receiveth seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Mat. 13:3-9, 18-23).

The very first word of this parable challenges attention — “Behold — Harken!” The final phrase repeats the challenge — “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” My earnest prayer to God is that He will teach all who read these lines **how to hear**. As we hearken to hear, may the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God make clear to our hearts that this significant parable is not just the Parable of the Sower, nor yet of the Seed, but also a parable of the SOILS. It is about the soil of a man’s understanding and response into which the word of the kingdom of God falls. “And there were gathered unto Him great multitudes” — *there was the soil!* Why had they come? Some from curiosity — idle followers of the crowd. Some came from self-seeking motives — it might be profitable to cultivate the company of this rising star and His associates. Some came as revolutionaries — to make Him king, to use Him as a flag of revolt against Rome. Some came in quick but shallow enthusiasm, others in deep longing, yet others drawn irresistibly by the Father, and others they knew not why. How would they receive His words? As variously as the soil of a Galilean hillside receives the seed! Not in vain had Jesus watched the sower tramping his furrows. He would tell the multitude a story about themselves. Being under no illusions He would tell them just what chance His teaching would have with them, and why in some it would find no lodgment, at least not in their present condition before being dealt with by the mighty hand of God. “And He spake many things...saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow...”

Ah, there stood the Sower in their midst, and the words He spoke unto them were the Seed! By that word He was cast into their earth, into that earth which *they were*, He spake as never man spake, the words of eternal life, the word of the kingdom of heaven, of a higher plane of life available to men, even the inner life of the spirit. Although no one can, with the natural mind, understand the level of life belonging to the kingdom of heaven within, a man can understand the level of life on which he lives. Everyone can see the nature of life in this outward world! He can see through his outer senses what is done by people on this level of life: and he can, if he looks at himself, see what he does. He will then see what life is like at this level. And I do not hesitate to say that neither life nor himself can be different *at this level*.

The parable of the Sower is, then, about a man who casts Seed upon the ground. The Seed is “the word of the kingdom.” There is a gradual ascent in quality of the four types of character revealed in the parable. Some of that Seed, some of that kingdom word, falls upon the wayside, or on the trail around the planting area. This first soil is impenetrable. The second, the stony ground, is a soil that has been plowed, but not deeply. Thirdly, some of the Seed falls into the weedy and thorny ground, which is an area that has been cultivated and can bring forth, it is rich earth with possibilities of a generous harvest, but it has not been tended enough to get rid of all the weeds. It is a hearing of high potential, of genuine vision, but this realm is not wholehearted, for it is held in reserve, uncrucified. This ground exists in a state of duality, double mindedness, divided between the irreconcilable loyalties of spirit and soul, of God and self. And last, but not least, there is the good ground that brings forth an eventual harvest, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold of the Seed that is planted in it.

Now hear this — that planting ground in its various conditions is not just different individuals — that planting ground is also right within each one of us! It is completely impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this foundational and fundamental truth: YOU ARE THE SOIL into which is cast the word of the kingdom of God! This is why Jesus declared, “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU!” It is here, O child of God, that the majesty, magnificence, glory, power, and dominion of the everlasting kingdom of God has its beginning. The Most High God, full of wisdom, grace, and faithfulness is preparing a people in the lowly estates of this present evil world who are destined to reign with Christ in His throne, first over all this planet, and then from universe to universe. Hear me! These present days of preparation in the lowest parts of the earth are fraught with infinite importance and eternal significance. It is here and now that preparations are to be made. You are mistaken, dear ones, if you suppose that the Lord has paid the high price of Calvary and wrought mightily by the sovereignty of His omnipotent Spirit within your life merely to whisk you away to some golden street to strum a harp forever! Oh, no! He has planted a *kingdom seed* within the soil of your life to bring forth in this earth and in the physical universe A GREAT KINGDOM HARVEST! It’s not about heaven — it’s about the HARVEST!

All of these kinds of soil lie between our ears, for they all represent levels on which we **hear**, **receive**, **understand**, and **appropriate** the word of the kingdom! It truly is “all in your mind!” In each case Jesus says that the ground, of whatever kind it is, is “the man that **heareth** the word.” So the ground relates to hearing and also to understanding! How you “hear” the word, how you “understand” the word of the kingdom reveals what kind of ground the Seed is falling upon. Every man, every woman, has within his or her understanding a wayside area, a stony area, a thorny area, and a good or responsive area. The minister of Christ, whoever he or she may be, casts the kingdom word upon your mind, into your understanding. As the word is ministered in the power of the Spirit it is just the Lord Himself walking among you throwing the word out, the truth of the kingdom, scattering it abroad upon your mind; but the word lands not in just one place, but upon all four areas of your thinking and understanding.

The fault was not in the Sower, nor yet in the Seed, but in the Soil. The problem lay in the factor of response, for the hearer was in a condition *incapable of either receiving or nurturing the word*. Let us meditate briefly upon the Seed that fell by the wayside. The “wayside” or “pathway” is the well-worn outer part of your conscious mind where you have already pre-set, pre-conditioned, and pre-determined what truth is — and woe to anyone who dares to tell you that what the scriptures or the Holy Spirit says is different! In this area the kingdom is unable to sprout, gain a foothold, develop, and become established *because the ground is not fit for the Seed*. It is as unreceptive as the uncultivated roadside, where, finding no root, it brings forth nothing, but is carried off by the birds of the air — the thought processes and carnal reasonings of the natural mind and human understanding!

Let me illustrate. Every one of us has received Seed in that area — in that condition, mentality, and state of being. Some who read these lines were brought up in a background that taught you that Pentecost was past, that speaking in tongues was not for today, that the gifts of the Spirit ended with the early church, along with the ministries of apostles and prophets. You had heard that drum-beat all your life, you were versed in all the arguments and the scriptures and were convinced that your pastor and your church were right. Then by God’s divine appointment a word came to you — and it landed first on your wayside. Somebody told you that there was a supernatural experience available today in the Holy Spirit. They had experienced it! When that Seed came into your mind you automatically rejected it. You didn’t need to give it any thought or consideration — instinctively you judged it to be erroneous. You *knew* better! But actually you knew nothing at all except what you had been conditioned to believe. So the adversary came and grabbed that Seed and fed himself upon it and you were left barren.

But thank God — the Sower didn’t throw just *one* seed out! He cast a whole handful. And some of that Seed went a little deeper into your mind and consciousness and it got into your stony area. It’s an area just beyond your pre-set, pre-conceived, and pre-conditioned ideas that’s been broken up in a shallow way. It is my understanding that “stony” in the land of Israel is not a concentration of pebbles, nor a scattering of larger rocks, but a layer of hardpan. Sometimes it takes dynamite to break the stuff up. There is a thin layer of soil on top of the hardpan, but the roots of the plants can’t get deep enough — they can’t penetrate the hardpan. So the Seed will germinate but there isn’t enough soil for the plant to grow to maturity. That area is a realm of half-heartedness. Out on the wayside you dismissed it outright — “No — no way!” But as you thought a little deeper you admitted, “Well, I see in the scripture where the promise of the Holy Spirit is *‘unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call’* (Acts 2:39). There’s a little room there to think that maybe this experience could still be for us today — but my pastor says that it isn’t for today, my church doesn’t believe in it — so while you consent to it, you are not sufficiently exercised to pursue it — there isn’t enough soil for the truth to take root and grow and develop unto the harvest.

Perhaps you even go to your minister and discuss the proposition with him. You would *like* to press into this new truth that has been awakened within. You lay your cards on the table. The minister replies, “Oh, no, that’s not for us today. Prophecies and tongues were to continue only “until that which is perfect is come,” and that which is perfect is the infallible canon of scripture. Once the word and revelation of God was complete the church no longer needed the special spiritual gifts. You get involved with that bunch of people and you are going to get a demon. And when you get a demon we have no need of you here in this church. You can go your own deceived way.” The pressure and persecution begin to arise, and guess what happens — because you want friends, recognition, and security the fragile little plant of promise quickly withers and dies! It has no root in itself. The hope springs up powerfully within you for a short season, but because there is no depth of soil it withers as soon as the sun comes out in its fury. Yet — thank God, the great Sower didn’t throw out just *two* Seeds!

The third seed falls into your weedy area and it takes root and begins to grow. You think, “Maybe I ought to go to some of the meetings and see for myself what is happening there.” You go, and soon you are experiencing things you have never experienced before! The truth and reality begin to find expression and manifestation in your life. Our only hope is that as you return from that meeting you don’t get caught like Br’er Rabbit in the briar patch! In the thorny ground the Seeds sprout, they take root, there is growth and new life, but the vitality is quickly smothered by prickly thorns so that the ultimate harvest is aborted. In spite of our experience, and the reality and power of it, the pressures and demands of life crowd in upon us, the demands of work, the needs of family, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life suffocate the new plants and suddenly the things of God do not seem as important to us as we once thought they were. The briars strangle the shoots. The synoptic writers all use the word “choke.” The throbbing spiritual life is gagged, the vision blurred, the hope dimmed. Fruit buds appear; but there is no fruit. The Seed never develops unto maturity. The point is straightforward. The cares of *this life* abort the growth of the kingdom in our lives. They sap the life out of the kingdom and squelch the harvest!

Thank God, there were not just *three* Seeds — because this third Seed begins well but eventually has the life choked out of it. There is another Seed — same Seed, same handful — but it goes a little deeper, right into the center, into the *spirit of the mind*, into the deepest depth of the heart and the core of the life. There it finds **good ground** and it takes root, it begins to grow, and all the thinking and all the experiences gather together and suddenly that Seed that has been rejected three times, on three different levels of your life, begins to produce its fruit! The reality of God triumphs within you over all resistance, over every hindrance and barrier and opposition. You have reached the point of no return. That is how we want to hear! Not out of our pre-conceived concepts of things we think we know — that is the hardest, most unprepared soil of all!

When I hear something that conflicts with my understanding my response is: “Father, is this possible? Is there any truth, any reality in this?” I consider it before the Lord, actively searching the mind of the spirit. I don’t want to reject out of hand any Seed from the Sower! I don’t want to hear half-heartedly. I don’t want to say, “It sounds good — but it really isn’t important.” I choose to be at least as noble as the Bereans and “search the scriptures daily *whether these things be so*” — so that whatever the new understanding is, if it be of God, it becomes rooted in me and produces its fruit. I have no desire to stop short and allow it to be choked out by the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches (things I esteem as being of greater value). That is, I don’t want to get so involved that I think its not important to give myself to new understanding and experience, nor do I want to think that I am so rich in understanding and experience that I need nothing more. So I keep pressing toward the center of my garden area and I find that when the Seed, the word of the kingdom, is nurtured in that area, the Christ-life is raised up! Oh, my Father, let me “hear” with the “good soil”! May I hear with an open heart and a contrite spirit, a heart that can produce the life of the word of the kingdom!

We have used the illustration of Pentecost, the truth of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, because that is something nearly every reader of these pages can relate to out of their past experience. But the real subject of the parable is not Pentecost — it is THE KINGDOM OF GOD! The kingdom is a realm *far beyond* Pentecost! Within the word of the kingdom lie other great and eternal truths like the new creation man, spiritual maturity, the manifestation of the sons of God, God’s great plan of the ages, the purpose and processes of judgment, and the reconciliation and restoration of all creation into God again. I have no doubt that many readers have experientially passed through these same “stages of the soils” as the deeper truths of the kingdom of God fell upon your hearing ear. The kingdom of God began to be established in your yielded, believing heart as the great Sower planted there within the furrows of your understanding, on the different levels, the good word of the kingdom. Christ enters the fertile soil of the believing heart. He takes the throne and begins to rule and lead the believer till in him *Christ is all*, and *all is Christ*. This is the kingdom of God *within you!* Oh, the mystery of it!

THE HARVEST

The Spirit has spoken mightily in these days that it is harvest time for God's people. People confuse the word "harvest" with soul-saving or revival. But there is a vast difference! When I say it is harvest time I am not talking about getting sinners converted or the saints experiencing revival. Revival time and harvest time are two entirely separate, distinct things! A revival occurs in the lives of the Lord's people when they have once experienced something and it has died and grown cold. Then, through the process of revival, it is stirred up and renewed. Revival is being brought back to life again in some area of your spiritual experience. So when I say, *this is harvest time*, I am talking about entering into something that is *new*, something that is *fresh*, something that has *just been produced*, something that has come to life, *matured*, and *reproduced the original seed* which is now ready to be offered as bread and life to the hungry creation. Ah, beloved, it's harvest time! It is time for God to bring forth something fresh, glorious, and powerful out of our lives — something the world has never seen before except in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus the Christ!

This great harvest of the formation of Christ in His people is the harvest for which the Husbandman has been waiting with long patience throughout the church age. Gifts of the Spirit are really no evidence of spiritual attainment. Gifts are just that — *gifts* — and they are given freely, not because of the merits of the recipient, but because of the goodness and grace of the Bestower. But with **fruit** it is entirely different! Fruit must grow, fruit must develop; and it is within the fruit that the life of the original seed must settle and find its full expression and power. God does not come to His church looking for gifts, but for the **formation of Christ — the fruit of the divine life**. He gave us gifts freely by His grace, and all we had to do was receive and use them. Even many scoundrels in the church have done so! What God wants now is **fruit** — THE SON OF GOD PERFECTLY FORMED IN YOU IN ALL THE FULLNESS OF HIMSELF! That is something which must **grow** upon you by your patient and continual walk in the Spirit. As George Warnock once wrote, "Until now the Husbandman has come into His garden, pruning, cultivating, watering — without expecting anything in return. But now the harvest time is approaching, and soon He shall visit His garden for one purpose and for one purpose only: seeking for fruit, and trusting that His tender care over the vine has produced genuine **fruit of the Spirit**. It is the **fruit** that is the embodiment and expression of Christ-likeness within the heart and soul."

Our Lord Jesus Christ is God's firstborn Son, and those who compose the body of Christ are the many sons of God brought to glory (Heb. 1:5-6; 2:10). As God's firstborn Son, Jesus is the model, example, pattern, and prototype for all His brother-sons, who will be conformed to His image and share His glory. We should not expect to share His glory without first maturing in life and being fully formed in the image of God's Son!

We may use the illustration of a sunflower seed. At the time of this writing our patio is brightened by a whole array of sunflowers that my wife planted this past year. The seed is sown into the ground and sprouts; this pictures regeneration. Then the sunflower grows; this is the process of growth in life and development. Eventually the sunflower plant develops to the point of blossoming and bearing seed; this is full maturity, a reproduced life, the harvest condition. The stage of blossoming is the stage of glorification. If you do not grow in life unto the full stature of the Son of God, yet await the time of blossoming, the state of glorification, you are a dreamer.

Many believers are interested in only two things: having their needs met and getting to heaven. But neither of these are the primary concerns of the great Husbandman! He is looking for maturity, the reproduced image of His Son, the manifest Christ-life, a full-grown new creation man (Eph. 4:13). In the New Testament the "gathering together" of the Lord's people is likened to a harvest, and a harvest is possible only after the crop has matured and ripened. If the crop is not ripe, but is still tender and green, how can the harvest come? It is impossible! Let us look at the Lord's people in the churches today. They are the "crop"! Is it ripe? Is Christ formed in them? Are they mature sons of the Father? Can we believe that according to the present stage of the growth of the crop the harvest is imminent? Look at the field — nowhere is it ripe already to harvest! Although there are millions of sincere believers all over the earth busily engaged in trying to serve the Lord and work for

God, where is the formation of the life of *manifest sonship*? How can we then expect to have the harvest? I dare to say that the harvest will not come until the harvest is ripe! Yet I am not discouraged. I am, in fact, greatly encouraged today! Why? BECAUSE I SEE THE FIRSTFRUITS COMING SWIFTLY TO MATURITY! At the time of the ripening of the firstfruits the balance of the crop still bears the appearance of greenness. Only the firstfruits have that appearance of whiteness that denotes ripeness. If you truly yearn today for the harvest fields to become white and ready for the Reaper, then yield yourself under the mighty hand of God that *you* may ripen unto the time of the gleaning of the firstfruits! God will then perform His “quick work” and cut it short in righteousness; the fields will speedily mature and ripen!

Many people also confuse the word “harvest” with judgment. Untold thousands of Bible teachers teach that when the Son of man comes with His sickle and casts it into the earth, He is actually mowing down His enemies with great destruction and blood. What strange delusions the carnal mind invents! While the Greek noun *therismos* (**harvest**) with the verb *therizo* could have been used of the mowing down of enemies, they are never so used in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), even in the passages where judgment is symbolically likened to a reaping; and in the New Testament they are used of the ingathering of men into the kingdom of God (Mat. 9:37; Mk. 4:29; Lk. 10:2; Jn. 4:35-38). It is furthermore significant to note that the Son of man is armed, not with the sword that slays, but with the sickle that reaps! Who is more peaceful, more joyful and expectant, than the reaper in the harvest field even though he carries in his hand the sharp sickle? And to His disciples Jesus said, “*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth...gathereth fruit unto eternal life: that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together*” (Jn. 4:35-36). Harvest is a good thing, the subject of the first promise of the renewed earth (Gen. 8:22). Wheat, or corn, the result of harvest is good. Its color is good: “the fields are *white* already to harvest.” Harvest is the result of seed sown. “***Thrust in Thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for Thee to reap***” is to say, “The harvest which *Thou* art to reap is ripe; the seed which *Thou* has sown hast now grown up; the earth which *Thou* hast cultivated has produced this golden grain, and it is fit that *Thou* shouldst gather it in.” What is this grain that grows out of the earth and which is now (in our text) fully ripe and ready to be harvested? Ah, it is those of whom the Lord spoke when He said, “*Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*” (Jn. 12:24). Now the seed sown by the great Sower is the “***word of the kingdom.***” The result is “***the children of the kingdom.***” The Gospels give one testimony as to the meaning of harvest; showing that it relates to the SPIRITUAL STATURE of the people of God!

These facts remind us that John has prepared us for a scene of spiritual harvest conditions, maturity followed by ingathering, by his earlier description of the scene of the gathering unto the Lamb of the “firstfruits.” Where the firstfruits have been offered to God, the full ingathering may be expected to follow! The firstfruits here bear something of the same relation to the full harvest as in chapter seven the hundred and forty-four thousand did to the great multitude which no man could count. The offering of the *omer* or first sheaf by the priest in the temple set free the rest of the crop for general use, and was therefore the signal that the harvest was nigh at hand. And this without doubt is why the command “***Send your sickle and reap***” is given by a *messenger* who ***came out of the temple!*** Can you not see the mystery? Such as the firstfruits are, such is the harvest. The firstfruits are holy and mature, so is the harvest.

Some teachers have even sought to distinguish the *harvest* of verses fourteen through sixteen from the *vintage* of verses seventeen through twenty. They say the harvest is the ingathering of the elect, whereas the vintage is the gruesome fate of the enemies of God, slain in a gory battle in which their dead bodies float in a sea of blood up to the horses’ bridles. But such cannot be! Harvest and vintage are described in too close a parallelism to be regarded as symbols for entirely contrary realities! Both are inaugurated by the same angelic command to ***reap the harvest of the earth***, and the earth’s harvest-grain is balanced by earth’s vine, both are described to be *ripe*, and the reaping of both are described in almost identical terms.

THE HARVEST RAIN

Among the various types of our Lord's coming is His coming unto us AS THE RAIN. The world cannot receive the Christ today because it *seeth* Him not, neither *knoweth* Him. But for all whose hearts hunger and thirst for the fullness of His presence, power, and glory the promise is sure: "*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 former rain unto the earth*" (Hos. 6:3). The apostle James, speaking of the coming of the Lord, penned these significant words: "*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming (manifest presence) of the Lord draweth nigh*" (James 5:7-8). Furthermore, the prophet Zechariah gives us this inspiring admonition of hope: "*Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field*" (Zech. 10:1). In that beautiful Messianic Psalm, Psalm 72, the sweet singer of Israel intoned these marvelously instructive words about the coming of the King of Glory: "*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth*" (Ps. 72:6). Little wonder that the scriptures reiterate again and again that the Lord comes **with clouds**; for there can be no rain without clouds, and we are exhorted to ask for rain, via the avenue of clouds (Zech. 10:1).

Thus the prophets foretold a coming time of the manifestation of the Lord as rain upon the earth, the former rain, and the latter rain. They spoke of a time when there would be an outpouring of the Spirit of Christ in the earth that would be known as the early or former rain; they also prophesied of a time when there would be an outpouring of the Spirit of Christ in the earth that would be known as the latter rain. The early or former rain was the outpouring or visitation of the Lord that you can read about in your Bible in the book of Acts. The latter rain began about the beginning of the twentieth century. Historically you will find sovereign outpourings of the Holy Spirit in great power and glory, attended by the manifestations of the Spirit, in all kinds of places from about 1885 onward; places like Armenia in Russia, places you wouldn't dream of. God was beginning to restore something! At the dawn of the twentieth century the baptism in the Holy Spirit was restored to God's people. Talk about a bomb going off! The latter rain had begun.

Yet, these were mere "showers of blessing" which continued until 1948 when there occurred an unprecedented cloudburst of glory! The effect of the move of God that began in Canada in 1948 soon spread around the whole world, and there are few places that have not felt its power in one way or another. With this coming of Christ as latter rain God has done a great and mighty thing, but this is only the beginning! This is the HARVEST RAIN which prepares the grain for its final thrust to maturity. As a result the firstfruits are coming to their ripeness, and a mighty army of saints is in preparation as overcomers to stand up in the earth in the fullness of the life, image, glory, and power of the Son of God. The manifestation of the sons of God is drawing nigh, and events of immense magnitude and universal significance loom bright upon the horizon!

There were seasonal rains in Palestine, the former and the latter rain. The former or early rain was the rains that came at the time when the seed was planted in the ground, and speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the early or former part of this age. The latter rain was the rain which came about six months later to bring the harvest to maturity and speaks of the outpouring of the Spirit in the latter part of the age. When a farmer plants the seed for a new crop, he desires the early rain to water the fields and to promote the immediate growth of that seed. In like manner, when the seed of the kingdom was first planted in the soil of the early church, the Lord then came as **the early rain** so that the seed would germinate and produce the beginnings of the desired life. Again, when the farmer sees that his crop is growing unto maturity, he then desires **the latter rain** so that the grain will mature in the head of the plant and his harvest will be abundant. The harvest is the result of the rain!

We must also understand that not only dispensationally is there the manifestation of the former and latter rain, but individually, too, on the plane of our personal development in Christ. As one has written: "The Husbandman plants His seed, and He shall receive His harvest. However it requires long patience, for there are some tremendous processings required to bring it to that **ripened** harvestable state. There will be the early rains to make the seed sprout and grow. There will be the latter rains to close out the growing season and give fullness to the grain in the ear. There will be the hot drying days as it matures and ripens — and patiently the Husbandman waits. Yet suddenly He announces **the time is now** — conditions are just right, let us reap! 'We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...' (Eph. 2:10). We are the **product** of His hand. **He comes to us**, He becomes in us the Seed, then He visits us periodically — 'the times of refreshing which come from the presence of the Lord' (Acts 3:19). HE is our early rain which causes our life in Him, His life in us, to sprout and grow. Visitation after visitation, change after change, going from strength to strength — IF WE RECEIVE HIM IN EACH VISITATION. All of God's times are related to certain spiritual states, and we have to be in the right state and condition to be in its corresponding time...that we might come into the *now* of its fulfillment. Thus we pass from vision into reality, from profession into possession" — Ray Prinzing.

The result of the rain — former and latter — was the harvest. When the Lord gave the promise to Israel of a land of abundance and one that flows with milk and honey, He promised that if they would obey His word He would give them "*the rain in your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy CORN, and thy WINE, and thine OIL.*" Yet, in spite of the promise, it still requires great patience to wait for the rains to come and do their work! The husbandman has long patience in waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, James tells us, and so must we! How perfectly this figure suits the Lord Himself! HE has spent much labor and has sown much precious seed. He has tilled and cared for His heritage. All preparations completed, there remains but to wait. To rush the harvest would be to destroy it. So even as the farmer waits not only till the early rain makes the seed to sprout, but also till the latter rain fills the ears before they ripen, for both are needful before harvest can be gathered, the Lord on high lingers and has long patience. Thus are we too to wait that coming of His which will bring the fulfillment of our hope and full sonship to God.

Whether I live in the flesh to see the harvest of this age matters not, for I will stand in the place I am called to in the hour of the great unveiling. It is apparent that the harvest represents saints of the Lord coming forth in the image and likeness of Christ and with the fullness of His life — sons indeed. It is also obvious that God has a purpose to accomplish in each age of mankind upon the earth. Each age ends in a harvest. For example, it was in God's plan and purpose that Jesus Christ should come forth in glory and perfection as a result of the age of the law and the prophets. At the end of that age there came a harvest period and a harvest work — a gathering in of the results from the labors of the entire age. He was the **end product** of all that God was saying and doing throughout that glorious age! Christ Himself was the harvest of that age, along with all who were gathered into Him in that day; therefore we can expect a like but even more glorious harvest as this age comes to a close! The manifest sons of God and the glorious church without spot or wrinkle, the bride who has made herself ready — these are the harvest of this age! Patience, brethren!

THE HARVEST OF THE "EARTH"

As surely as there is a time to sow, there is also a time of harvest when the fruit of the earth will be reaped. Solomon declared, "*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*" (Eccl. 3:1). This harvest is called "**the harvest of the earth**," signifying that it is a harvest out of the "earth-realm" of the carnal church systems of man. It is not the harvest of the systems, but the harvest of the Lord's people that have been held in captivity in Babylon. Oh, yes! God has not forgotten His people who love Him, who seek to serve Him, but in ignorance walk carnally and soulishly in the lowlands of spirituality. At the time of the harvest God will have so dealt with the earth-realm, the carnal church order, that at last He has brought forth a great purging, a mighty

change and transformation, and true spiritual maturity even there and a harvest grown to fullness. It is my deep conviction that this transformation and maturity is wrought as a result of the three angels' messages and ministries in verses six through thirteen of chapter fourteen of the Revelation.

Jesus is the Cloud-Man with the sickle in His hand and He's ready to gather a harvest, the harvest of the earth-realm. What a scene! What a wonder! Every man must come to the harvest. The Lord's people are His field, His vineyard, His garden, growing out of the seed of Christ. The hour of harvest arrives and it is time to gather in the grain. The grain, barley and wheat, were harvested at the time of Passover and Pentecost. With all certainty this is the harvest of the feasts of Passover and Pentecost! There is a Man in the heavens ready to reap something today! His sickle is in His hand! Millions upon millions conformed to the image of Christ! Can you conceive of such a thing, can you embrace the beautiful hope? A glorious, triumphant church at last! What incredible *patience* the husbandman has had! And just as the sowing actually took place two millenniums ago, how wonderfully certain it is that the harvest will come — and be reaped! And it will not be long after the firstfruits appear upon mount Zion! Isn't it wonderful!

With keen spiritual insight Ray Prinzing wrote, “***And another messenger came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.***’ Now let us shout ‘Hallelujah!’ ‘***Out of the temple***’ comes the message we have long waited to hear. It is a true word, it is a pure word, for as we already observed, the temple has been measured, brought up to specifications — ‘*unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*’ Now the message that goes forth is HIS MESSAGE — not the programs of man, not the schemes and plans of carnal men building kingdoms, supposedly for God, but actually for their own ego trip. And the message is that it is now GOD’S HOUR for the ingathering.

“Long have we eagerly awaited this time. Through the centuries the efforts of Missionary Societies have ebbed and flowed, and as the *‘times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord,’* there have been some precious ingatherings. But always the harvest was so ‘in part.’ The revivals were held, and a remnant was gathered in, but the vast majority of the city remained untouched. God was still gathering His Firstfruits. But now the time for the general harvest arrives, and with joy we hear Him say, ***‘Thrust in thy sickle, and reap.’*** The harvest shall be completed...the process will be accelerated, for, *‘Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop with wine, and all the hills shall melt’* (Amos 9:13)” — end quote.

While writing this message I came across the following prophetic dream report from Neville Johnson in Perth, Australia, which we receive as a word of the Lord. He writes, “I found myself in the dream standing on a beach, the tide was almost full and somehow that seemed significant. The water gently lapped the sandy shoreline and a light colored mist hung over the water a few hundred meters offshore. The atmosphere was crisp yet warm. Suddenly a boat appeared through the mist heading towards me. A man was standing, holding a tiller, and cheerfully calling to me, saying, ‘Do you want to come fishing?’ I hesitated for a moment, then said, ‘OK,’ pushing the boat out and at the same time jumping in. The man’s face emanated a glow that was not of this world; he had a rugged yet refined look and he seemed very focused and determined.

“I had the strange feeling that I had been here before but could not quite put my finger on it. The boat quickly moved out into deep water and stopped. The water was teeming with fish and it almost seemed like the fish wanted to be caught. This man looked at me and said, ‘My name is Peter.’ With that he threw the net out and in what seemed like no time at all, he was pulling it in again and the net was teeming with fish. As soon as the fish hit the deck of the boat, they turned into people of all ages. I was struggling to get my mind around this unusual phenomenon when Peter said, ‘The final harvest must be reaped but it can only be reaped by those who have crossed the River Jordan.’ Suddenly it dawned on me that, in my dream, I was talking to the apostle Peter.

“Before I could speak, Peter continued, ‘Jesus was involved in two fishing trips while He walked this earth; one was at the beginning of His ministry and one towards the end of His ministry’ (Lk. 5:4-10; Jn. 21:6-8). Peter continued, ‘On the first fishing trip the net broke, but on the second trip the net held. And so it will be in this final harvest...the net will hold. The net broke in the early church and much was lost, but it will not be so in your day. Those who have left the wilderness behind and have crossed over into the promised-land are those who have one goal and motive which is only to build the kingdom of God. Jealousy, anger, and selfish ambition no longer will hinder them nor spoil the harvest. Pride no longer motivates them and they have come into rest. The final harvest has begun and will increase in intensity until the end. The end is now in sight, the finishing line is in view; what began at Pentecost will finish in your day.

“The great cloud of witnesses watches with great joy and anticipation for the final consummation. Just as the harvest began with one generation in my day, so it will finish with this present generation in your day. My generation saw the foundations laid; your generation will see the building completed. There will be many in your generation that will overcome all things, even death. My generation saw tares sown into the harvest field, your generation will see all the tares removed. The harvest wave is upon you and you will accomplish, in one generation, what hundreds of generations have longed to see. The feast of Pentecost must give way to the feast of Tabernacles. Your generation will accomplish that which the church could not over the past two thousand years. The glorious shadow that emanated from the early church was just that, a shadow. You will see the fullness of the glory of God in one generation manifested in such a way that nothing will be impossible. The miracles we saw were just a foretaste of what was to come.’

“Peter paused, looking at the people in the boat. He said, ‘See how the boat has now grown!’ I was amazed! The boat was now huge and was accommodating so many people. It was impossible to estimate how many people were now in the boat. Peter continued, ‘The seed of early church martyrs will blossom in your generation. One seed will produce countless multitudes in the harvest of your day. They will watch, with gratitude to the Lord, for allowing them to be a part of what you will experience. This seed will explode into continuing, ever increasing harvests...they have waited to see this day.’

“Peter looked at me and said, ‘Tell the Christian leaders of your day...if they seek to profit by this harvest and build their own kingdoms with the harvest, they will be destroyed. This harvest is Holy; this fruit is precious. If you cause any to stumble, you will surely be destroyed.’ I felt the force and gravity of what Peter had just said. It hit me like a hammer blow and I had to steady myself somewhat in order not to miss anything more Peter had to say. Peter continued, ‘Purity of heart is required for those who are to be involved in gathering this harvest. It is the *Lord’s* harvest — not *your* harvest. HE has waited for this with great longing and anticipation! Don’t be impetuous like I was, follow the Lord of the Harvest. True sons of God are led by the Spirit of God!’ I began to feel a holy fear which triggered a determination never to hurt or hinder the harvest...never to use it for my own ends and purposes. Peter looked at me and said, ‘Great grace will be given to your generation but great accountability will be required.’ With that, he was gone and I awoke” — end quote.

We speak the truth in saying that the hour for the deliverance of God’s people and the manifestation of His fullness within them and upon them is wonderfully nigh at hand. The harvest is upon us! Hallelujah! The King is coming in mighty spirit-power to set His people free, to burst asunder the chains of their captivity, that they in turn may deliver creation. Once the church is cleansed from her idols and defilement, she will be in a position to bring deliverance to a sin-sick and judgment-weary world, when “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). Only when Christ’s church is cleansed from her idols can she ever hope to be a light unto all nations. You see, my friends, God intends not only to raise up a vast company of the *manifest sons of God upon mount Zion*; He also purposes to have a *glorious church without spot or wrinkle, the bride of the Lamb, the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven!*

Do not sell the “church” short, my friend, as though God no longer has any use for the church, and will use only the sons. The believers in Christ who now sit within the church systems are also the Lord’s people, and I tell you now that Christ *loves* 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*, no longer having any *spot* or any *wrinkle*, or any *such thing*; but that it should be *holy* and *without blemish*. Don’t think He won’t accomplish this, for He most certainly shall! ALL of the Lord’s people will one day march out of the darkness of tradition, the bondage of carnality, the limitation of static creeds, the delusion of false doctrines, the foolishness of immaturity, and the prison houses of men’s kingdoms and move into the bright light of the knowledge, wisdom, truth, glory, and power of God. Oh yes, they will! God will bring forth a light that is seven-fold in its intensification, so that there will be nothing hidden from it, and its heat and brightness will consume and destroy everything that opposes. And that deliverance has to come! The firstfruits will hasten the glad day! No one can deliver men from the lies of the antichrist while continuing to preach those lies. No one can deliver the world from the bondages of sin, fear, ignorance, carnality, limitation, and death while himself remaining a captive of those things. And before God’s church can cause all nations to walk in the light of that City which she is, she must first be cleansed from all her own idols and darkness and bondage and shame and march in victory out of Babylon’s domain.

We think we have seen some wonderful moves of God, and we have, but we haven’t even scratched the surface, we haven’t seen anything yet that faintly resembles the glorious things God will do in this great HARVEST TIME! God is laying a foundation in His firstfruits, and teaching, processing, qualifying, equipping, and empowering His sons, ***His sickle***, for the coming invasion of all the church systems of man. He must do something unprecedented for us first, so that we will be ready. Let us not deceive ourselves, we don’t have all that we need for this great work, but God is quickening us for it. He is stripping away our dependence upon money, education, status, recognition, titles, methods, promotions, and materials, drawing us to move out of that and into HIS REALM. The realm of God is the realm of *SPIRIT*. It is the realm of *BEING*. God is teaching us the ways of His Spirit, and we must be endowed with the absolute fullness of His Spirit, which is the sevenfold *SPIRIT OF SONSHIP*.

Oh, how we long for the fulfillment of the vision! As the messenger came out of the temple his message was simply: ***“Reap, for the time is come, because the harvest of the earth is RIFE.”*** The hour appointed by God had struck. There was not a single moment’s further delay. ***“He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”*** How much can be put into so few and simple words! They paint at a single stroke the deliverance and transformation of the whole church of Jesus Christ! How deliberately God proceeds and operates in all of this! Unhurried, yet right on schedule! Not so much as a single sheaf, or ear, or kernel, intended for the granary of the kingdom of God, is passed unnoticed, or is lost. All are safely gathered in! It’s HARVEST TIME!

Several years ago a dear sister wrote to me some inspired words which I have cherished to this day, for they illustrate so beautifully the greatness of our God in the fulfilling of His purpose in both His firstfruits and His harvest. She said, “I still raise sheep and make wool felt hats, scarves, and ponchos from their wool. This morning as I was working in my studio the Lord blessed me with a little observation. I was working on a very large brimmed hat and I started on it yesterday and worked on it till I was tired of it, and let it rest over night so I could start in again this morning. When I looked at it this morning it just looked like a mess — it didn’t look like it would ever become small enough to actually fit on the hat shaper I was using or take on the finished form. But I just kept rubbing and rolling and adding more soap and hot water and *suddenly* it just came together! It always seems too funny to me that at the midpoint in the process it just looks like you have a big mess and then suddenly it comes together into a beautiful finished piece. I felt the Lord was telling me this is how it is with us as well! We usually feel like we are a big mess, but He is going to *suddenly* finish His work in us! He has been patiently working on us for years and it is exciting to know that soon He will finish us up and come forth from our being!” To which I would add — beyond us individually, when we look at the church world today we see what looks like an even bigger mess!

That God could bring forth a glorious church, cleansed, delivered, changed, transformed, matured, and empowered to reign with Christ seems almost hopeless. But fear not, my beloved, for God has His “suddenly” when He will move speedily, do His quick work, and bring forth beauty and glory out of this “mess”! Aren’t you glad!

Chapter 173

The Firstfruits, The Harvest, And The Vintage (continued)

“And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for *the harvest of the earth is ripe*. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped” (Rev. 14:15-16).

The fall of the year is harvest time, when the fruits of the summer’s labors are reaped, and the husbandman enjoys the fruits of his labors. The harvest time of this present age, the church age, is upon us, and the harvest of the earth is moving speedily toward ripeness, and the time of reaping. The harvest time is the time of ingathering of the precious fruit of the earth. “Ingathering” does not speak of a rapture of the elect away to some far-off heaven somewhere; rather it signifies the gathering of the grain (the Lord’s people) into the great Husbandman’s garner — *the kingdom of God*. God’s people have been long growing in the “field” of the church-world, but they have not yet been matured, reaped, and gathered into the kingdom!

Harvest is also a time of discarding that which has fulfilled its purpose. In our Lord’s wonderful parable of the wheat and the tares, both the wheat and the tares were to grow together in the same field, but at the time of maturity the tares would be separated from the wheat and burned, and the wheat gathered into the garner. There are also two other items, which actually belong to the wheat plant, that are discarded at this time, and these are the straw and the chaff. Only the fruit of the plant is what the husbandman keeps and gathers into his garner. The straw and the chaff were necessary in order to bring the wheat to its fullness, but when the fruit is fully matured the *life settles* in the fruit or kernels, and the straw and the chaff having fulfilled their purpose, are separated and discarded.

Before the wheat can be garnered there has to be a threshing time by which the kernels of wheat are separated from the straw of the plant. First the wheat was cut, or reaped, and tied into bundles or sheaves, but that was not the end of the harvest; it was, in fact, only the beginning! The wheat is cut off from its roots which are buried in the earth, and then the wheat is beaten out of the straw, and this is the real rough part, but it is all necessary for the husbandman to get the fruits of his year’s labor. The work of harvest was not completed until the threshing was done, the wheat separated from the straw, and brought into the storehouse. There was a jointed stick wherewith the wheat was beaten until the kernels were separated from the straw. Sometimes they spread the wheat on the ground in the area called the *threshing floor*, and caused the oxen to walk over it until the same results were achieved. Isaiah spoke of this saying, **“O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you”** (Isa. 21:10). There is always something good to be gleaned from the threshings of the Lord! It results in *“the corn of my floor,”* and when the Lord “threshes” us, as every son of God is experiencing, the husk or the outer shell of our earth-man is removed, leaving the pure “grain” of our redeemed spirit, which is to be clothed upon with our new heavenly body that is like unto His glorious body of Life and Immortality! So, I pray, “Lord, continue to thresh us until there is nothing left of us but the pure ‘grain’ of Thy divine life, from which a pure son of God in your glorious image and likeness shall shine forth!”

John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus, said this: *“Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into His garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”* (Mat. 3:12). This is a spiritual work which the Lord Jesus carries forth in and upon His people in the time of harvest. In some measure the firstfruits of the harvest have already begun to experience the process. This is the harvest of the “earth,” and though the wheat is the Lord’s and is the growth and development of His very own life, for He is Himself the *seed* that has

been planted, yet who can deny that as the Lord's people we all had our roots sunk deep in the earth, in earthly things; in worldly methods and means; in the ways and systems of men. We were well rooted deeply in denominationalism, in the programs and promotions of carnally minded men, and then the Lord of the harvest began to cut us off from our earthly roots. Of these firstfruits John bears witness: "*These were redeemed from among men*" (Rev. 14:4). The sickle is being used and the reaping has begun! It is sometimes hard, and many have had a real struggle in leaving their old friends, and the comfort and security of the system they have so long depended upon; but the Lord is seeing to it that all of His firstfruits are reaped, and if any cannot make up their minds to leave the old earthly field and follow the Lamb to mount Zion, He sees to it that they are thrown out by the lords of the old systems, and there is no way to return! Then the hand of the Lord is laid heavily upon them and they are conscripted by the power of the Holy Spirit for the army of God, and truly "resistance is futile!"

No one has commented with deeper spiritual insight on this subject than dear sister Dora Van Assen. Many years ago she wrote, "What is the **chaff** to the **wheat**? *Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*' (Mat. 3:12). *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn*' (Mat. 13:30).

"For years I read **eternal torment** into the foregoing scriptures. I had the wheat as all the saved people taken to heaven, the chaff and tares as all the unsaved people put in hell to be burned with a literal unquenchable fire; until God spoke to my heart saying: 'You cannot have wheat without chaff, for it takes the chaff to hold the wheat until it is fully matured, and only then can it be threshed, removing the chaff without damaging the seed of life. So this is done at the end of the harvest when the seed is fully grown.' Thus God gradually began to open my eyes to see that the chaff and the wheat were both in my own self; that my natural Adam nature or human identity was the chaff encasing the wheat, the very *life-seed of Christ*; that I was being born of an incorruptible seed, and that seed is Christ in me, the hope of glory. These scriptural concepts began to take on new meaning in a most wonderful way!

"I then began to see that it is first the natural and then the spiritual (I Cor. 15:44-46); that without the natural we could not contain the spiritual. We are an earthen vessel holding a 'treasure' which is the very excellency of God (II Cor. 4:7). Be glad, therefore, for this natural creation because out of it God brings forth a NEW CREATION! If the chaff is removed before the wheat is mature, it will do damage to the wheat. It is needed to hold the wheat as it passes from the milk stage into the fully hardened and mature stage, where it can be removed from the chaff without harming the wheat in any way. Then the wheat is placed in the barn and the chaff is burned. Today in this enlightened age, even the chaff has many useful purposes, but in ancient times it was simply disposed of by fire. There is absolutely no waste in the economy of God! The prophet inquired, '*What is the chaff to the wheat?*' (Jer. 23:28). Praise God, it is the super-structure, scaffolding, or encasement which covers and holds the wheat intact as it grows into the very likeness of the One who planted it within. All seed brings forth after its own kind. So, Christ shall see His seed and be satisfied when it comes into His own image and likeness!

"Looking again at Matthew 3:11-12. '*He that cometh after me is mightier than I...He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*' We find that this baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire is accomplished AT THE END OF THE HARVEST. The phrase, '*and He will thoroughly purge His floor,*' speaks of the threshing floor where the chaff is removed from the wheat. Furthermore, it should be clear to all that the 'unquenchable fire' is not the fire of hell, for nothing is said here about hell, but it is the *baptism of fire* which attends the *baptism with the Holy Spirit*. The fire is the Holy Ghost fire! This represents the fullness of the Spirit for which Paul prayed (Eph. 3:19), not just the firstfruits of the Spirit, at our

initial filling with the Spirit, spoken of as Pentecostal, but the full measure of the Spirit which brings the full redemption of our spirit, soul, and body (Rom. 8:23) into the sonship dimension of full responsibility. This is the redemption for which all creation is groaning, called by Paul **'the manifestation of the sons of God.'**

"The Holy Spirit baptism of fire is burning away all our natural Adamic nature. Our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29), consuming the sin but not the sinner; cleansing and purging away the tin and the dross (Isa. 1:25). Thank God! This fiery cleansing will not be quenched until all our carnality is completely removed. The Father will not spare the scourging of any son whom He receiveth until they also be partakers of His divine nature and holiness (Heb. 12). Jesus came to purify a peculiar people unto Himself (Tit. 2:14). So we hear Him saying, **'I am come to send fire in the earth (not in hell!); and how I wish it were already kindled'** (Lk. 12:49). He was looking forward to the time when He would return in the form of the Spirit to do a great purifying work within His own sons and within His people, transforming them into His own image. **'Everyone shall be salted with fire'** (Mk. 9:49). Salt has a preservative and purifying quality, while fire purifies and transforms into other elements and gases. So we see every living sacrifice presented to Him being purified and changed into a **'sweet smelling savor unto God.'** So we hear Jeremiah say concerning the chaff and the wheat, **'He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.'** Much of our dreams and visions are a mixture of ourselves, as they pass through our own mind and personality. But **His word is as a fire** burning the chaff in the right measure and time, exposing the pure wheat of the word!

"Let us also consider the wheat and the tares. Their true meaning is found in the parable Jesus recorded in Matthew 13:24-30. Because the chaff had taken on such a totally different meaning as I was taught by the Holy Spirit, I was sure my first understanding of the tares could be wrong also. And as I was thinking on these things, suddenly it stood out so plainly: THE WHEAT AND THE TARES DID NOT CONVERT ONE ANOTHER! Wheat was wheat, the tares were tares, both growing up together just like the wheat and the chaff, until the time of harvest.

"In that moment I saw that this was not a parable on soul-saving, nor was it an exhortation to scare the heathen or sinning Christians in the church into a conversion, but it was a parable dealing with the **inner thought life** of the believer himself. In the context around this parable we find that Jesus was uttering **'things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world'** (Mat. 13:35). In other words, by this parable, He was explaining in parabolic form something which had taken place **from the beginning!** I believe He was referring to what had happened in the garden of Eden when sin entered into the plan of God. There we find God fellowshiping with Adam in the cool of the day. Certainly God was not standing there in bodily form any more than He comes in bodily form when we commune with Him and hear His voice. By the Spirit God was planting His **good thoughts and spiritual understanding** in the mind of Adam. But while Adam was not aware of it, the adversary also came into the garden and whispered and planted **evil thoughts and carnal understanding**, causing a duality within, which led him to fall into a carnal mind. This dual mind of both good and evil was as a split personality within man, each capable of bringing forth a harvest of a certain kind of man (Rom., 8:6). The battlefield is **in the mind!**

"Some may object to this interpretation of the tares, because Jesus in His explanation of the parable used the words, **'the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one'** (Mat. 13:38). That does sound as if they are two different kinds of people. And indeed they are! If we will just stop for a moment and think this through, we must admit that God is an invisible spirit, and Satan is likewise invisible spirit. Neither of these produce flesh and blood **children** of their own! The new creation is formed in a people who are **'renewed in the spirit of their mind.'** So the term 'children' must be taken as a metaphor. The Holy Spirit deals with men in their minds and thoughts, and Satan can only attack man in his mind, giving false ideas and imaginations.

These thought-pictures are often called '**brain children.**' And these determine *what manner of man* a man is!

"These *thought-pictures* can be either good or bad, spiritual or carnal. Paul exhorts us to '*cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every **thought** to the obedience of Christ*' (II Cor. 10:5). Bringing this parable down to us personally, we find that our own mind is the field in which are planted both good and evil. The children or offspring of the kingdom, and the children or offspring of the wicked one, are a mixture of both good and evil, flesh and spirit, growing up together within us until the harvest, which is the time of separation. The tares are somewhat different from the chaff in that the chaff is *part of the wheat*; however the tares are not part of the wheat, but a foreign implantation made to appear as wheat. The harvest reveals what sort of seed was planted in our earth, and how they have matured in areas of our lives. Only the mature know the difference! And only by harvest conditions can the Lord bring the separation!" — end quote.

When the Son of man as the crowned Reaper sends His sickle into the earth, all things will have come to full maturity. The age has witnessed the sowing and growth and development of the Son of man, and also the sowing of the adversary, and there has been no conclusive divine dealing on earth to make manifest the judgment of God as to what has resulted. But the harvest is the end of the age! It does not take place individually or collectively until all things have fully developed and ripened even to the point of being "dried." Then the age closes by the gathering out of the kingdom of the Son of man "all offences and those that practice lawlessness," while the wheat will be brought together into the granary of His kingdom. Everything that is worthless to God will be baptized in His all-consuming fire, whereas all that is of value to Him will be anointed with the seven-fold intensified Spirit of the Lord to bring blessing to creation in the age and the ages to come! "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost **and** with fire!" The harvest is the time when everything will be perfectly discriminated, and dealt with according to its true character. The harvest will finally close the present order of things. All the religiousness of man will go up in smoke and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day!

The "binding into bundles" seems to speak of companies and combinations. It is not a literal binding as grain is bound, but like water finding its own level. Truly the Lord is bringing separation after separation in our lives, within and without. How careful we should be not to be tied up in any bundle that is going to be burned! It does not appear to me strange to suppose that the work of the harvest is an unseen work at times, and those conscious of its working become so by the dealing and revelation of the Lord.

THE THREE ANGELS

"And *another angel came out of the temple*, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud...and *another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven*, he also having a sharp sickle. And *another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire*; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe" (Rev. 14:15-18).

The scene opens with John announcing that "*another angel came out of the temple.*" The Greek word for temple is *naos* indicating the *inner sanctuary* or *most holy place*. Throughout the book of Revelation there are seven angels out of the temple and there are the seven spirits of God, or the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord, or the fullness of the Holy Spirit. At various times one or more of these seven angels out of the temple move into action upon the stage of God's unfolding revelation to accomplish some aspect of His purposes. Each of these angels signifies a *message*, an *activity*, or a *ministry* out of the fullness of God's Spirit.

Before this, in the same chapter, John saw three angels. The first had the everlasting gospel, or the gospel of the ages to proclaim to the rulers and leaders of the earth-dwellers; the second proclaimed the sober message that Babylon was in a fallen condition; and the third angel revealed the fiery processes of divine judgment upon all who persist in worshipping the beast and his image, or bearing his mark. Now John again sees three angels, which exactly match the first three angels. As the first of the previous three angels called with a loud voice to the rulers of the earth-realm to *“fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him,”* even so this angel calls with a loud voice. However, his voice is directed to the One who sits on the cloud, and his voice is crying for the great purpose of God in His people to be consummated, for the *grain harvest* of the earth to be reaped. The second angel comes out of the temple in heaven bearing a sharp sickle, signifying the moving of the Spirit and the activity of God’s Christ to reap the harvest of the *vine* of the earth.

The third angel is described as coming from the altar, and he has power and authority over fire. To understand these mysteries is of eternal importance, for until we do understand them we will be ineffectual in our ministry as the priesthood of God. I would draw your attention to three specific items in connection with this third scene. There is an altar, an angel, and fire. We must be very certain about the identity of these three items! The setting is the “holy place,” the location of the golden altar within the typical tabernacle of Moses, or later the temple in Jerusalem. It was stationed just before the veil of entrance into the “most holy place” of the throne of God over the ark of the covenant from whence proceeded God’s mercy — the throne of the mercy seat.

The golden altar of incense was made of wood, overlaid with pure gold. It was three feet high and one and one-half feet square. It was the tallest piece of furniture in the holy place and speaks of the highest act of worship possible, that of praise and prayer and priestly intercession. On the top of it rests a pan-shaped vessel, called the golden censer, on which coals (pieces of burning wood taken from the brazen altar in the outer court) are burning. There is no chimney for the smoke to escape by, so the room is full of it; but the smoke is so pleasant that every priest of God ministering in that holy place would not like to be without it; the fragrance is sweeter than anything ever smelt before! But it is not the wood which gives forth such a sweet odor when under the action of fire; it is the incense which the high priest has put on those burning coals that smells so pleasant, and which feels so refreshing to the spirits of those who minister there. The incense was made of four sweet spices, which gave forth their fragrance by burning. Their sweetness is not known till they are submitted to the action of fire, when the odor is sent forth in the smoke.

The high priest would fill his censer with fresh coals, and put on incense every morning and every evening, so that day and night there would be the sweet odor going up to God. It was called “a perpetual incense before the Lord” (Ex. 30:8), because night and day it was ever burning, and the smoke was ever ascending before the veil, and penetrating through the veil, and passing under it, and wafting its way by the sides of it, into the Holy of holies before the Lord, who dwelt there on the mercy seat. And on the tenth day of the seventh month, when the high priest went into the Holy of holies to make atonement for all the people of Israel, he carried the golden censer in his hand, and placed it on the floor of the Holiest of all; and as he stood in the presence of God and before the majesty of His power, and sprinkled the blood seven times on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, he would be enveloped in smoke; his garments would smell of sweet incense, and every part of the room would be filled with it, and the glory of the Lord would be softened by it (Lev. 16:11-14).

Obviously this angel from out of the altar signifies the priestly ministry of the sons of God on behalf of the “vine” and the “vintage” of the earth. He had power over fire, and care of the fire was part of the priest’s duties under the Old Covenant. *‘And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire’* (Lev. 1:7). *“And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning...”* (Lev. 6:12). Remember, the fire upon the golden altar is the same fire as the fire of the brazen altar, for it is taken from thence. And it is carried into the holy place by the priesthood that has the authority over fire.

But there is evidence throughout the book of Revelation that “the altar” refers to the golden altar in the holy place, not the brazen altar of the outer court.

The **fire** upon the altar, over which the angel has authority, is the energizing, quickening, transforming presence, word, and power of God Himself who “is a consuming fire.” The purpose of the fire was to consume and transform every sacrifice placed upon the brazen altar, and to change the incense upon the golden altar from a solid, hard, material substance into a spiritual fragrance empowered to waft its way through the veil into the presence of the majesty of God in the Holiest of all. The fire was the energizing of God Himself by the Spirit! This fire is the fire burning the incense upon the golden altar, the sweet-smelling smoke of which goes up before God with the prayers of the saints. This signifies a powerful ministry, an efficacious moving of God on behalf of His people who have been dwelling in the “earth-realm” and are called “the vine of the earth.” The two angels, then, who act together in the matter of the vintage, are of one spirit; both are charged with a kind of reaping or gathering. The angel of the altar calls with loud voice to his companion. And the burden of their mission is that the clusters of the vine of the earth be gathered, for her grapes are fully ripe.

The fire of the altar which the high priest carried in the censer was put there to reveal the great truth that it is the fire of God that brings change in any realm. The fire of God brings the spirit of purification and transformation into the lives of men. This is not an action of judgment, as we normally think of it, but rather an action of purification! It recalls the action of the seraphim in Isaiah’s inaugural vision, taking burning coal from the altar and touching Isaiah’s lips (Isa. 6:6-7). Beholding the manifest glory of the Lord the prophet cried, “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” But the coal placed on Isaiah’s lips does not mean Isaiah’s judgment or destruction; instead it is good news, for the messenger says, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is *taken away*, and thy sin *purged*.” Purification does not come easy! Hot coal *burns*, as does the cauterization of an infected wound. Surgery might take away part of us in order to make us well; we may not want to lose anything, but pain and loss may be necessary in order for us to experience actual healing. The fire of the altar is the fire of God’s *love, holiness, glory, and majesty!* It is the fire that *purifies, transforms, and glorifies God!* What fire is in the natural world, the Holy Ghost fire of God is in the spiritual world of men. Fire warms, beautifies, protects, glorifies, refines, purifies, and consumes, effecting change. Purification is neither punishment nor destruction — purification brings deliverance, salvation, and transformation! Ah, when the Lord sends a ministry to deal with His people dwelling in the earth-realm, to gather them out of the earth and into the garner of His kingdom, He sends the messenger from the altar who has *authority over fire!* Do you, for one minute, doubt God’s ability to deliver His entire church out of Babylon, establish in them His great and eternal truth, and conform them into the image of His Son? If you doubt it then you just don’t know the power of this messenger from the altar with *authority over fire!*

THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE

Harvest and **vintage** are variations on a single theme; and, since the Son of man sends out His harvester messengers to gather the harvest of the earth, it follows that the vintager messengers must have the same function. This is precisely the truth presented when we understand the scene in the light of the “firstfruits.” For Israel was required to offer firstfruits of **wine** as well as of **grain** (Ex. 22:29). The harvest season which opened with the offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest at Passover ended not with the wheat harvest at Pentecost, but with the grape harvest at Tabernacles. Can we not see by this that the gathering of the vintage is associated with the feast of Tabernacles; in fact, the vintage must be gathered *before the great feast of Tabernacles can begin!* Many today believe that they have already entered into the feast of Tabernacles, and the Holy Spirit has indeed been revealing to the saints great and wonderful truths concerning this glorious feast, and some may have experienced a foretaste, yet the feast cannot be experienced in its fullness until *all* the firstfruits, *all* the harvest, and *all* the vintage have been gathered into the kingdom realm of God! The *fullness* thus entered into by the masses of the Lord’s people is exactly what **makes** this such an exceptional

and glorious feast — THE FEAST OF THE INGATHERING! “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the **floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil...and ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed**” (Joel 2:23-26).

THE VINTAGE AND THE WINEPRESS

“And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and *gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the passion of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs*” (Rev. 14:18-19).

Those who look for the literal fulfillment of this portion of the prophetic vision are most certainly in error. That a river or lake of actual blood, two hundred miles in extent, deep as the bridle of a horse, all coming from a literal winepress in which grapes are being trodden by human feet is incompatible with either natural law or spiritual sense, and not in accord with the *purpose* and *teaching* of this part of the vision. The record tells us in the first verse of the first chapter that the things that were to come to pass were “signified,” or communicated in *sign* language or symbols.

Now in vision John sees the process of fruitage begin. Clusters of grapes from the vine are gathered. In the eastern countries even today, and more so in ancient times, where grapes are grown, the rich clusters are thrown into a huge winepress outside the city walls. There the juice is released by the men who trample the grapes in bare feet to the rhythm of the vintage songs (see Psalm 81) sung by the women. Each winepress has a spout, and the grape juice, or *life* of the fruitage, flows out into jars, as a stream of water might flow. In verse twenty we read that as a result of the harvest and its exceeding bountifulness, the mighty stream of the *life* of the fruitage is as *blood*. In other words, the life is released from the clusters in the same way the grain is separated from the chaff — the juice by treading, and the grain by threshing. It all bespeaks the heavy and powerful dealing of God in the lives of His people in the time of harvest!

The great purpose of the harvest now under consideration is so that the husbandman may gather that final harvest of the age, for the harvest *is* the end of the age, not specifically to plant more seed and extend his fields, but for the purpose of *gathering* the wheat into the garner, and creating a *new kind of bread* for the new order to come forth. Thus the bread is a *word* and a *people* created to satisfy the hunger of the groaning creation! In like manner, the grapes are for the purpose of yielding *wine*, and wine is the *life-blood* of the grape. As the grain is made into bread, that is, a word and a people, so the husbandman oversees the treading of the grapes that there might be also a new and abundant *out-flow* of the *spirit of life* unto creation. The winepress is not evil but good. The Son of man did not come to destroy grapes, but to obtain grape juice. He did not come to squash men and destroy them in a winepress so that their blood will be squeezed out of them in some horrible judgment and execution. He came instead to bring forth a *life-flow* from them so that the new wine of the kingdom can be poured out as a drink offering and a transforming, life-giving power to all men everywhere!

As we mentioned previously, in the Mediterranean countries it is still a common sight in some places, at the time of the grape harvest, to see the grapes cast into a large vat in order that the juice should be pressed by the naked feet of the vintners. Macaulay, in his famous poem, “Horatius at the Bridge,” describes the countryside from which all the men have departed as soldiers so that the work has to be done by the women.

*This year the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls*

Whose sires have marched to Rome.

This poem reveals the fact that the time of harvest, and treading of the winepress, was a time of JOY! There was great merriment, rejoicing, and satisfaction with the gathering of the vintage and the flowing of the juice! Most commentators see only wrath and vindictive savagery in the mention of the winepress and the blood flowing to the horse bridles — but when understood by the spirit we see a *positive* picture of joy and blessing upon all! It is the time of the feast of Tabernacles, the feast of Ingathering, and the feast of Joy! It is indeed incongruous how the carnal mind insists on seeing judgment and viciousness where there is only blessing and abundance! In fact, it is the *absence* of the treading of grapes that is the sign of judgment and cause for concern and consternation! Isaiah points out that the time of treading the winepresses is a time of shouting. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea all, speaking of Israel say that because of Israel's sin, "*Israel is an empty vine*" (Hosea 10:1). "*I have caused the wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread **with shouting***" (Jer. 48:33). "*In the vineyards there shall be **no singing**, neither shall there be **shouting**: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their **vintage shouting to cease***" (Isa. 16:10).

The overcomers are the firstfruits of the bread and the wine — the *communion* of the new age of the kingdom! They are the first ones coming forth from God's winepress in the living power and fullness of the seven-fold spirit of God, just as they also are the first ones appearing with the new, living word of God for the new age. They have submitted to His disciplines upon the threshing floor and in the winepress, and their flesh has been trodden under His feet, separated, and overcome. The flesh of the grape stays in the winepress, but the life of the grape flows out! When God finishes His harvest work — testing, processing, judging His people — His life will be brought forth in them and their flesh separated from them! The overcomers are the first company to be poured upon the earth, not in condemnation, judgment, and curse, but as blessing, empowerment, and life!

Wine is a biblical symbol of joy, revelation, and life. Wine represents the *inner essence* of the fruit from which it comes. Grapes are the principle fruit which produces wine, but grapes are not wine themselves. There are grapes that never fulfill their true destiny! Grapes that remain on the vine harden, and after a time they are pulpy and dry. They will keep for months, dry all the time, and will still be nourishing, but the wine is gone, and the raisins excite a thirst for the juice that is not there. Such grapes are better than nothing, but they are not substitutes for wine! Today we know that both grape juice and wine contain healthy, life-giving properties above almost any fruit on earth. The fact is, the only way to preserve the essence of the grapes is to extract it from them in the form of wine!

Are you satisfied with grapes? Then you understand not the principle of the winepress! Be sure the grapes will dry up in your storehouse and will never flow out to quicken, nourish, and bless humanity! Wine brings lasting joy and strength and life, not grapes. And surely you can see that it is not possible to have wine unless the grapes are *crushed*! Oh, may God help all who read these lines to truly *understand*! Then you will comprehend the vision John gives us, and you will thank God for the winepress, and you will rejoice at the sight of the blood up to the horses' bridles! Even the finest fruit will not yield its essence without this process. Indeed, the finer the fruit the firmer the skin, and the heavier the pressure must be upon it to burst its surface that the juices may flow!

To have wine you must have grapes. The natural man cannot bring forth the life of Christ or the ministry of sonship, because he has no fruit from which they can be produced. The world is filled with all kinds of vegetation and growth, but the harvest of the Lord is *wheat* and *grapes*. All the other "good" things represent something other than the Lord's crop! Religion is the product of the natural man, but religion has no life! Only the new creation man of the spirit has within him the life of God. If you are walking after the fleshly mind you can bring forth no quickening life because you have nothing but thorns and thistles. Crush them and you get thorn juice and thistle milk which never made the heart of any man rejoice! The natural man can observe rituals and ceremonies, obey rules and regulations, and do many good religious works, but he can never be conformed to the image of Christ and he can never reveal out of himself the life of God that sets creation free. Imagine, if you

can, should God cast some of these spiritually dead, dried up, thorny, sour old religious people into His winepress — imagine what would flow out! The true life-flow comes only from God's wine; and this, in turn, is pressed from *God's grapes!*

Most believers today are content with the knowledge that they have grapes in the garden of their life. They take a certain pride in the fact that the Lord has visited them and has dug the earth and pruned the vines; He has also sent seasons of refreshing and watered them with care and even gathered a little fruit. They consider themselves a fruitful vine in a fertile garden. And the fruit of their lives certainly does become a blessing on some level to many! But when the harvest-call comes to a man he is then made aware that God is after something more than that. He is after grain that has been reaped and threshed and garnered, and grapes that have been gathered and crushed and made into wine! He is after the inner kernel, and the wine where the essence and power of the inner life is brought forth. The presence of fruit alone does not satisfy the heart of the Father. Nor can it be preserved to meet the need of creation! God has caused a people in these days to become dissatisfied with the mere appearance of grapes. If you are satisfied with grain in the head, or with grapes in the vineyard of your life, you will never flow out to creation in grace, love, and power!

The grapes must be crushed! There must be a journey to the winepress! “We *must* through *much tribulation* (pressure) enter into the kingdom of God.” For this the Lord has many different processes. In all vintage countries proprietors of great vineyards have their own secrets for making wines. Connoisseurs tell the difference between the products of one vineyard and another by their tastes. Soil, sun, method of preparation, all enter into the final product. So the Lord works in each of us to bring forth a particular brand, expression, or dimension of His life that we may impart. The Lord knows just who He will send us to and what their specific need will be. To that end the Lord is now working in the lives of all His elect sons, first growing grapes (fruit of the spirit) in the vineyard of our life, and then pressing them out so that there may be wine to bless creation. We cannot know the quality of the work of God in us except when the pressure comes! What flows out of our lives when we are pressured? Ah, have there not been those times when there was nothing but the thorns and thistles of anger, bitterness, complaining, unbelief, and ungodliness flowing out when we were crushed. But what a mighty work the Lord has been doing in us! Yet — we can never know the true quality of the Christ-life formed within us until the pressures come and the essence is literally squeezed, beat, or stomped out of us!

Yes, my beloved, the Lord is cultivating His grapes in the vineyards of our lives, and He will press out His wine! He will give us such an expression of the out-flowing of the nature, love, wisdom, glory, and power of Christ that nothing else in the world will charm us like the knowledge that we are the sons of HIS LIFE. It is evident that this kind of living is miraculous, for it is not in the capacity of the natural man or even the religious man to give forth wine. He doesn't want to go to the winepress! It is natural to whine and sigh and cry in adversity! The worldling often lives such a life of failure, and, alas, many Christians settle down to the same low level. But our Father has called His firstfruits for better things and higher realities! And the wonder of it all is that God has a marvelous plan to bring His whole church to maturity! And they will all come to the harvest! They will everyone feel the thrust of the sickle and they will everyone be cast into the great winepress of God — and what a FLOWING THERE WILL BE! Isn't it wonderful! And isn't that better than a gory war in the Middle East?

John also tells us that “*the winepress was trodden without the city.*” That is a significant picture, and it is interesting that the ancient winepresses were generally located in the vineyards outside the walls of the cities. It was there, without the city, that Jesus, physically, passed through His “winepress” experience when by crucifixion the life was squeezed out of Him, His blood flowing forth for the redemption and life of all mankind. And thus we read, “*Wherefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, **suffered without the gate.** Let us go forth therefore unto Him **without the camp, bearing His reproach**” (Heb. 13:12-13). John, in his Gospel, tells us, “*Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was**

never man yet laid" (Jn. 19:41). When one visits present day Jerusalem, it is possible to go to that Garden Tomb which is right by mount Calvary, the "place of a skull." This is the place where Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. **Not many feet from the tomb is a winepress.** Nearly thirty years ago Lorain and I stood by that winepress meditating upon the scene, and the Lord spoke a word to Lorain. That is another subject, but the presence of that winepress by the place of the cross and the tomb shows the association with the truth the Holy Spirit is speaking in the vision John saw on Patmos and within our own hearts today.

When John identifies the "winepress of the passion of God" as being trodden "without the city," he can only mean *"the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified"* (Rev. 11:8). This is the city which is also given the name "Babylon the Great" in more than one place in the book of Revelation. But if this were a scene of *judgment*, as so many Bible teachers proclaim, it would make no sense at all to say that the inhabitants of this city are subjected to a final divine judgment **outside the city**. For in chapter eighteen we read of this great city of religious Babylon, *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES**"* (Rev. 18:4). The divine judgment is **on the city** and the safety from the judgment is **outside the city!** Those who remain within the city share its sins and its doom. To come outside the city is to escape to that place of security provided by the Lord for those who come unto Christ "without the camp." A vintage of *judgment* would be celebrated in the very heart of the city. At the winepress **outside the city** is where Jesus is and where we encounter Him in identification with His death and the out-flowing of His life! Therefore, the crude notion that our text is portraying a scene of divine judgment on sin and sinners is far afield from the truth!

The following words by Ray Prinzing are so meaningful here. "God said to Moses, *'Let them make me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them'* (Ex. 125:8). But there was so much controversy in Israel, so much carnality of man, that God finally said, *'I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way. So Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it **without the camp...**and it came to pass that everyone that sought the Lord **went out unto the tabernacle** of the congregation, which was **without the camp'** (Ex. 33:3,7).*

"God's presence was there, but not in closeness to the people, because they were too stiff-necked and rebellious, and HE who is a CONSUMING FIRE would have moved to purge and purify, and consumed them in the way. So they had to prepare a little plot of ground for Him — afar off from the camp. All this prefigured the greater, spoken of in Hebrews, where Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate, and we are admonished to *go forth unto Him without the camp*. Afar off from the camp, on a little plot of ground SET APART FOR HIM, He met with those who came out and sought after Him. Then Jesus came, that He might sanctify the people — and every one that GOES FORTH UNTO HIM without the camp, when sanctified by Him, ultimately is destined to become one in whom He shall dwell in fullness" — end quote.

Christ, the Spirit, is completely without the camp! He is outside the camp of the systems of this world, including the political, economic, and religious systems of man; He is outside the camp of the denominations, churches, and fellowships; He is outside the camp of those who continue in the old ways of the dead, church order of the past; He is also outside the camp of anything that is of man, or that man's works have created. No longer is He dealing with the apostate systems of man, but is calling all men to **come forth unto Him without the camp**. Without the camp is where you will experience the true dealings of God, where the crop grows, matures, is harvested, and where the grain is gathered into the garner and the grapes are cast into the winepress. It is without the city that the winepress is trodden and the life of God pours forth for every man! THE GREAT HARVEST WORK IS WITHOUT THE CITY! And that is why Babylon will fall and be burned with fire — God will by a sovereign work of His grace and power call **all His people out of Babylon — NOT JUST THE FIRSTFRUITS!** ONLY THAT IS HARVEST! Aren't you glad!

It is significant to note that Jesus, as part of His death experience, passed through Gethsemane. *Gethsemane* means “winepress.” He knew the process that was beginning for Him, so it was not by chance that He made His way to this particular garden. The Chaldean root is *gath*. That is a vat used in the treading down of the grapes to bring out the juice. The second root word is *shemen*, meaning any kind of liquid. In the Old Testament it is also used in certain places for the *anointing*. From this same term is derived the English word *semen*, the fluid of reproductive life. What we see in this word, then, is the release of the inner power of life whether it be the incorruptible seed of the word of God, the Holy Spirit oil of anointing, or the grape (fruit of the spirit) that is put in a vat and pressed until the unhindered flow of the pure juice comes forth. We are the habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22), and the true forces of life are locked up in the spirit man. God is performing a work to bring it forth! We think of the breaking that comes only because of the pressure, the force from without — but God is also beginning a work of brokenness within us — there is a brokenness that God wants to come into our lives which is an inward reality in our state of being. The purpose of brokenness is for the release of the precious issues from the spirit man. And how much more meaningful when it comes from a brokenness inworked within ourselves rather than an uninvited, irresistible force from without!

BLOOD TO THE HORSE BRIDLES

“And the winepress was trodden without the city, and *blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs*” (Rev. 14:20).

This brings us to a statement over which multitudes have stumbled: concerning the blood flowing out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, for a distance of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. This is a scary scene for those who think this is literal or that there is a literal battle of Armageddon with hundreds of thousands of soldiers, horses, and rivers of blood flowing. Men who persist in teaching that this is a literal scene should stop to consider all the facts involved in what the prophet saw. We have a description of the harvest and vintage of the earth. No man can maintain other than that these are a figurative harvest and vintage of the earth, to be followed by the great spiritual feast of Tabernacles. Even the so-called “literalists” are not literal in this respect, for they don’t view it as a natural harvest or vintage of grain and grapes! We also find the reapers with sickles, gathering the clusters of the vine, whose grapes are fully ripe. No man can maintain that these are literal sickles, literal vines, and literal grapes! The grapes were cast into the winepress of the passion of God. However one interprets the scene, that winepress is not a literal winepress. No sane man can dispute these statements. Neither is the treading a literal treading. And yet in view of all these facts unspiritual men maintain that the balance of the prophecy has to be fulfilled literally, they doggedly persist in alleging, against all reason, that the predictions concerning blood, and horses, and bridles, and the sixteen hundred furlongs, must be fulfilled literally! In their folly they refuse to believe that this scripture is fulfilled unless it can be shown that such an impossible event has actually been seen by man!

The statement concerning blood reaching to the horse bridles is most certainly not to be interpreted literally. It is used as a figure of speech, a hyperbolic statement denoting the shedding of blood, even as Jesus shed His blood — the out-flowing of divine life! The Spirit often uses such figures of speech, conveying in them a deeper meaning than appears on the surface. “*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you*” (Jn. 6:53). So we will do well to look into this statement more exactly. The question follows — What kind of blood is it? In the vision it is grapes that are being crushed — that’s grape juice! But then the grape juice becomes blood. What kind of blood? Not horse blood, certainly, and not human blood, absolutely, for the blood flows from a *winepress*, not a *battlefield*! Ah, someone says, but this is the battle of Armageddon, so it *is* a battle! By whose authority? I ask. Armageddon is not even mentioned in this passage! Neither is the number of horses. Nor are any soldiers mentioned. Nor any valley of Megiddo. Nor is warfare even hinted at. To superimpose this scene upon the so-called “Battle of Armageddon” is totally without foundation. It’s not about a war, my friend, it’s about THE HARVEST!

The blood flows to the horse bridles for a distance of sixteen hundred furlongs. Now sixteen hundred furlongs are equal to about one hundred and eighty five miles, which is approximately the distance from Dan to Beersheba — the length of the land of Israel. So in type it represents a life-flow that reaches not just to mount Zion, nor to the temple on mount Moriah, nor to the capital city of Jerusalem, nor to the land of Judah, but unto *all the Lord's people* from one end of His "land" unto the other! Ah, yes — the HARVEST!

Now, let's suppose for one moment that this is literal blood up to the bridles of literal horses. My son did the following computation for me on his computer. Using an area of two hundred square miles for our base, and assuming that a horse's bridle is about four feet high, it would take **one hundred sixty-six trillion, eight hundred thirty-five million, nine hundred twenty thousand, seven hundred (166,835,920,700) GALLONS** of blood to cover two hundred square miles, four feet deep. Every normal human being has approximately six quarts of blood flowing through his body. To get the quantity of blood enumerated above would require the blood of **one hundred eleven trillion, two hundred twenty-three million, nine hundred forty-seven thousand, one hundred (111,223,947,100) PEOPLE!** There are currently between six and seven billion people alive on planet earth, so to get this quantity of blood every living person on earth would have to be slain in the valley of Megiddo plus more than one hundred and eleven *trillion MORE!* I think we can all see the ludicrousness of such an interpretation! *Think, brethren, think!*

And now, in closing, we mention the horses' bridles. The only Old Testament passage which speaks of the bridles of horses is in the prophecies of Zechariah, and the Hebrew text reads: "*On that day shall there be upon the bridles of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD...*" (Zech. 14:20). Bridles that proclaim the **holiness** of the Lord! Those familiar with horses will recognize the allusion to the stream coming up to the bridles as a reference to the fact that a horse always holds his head high in the water. But when the stream is powerful enough to come to his bridle, he loses his hold and is swept away by the current. Horses are often a figure in prophecy denoting speed and strength in battle, and typify the strength of man, the strength of the flesh. Ah, when the life-flow reaches the bridles, the horses lose their hold, that is, the strength of the flesh is swept away, replaced by HIS LIFE, truly producing within God's harvest people the nature and power HIS HOLINESS! Isn't it wonderful!

Chapter 174

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues

“And I saw *another sign* in heaven, great and marvelous, *seven angels having the seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the wrath of God” (Rev. 15:1).

This first verse of chapter fifteen introduces the deep mystery the Holy Spirit now reveals to the called and chosen elect of the Lord. John speaks here of “another sign,” that is, a similitude, something like a parable, and this sign is in contrast with the other signs he previously beheld in spirit — the sign of the sun-clad woman with the moon under her feet, ready to be delivered of a man-child; the sign of the great red dragon standing before the woman to devour her child as soon as it is born; the sign of the beast from the sea, having seven heads and ten horns; the other sign, of the two-horned beast rising up out of the earth; the sign of the three messengers flying in mid-heaven; the sign of the Lamb standing upon mount Zion and 144,000 with Him; the sign of the Son of man coming upon a white cloud to reap the harvest and vintage of the earth — all these signs, and many more, John has already seen. And now, with rapt wonder, he beholds **another sign!**

The sign which he now sees in the heaven of the Spirit is great and marvelous. It is, in other words, awe-inspiring and wonderful! And no wonder: for the sign which he now beholds is of the greatest importance. It cannot be looked upon or understood without moving us deeply and filling our hearts with the overflowing of wonder and joy.

In this remarkable introduction we once more meet our old friends, the seven angels of His presence, and here again they are operating in the action the Holy Spirit sets before the beloved apostle in his visions. They are prepared to pour out the seven vials or bowls of God’s passion. This pouring is called the *plague*, for the outpouring of God’s determined passion, zeal, or wrath, as the King James Bible terms it, is indeed a plague to the carnal mind, the soulish disposition, and the flesh life! We must always remember that the code-word “wrath” in the Greek language of the Bible simply denotes “passion,” *not* vengeance.

John beholds seven angels, or messengers. And although, without doubt, the sight of these seven shining heavenly messengers positioned side by side is already breath-taking — for they are glorious and beautiful, resplendent in their appearance, pure, radiant, dazzling, and powerful — yet their purpose and message is still more majestic and sublime! These are the seven messengers who have the *seven last plagues*. Evidently they do not have the seven plagues of themselves, but the power of these seven plagues is *given them*, and they now hold this power. They possess the power of pouring out these plagues into the earth-realm, the carnal and soulical religious realm of man, and completely devastating it — for the destruction implied in these plagues is complete. We have only to recall that we are dealing here with spiritual realities represented in the form of *signs* and *symbols* to understand the great truth revealed in this scene — the seven messengers in their symbolism represent a seven-fold message, ministry, and moving of God by His Spirit and by His Word to bring an end to the soulical power of man’s natural life and the soulish religious realm of man. The messengers are seven in number, the number of completion and fullness, signifying that by their seven plagues the work of God’s wrath or passion shall be fully fulfilled, finished, and completed. All the soulical operations in the lives of God’s dear people, all the self-hood, every vestige of the believers’ own mind, will, emotion, desire, and inclination to religiosity shall once and for all and forever be brought to an end! Seven is the symbol of completion of the kingdom within the Lord’s people! Seeing that in the order of John’s visions this wonderful work has already been accomplished in God’s called and chosen elect, the manchild company, the 144,000 on mount Zion, it follows that this dealing of God is now ready to come upon the masses of the Lord’s people who

still walk in a carnal realm and serve the Lord in the carnal church systems of man. Seven is the symbol of the completion and triumph of the kingdom of God in the lives of God's own people!

It is interesting to note that when no one in heaven or on earth was able to open the scroll sealed with seven seals, John *wept* (Rev. 5:3-4). When the seventh seal was opened which introduced the seven trumpets (Rev. 8:1), the event was so significant that there was complete *silence* in heaven for the space of half an hour. Now the third cycle of God's dealing begins, to execute the seven plagues "which are the last," as it reads in the Greek. But this time there is neither weeping nor silence but great joy and a mighty song of victory! (Rev. 15:2-4). Final victory is near in the church of Jesus Christ and it is the elect of God who are singing the song of triumph!

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the *seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (Rev. 15:1).

The word "plagues" is a most interesting word! It is translated from the Greek word *plege* meaning "a wound caused by a stripe or blow." *Plege* is translated in the King James Bible as "wound" or "wounded" four times; it is rendered "stripes" five times; and is rendered "plagues" only in the book of Revelation twelve times. Thus, the "seven last plagues" may be characterized as the "seven last stripes" or the "seven last scourgings" or the "seven last chastenings" in which is filled up the passion of God to correct His children. "Last" plagues in which the passion of God is "filled up" or "complete" signifies that these are the *last* or *final* dealings of God with a people. Not the last in the sense that God will never deal with them again about anything, but last in that these dealings of the Lord will have completed His work in a people to make right what is wrong and transform them into all that He wants them to be. That is the mystery!

Elwin Roach once wrote, "There is something else that is last. There are seven of them — plagues. They are the last seven plagues mentioned in the book of Revelation. What a promising word! They are full of the wrath (*thumos* — *passion*) of God. If we will notice, these plagues are poured out on men, upon flesh. Everything which is carnal will be subjected to the plagues! It appears that seven plagues, seven days, seven colors of the light spectrum make up the Last Day, and it swallows up every dark thing in its path. It is like a tidal wave of fire sweeping over the earth. There is nothing but stubble left in its wake..."

When these seven "last plagues" have gone, there will not be any more flesh, carnality, or selfhood dominating in any of the Lord's people. This will ultimately be true for all men everywhere, as we see at the conclusion of the Revelation, but here it refers to the people of God who are still immature children and who are enslaved in the carnal religious systems of man. There is the same truth as it pertains to the individual — that is, each one of us in our journey into God. The unproductive human identity — the flesh with its sinful disposition, the soul with its religious inclination, the carnal mind with its humanistic reasoning, planning, and scheming — ***all must suffer the seven plagues!*** Make no mistake about it — God will touch *everything* in the lives of His people! That is the final outcome of redemption, for He has redeemed us unto Himself and for His pleasure and purpose! Consider the following order of symbols used in the pouring out of the vials. They are poured out upon:

1. The Earth. (soulical religious realm)
2. The Sea. (body, sensual realm, fleshly passions, wicked works, ungodliness)
3. The Rivers and Fountains of Water. (sources of ideas, concepts, culture, teachings, philosophies, doctrines, traditions, customs, carnal knowledge, worldly wisdom, the sources from which carnal men draw their life, their natural joy and refreshment, all that

gives vitality to the programs of men. “Rivers” suggest the *flow* of these ideas as they are taught, propagated, and promoted by human institutions and instrumentalities of all kinds)

4. The Sun. (the external light of the *old* heavens and earth — laws, rules, commandments, authorities, hierarchies, dominions of the old world of man — religion, science, business, finance, etc.)
5. The Seat of the Beast. (human heart, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, out of which all evil emanates — also the corrupt seat of spiritual wickedness)
6. The Great River Euphrates. (the power that keeps God’s people enslaved in religious Babylon. The Euphrates River stands symbolically for the separation between the kingdom of religious Babylon and our promised land of inheritance in Christ.
7. The Air. (the *atmosphere* created by man’s programs, promotions, and works — realms of understanding, feeling, sentiment, emotion, especially religious)

When the last seven plagues have finished their work there will be no more missing the mark, no more childish immaturity, no more deception, no more fleshly manipulation and control, no more mistakes, no more spiritual bondage, no more falling short, no more sins of omission, and no more resistance to the will of God. There will be no more cause for correction, chastisement, purging, or purification, no more need for gaining more understanding, wisdom, or maturity of stature. Oh, my Father! As long as there remains something of this human nature, Your passion (wrath) is so kindled against it that You do not let it have any rest! For Zion’s sake You will not hold Your peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake You will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth! You will have no rest, till You establish, and till You make Jerusalem a praise in the earth! (Isa. 62:1,7). Great is the mystery!

THE WRATH OF GOD

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up *the wrath of God*” (Rev. 15:1).

The seven plagues are here described as acts of judgment in which is “filled up the wrath of God.” The concept of “filled up” (Gr., *etelesthe*) means to bring to conclusion or to the ultimate goal, that is, a complete fulfillment of God’s purpose in a thing or person.

Just as in Revelation 14:8 we read, in connection with Mystery Babylon, of “the *wrath* of her fornication,” the Greek word for “wrath” here, as mentioned previously, is *thumos* meaning, according to Strong’s Concordance, “*breathing hard, passion.*” That certainly sheds light upon the expression “the *wrath* of her fornication,” for there is no “wrath” suggested in the act of fornication. A man and woman who are having a fling, or a prostitute who has been paid for her services, do not engage in wrath — rage, violence, revenge, vengeance, punishment — while they are fornicating! Oh, no! But they certainly are in the fever heat of *passion*! Thus, the passage should read, “...she made all nations to drink of the *passion* of her fornication” rather than “the *wrath* of her fornication.” This fact alone should settle once and for all the real meaning of the Greek word *thumos*. So it is clear that God’s “wrath,” as revealed in the book of Revelation, has to do with His passion, or feeling very strongly about something. It is illuminating that in Revelation 14:10 we find that God’s disobedient children, who ignore the wooing of His Spirit and resist His hand of dealing, are made to drink “*the wine of the passion of God.*” Anyone knows that wine inflames the passions, but does not generally invoke wrath. Can we not see by this that God’s wrath or passion is not that which is vindictive and vengeful, but rather that which is impassioned, fervent, zealous, enlivened, glowing, vigorous, intense, burning, determined, and dynamic!

God has a passion to make right what is wrong, to cleanse and restore His people and creation, like any father who wants his son to grow straight and strong. He has a passion, therefore He will spare nothing, not even the rod, to accomplish His great purpose. The wrath of God is the wrath of a Father and in His wrath He remembers mercy! His purpose in wrath is always corrective and redemptive! Multitudes of religious people are full of bitterness, self-righteousness, condemnation, censure, denunciation, vindictiveness, judgment, anathemas, and damnation — the wrath of man — and really can hardly wait for the deceived religionists and the sinners and tyrants of this world to get just what they deserve — eternal damnation in hell. But now GOD'S WRATH is revealed! It is the wrath of our Father and our Redeemer! What a revelation that is! Oh, the wonder of it! How sublime the very thought! How awesome the implication! How divine and glorious the outcome!

However, as the love of God does not cancel out His wrath, so His wrath does not cancel out His love! Every parent who has ever disciplined a child understands this! Wrath and love work together to correct what is wrong and make it right. Strictly speaking, the wrath of God and His love are not equally *eternal attributes* of God. God IS love, the scripture testifies, but nowhere does it infer that God IS wrath! You do not see in any listing of God's attributes that wrath is included. Neither is wrath listed as one of the *fruits of the Spirit*. When sin and error are finished in God's universe His wrath will end, but His love will abide eternally upon all His creatures and upon all the works of His hands. God *reacts* to sin by wrath — stern measures of discipline and correction. The wrath really is the love of God in reverse! According to the Word of God His wrath *is but for a moment* — but His love is *unending!* In wrath God remembers mercy — because GOD IS LOVE!

Men have been given a wrong view, a mistaken image of God! Religion preaches and serves a God who is a monster, who is exacting, mean, cruel, and vicious. They say that God is love, but in their hearts they believe that God is vindictive, implacable, harsh, and ultimately unmerciful because they believe that God's judgment against sin and error is eternal torture in the fires of hell *without one degree of mercy ever*. They have a distorted, deranged notion of God's *justice*, too, for He will send to this eternal doom men who never had a chance, who never heard the name of Jesus, who were ignorant and undiscerning, who were careless and unconcerned, who were guilty at most of merely fleshly, temporal sins, although they did not hate God or deliberately walk in rebellion against Him — they merely had the misfortune of not *knowing Him*. But then, the way the churches tell it, the vilest man who ever lived, who hated and blasphemed and abused and murdered, if on his deathbed, at the last gasping breath of his life, he simply says, "Father, forgive me; Lord Jesus, save me," this one gets an immediate one-way ticket to heaven, whereas another who tried his best to be descent, honest, caring, and a really good person, but through no fault of his own never once heard the *real gospel*, dies and goes out to his sealed doom of eternal torture in the sizzling flames of damnation. Now that, my beloved, is classical *fickleness* — not *justice!*

And yet — even in passion there can be anger. In fact, one of the divinest things I know is anger! A divine indignation burns like fire and cuts sharper than any two-edged sword. As you can measure the height of a tower by the length of its shadow at a certain time, so one can always measure the height of a man's love by the intensity of his anger at evil. Righteous, holy, divine anger was manifested in our Lord more than in any other man. Have you not read of His anger? Many believers do not seem to understand Him at all. You ought to have seen that divine countenance that night in Bethany as He knit with His divine fingers that whip of small cords, and fastened it with His divine hand upon that firm little handle. He put it within His robe as He ascended the mount of Olives, then descended that eminence and climbed up the temple mount.

He walked into that temple, and then burst out in His divine indignation. "Get ye hence!" as He took that whip and laid it upon their backs. "Get ye hence!" and He laid it again upon their backs as only His divine hand could. He overturned the money-changers' tables; He opened the cages of the doves and let them go, and drove the lowing cattle out of the temple of God. "Get ye hence!" "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations, but ye have made it a den of thieves." They were driven out. They were not counseled with, pleaded with, nor persuaded. They were

driven out with the whip of divine anger! Do you think the firstborn Son of God never got angry? Do you think that He never spoke strong words? He looked into the faces of the religious ecclesiastics and said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof." "Ye who claim to belong to Abraham are hypocrites, liars, and children of the devil. Get ye hence!"

Jesus became angry at the dinner-table when He marked the hypocrisy of His host. The Pharisee saw that uninvited guest who had crept in from the street, who was weeping in her penitence at the Saviour's side. The Pharisee was saying in his heart, "This fellow, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is who toucheth him, for she is a sinner (prostitute)." He was a hypocrite in his heart, and Christ unveiled him. "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Rabbi, say on." Jesus continued and told the story of one who was forgiven so much. He said to Simon, "Which of them will love him most?" He answered, "He to whom he forgave most." "Seest thou this woman, Simon?" and then Jesus unveiled him. He had given Him no kiss. He had not washed His feet, but the woman had kissed His feet, and washed them with her tears. He turned from the severity of His reproach to the pity of His love and said to the poor, broken woman: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace!" Do you not see the Christ's hatred of hypocrisy, His anger at self-righteousness and the sublimity of His love? If a man cannot get angry, if there is no indignation in him against evil and error and injustice, he never knew God nor His Christ. He knows nothing of the divine nature! Divine anger is always accompanied by divine love. I thank God I can be wholesomely and heartily angry. It has never interfered with love, for I know that I have never hated either the sinner or the Pharisee, even when I have despised them both for their sin. This holy and divine anger is the wrath of God, the passion of God to correct that which is wrong!

The following illustration will make this clear. It is frequently said in the Old Testament that Yahweh is angry. Yet Jesus came as the revelation of our Father, Yahweh, and He said that "God (Yahweh) so **loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The beloved John states that as to His nature, "God IS love." Does not love appear to be far above anger and wrath? This may be compared to a wise father out of love telling his children that he is very angry on account of something bad that they have done. It is obvious in this case that the word "angry" stands for the sternness issuing out of the father's love of his children and his intense and determined hope of their improvement, and is the outward expression of his love. He may even take strong measures to show them his displeasure and how fervently he requires their repentance and change of behavior. Can we not see by this that whatever he does to correct his children is not done out of uncontrolled rage, unbridled vengeance, nor as vindictive punishment — rather his actions are the expression of *meaningful correction out of love*. And that, my friend, is what is meant by the "wrath" of God! It is His divine, determined passion to make right what is wrong in the lives of His immature, irresponsible, or rebellious children. Aren't you glad!

Consider this. Our language betrays the fact that the average person sees God as an antagonist. When high tides or strong winds shatter beachfront homes, what do men call it? An act of God! When an earthquake collapses buildings and lives are lost and thousands left homeless, what do we call it? An act of God! True enough, but why don't we call a bumper crop or a surplus an act of God? Why don't we call a warm, sunny day an act of God? The tendency to see (and fear) God in adversity as some kind of divine ogre is as old as civilization. But the actual message of the Bible and of God's Christ is just the opposite! Their main claim is that God *cherishes* you. He is *for* you. God *loves* you. He has paid the highest price for you! And God so *loves the world*. He so loves *every man in the world*. Moslem, Communist, Roman Catholic, drunk, prostitute, homosexual — God so loves them all! And He is angry! His passion is stirred! He shall arise and take all the measures necessary to bring correction, repentance, and redemption into the earth! Repentance shall come, but how great is the need for the inworking of His judgments, until that submission comes. To this very end there are even now seven angels prepared in the temple of God having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the passion of God!

THE SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE

“And I saw as it were *a sea of glass mingled with fire*: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God” (Rev. 15:2).

The next scene that opens to the view of this prophet is one of victory. Those who have witnessed the brilliant spectacle of a tropical sunset at sea have caught a faint idea of the glory the prophet here attempts to describe. As the great sun sinks like a ball of blazing fire, the ocean itself seems to break forth into flames of glory; the mirror-like surface, touched with crimson, transforms the whole scene into a mingling of flood and flame. So was the scene that opened in dimensions of spirit to the seer of Patmos!

Early in his visions, when John beheld the unveiling of Christ — Christ the Head and Christ the body — he also saw “a throne set in heaven” with God’s Christ upon the throne. It is then that we read, “And *before* the throne there was a ***sea of glass like unto crystal...***” (Rev. 4:6). Ezekiel, in the first chapter of his book, speaks of seeing the color of the “terrible crystal” or in contemporary English the “awesome, shining, dazzling crystal.” Crystal is pure glass. When you hold it up to the light and look at it you see the colors of the rainbow and the reflections of beauty out of the purity of the crystal. This is the purity of the walk of one who has been cleansed by the refining fire of God! How can one describe such purity, such holiness, in words? Ah, the wisdom of God is revealed from heaven in the vision shown to John — a sea of glass ***mingled with fire!*** It is a sea, John beholds them, not as many, but as one; as a sea of glass mingled with fire, as thousands upon thousands of grains of sand that have been melted and molded together into a substance of transparency. These are they that have come through the furnace of afflictions, tried as by fire, and they are filled with the divine Love of God and with the Holy Ghost and Fire. How better could one express the spiritual reality of a cleansed, sanctified, transformed life!

We bear in mind the qualifying words, “***as it were...***” “And I saw ***as it were*** a sea of glass mingled with fire.” If we have considered the matter as we ought, surely we realize that those believers who expect to go to heaven one day and literally stand upon a celestial sea of glass mingled with fire are certain to be disappointed. What John saw was not an actual sea of glass, but *as it were*, that is, a *vision, a symbol standing for reality*. The surface of glass cannot ripple or swell or wave as water in a sea here on earth. Water bespeaks the emotions of the multitudes. Here, then, we are shown a vast multitude standing in the glory of God knowing *no anxiety*, no fear, no envy, no hatred, no distress, no lust or demanding desires. As surely as the raging sea represents multitudes of restless, clamoring, surging, sinning humanity, so does the exquisite sea of glass before the throne of God represent an assembled throng of quickened and transformed saints IN WHOSE HEARTS THE PEACE OF GOD RULES. This great ***sea of redeemed men*** is calm and serene, tranquil and quiet, transformed “even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Furthermore, the *sea-dwelling beast* has been dealt with! The inner nature of man has been transformed, satan is bound, the sea is now calm. In contrast with the hurricane and the tumult of winds and waves, we now perceive the effectual dominion of God — the peace and rest of the divine nature, undisturbed by earth’s changes and storms. The sea of glass illustrates the ineffable calm of the divine nature — a mighty deep within of holy, divine love and purpose, of understanding and confidence, of righteousness, peace, and joy, upon which no wind blows, no tempest strives, no violent currents disturb its unfathomable depths.

Just how did this crystal sea become what it is? John envisions this sea of glass twice. In both of these descriptions, they are symbolical views of both a people and a state of being. They have been as individual grains of sand — for glass is *melted sand*. Glass and sand exposed to heat — *sand and fire!* John beheld this sea of glass mingled with fire — having come through the furnace of testings, trials, and afflictions. As the Lord says, “Behold, I have refined thee...I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction” (Isa. 48:10). These have been perfected through their fiery trials! “Tried with fire...and now they have been...found unto praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus

Christ" (I Pet. 1:7). In the image and likeness of Christ, they are bonded together in a divine union of life. John sees the whole redeemed company, not as millions of individual grains of sand, but as one body, even as a crystal sea of glass!

Glass is sand that has been heated in the fire and is melted and flows together until each grain of sand loses its individual identity as sand. These myriads of grains of sand are melted together into one piece of glass. This makes them smooth, level, calm, serene. This shimmering sea that John beholds is composed of a vast throng of the Lord's people who have passed through the fires of tribulation, trials, testings, and provings, and have overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the power of His indwelling life. They can never again be affected, moved, tossed, disturbed, agitated, distracted, disquieted, bothered, or tempted by anything in those realms, for they have fully and forever *overcome!* They are standing in their eternal victory over the fleshly, beastly nature of the carnal, human identity, and the spirit of this world, as well as the false religious image of the man-made church systems.

When the hour comes for a son of God to be tried as by fire, first your *faith* must be tried, your ability to trust God all the time and in every thing. "...who are kept by the power of God **through faith** unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold testings: that **the trial of your faith**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be **tried by fire**, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:5-7). Your faith must be tried, and it must possess three qualities, *praise, honor, and glory*. God won't put honor on any unless they have **become a praise** unto Him, and God won't put glory on any thing He cannot honor. I wish you would get the tremendous importance of these words! Your faith must be tried; then when you come forth unto the praise of His glory He will put some honor on you, and people will say, "Look how God can trust that man or woman." He puts honor on that faith, He will glorify it. When? Now, and at the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ within you! This is the first step in the path of sonship to God!

Second, *you* are to be tried. "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to **try you**, as though some strange thing had happened **unto you**: but rejoice, inasmuch as **ye** are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when **His glory** shall be revealed, **ye** may be glad also with exceeding joy*" (I Pet. 4:12-13). This is not the fiery trial of your faith now; this second trial is upon your *character, your virtue, your life, your state of being*. Your very nature must be tried, of what kind of fiber you are, what kind of spiritual quality, whether you are a piece of second-growth hickory or just a piece of pine. What is the matter with pine? It works nice, the lathes can be run nearly three times as long turning out pine, as when working on hickory, but God cannot make sons out of pine people! I have heard people say, "I became a son of God ten years ago." No, you did not! It takes a long time to grow good hickory. You have to *grow* in grace. The temple of God continually *groweth unto* a holy temple in the Lord. The body of Christ must be *edified, built up until* we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. You have to *grow up* into Him in all things! You are a child of God, yes, but that doesn't make a son out of you; that will start you out in the family of God, but you have to grow, and grow, and keep on growing to become a mature, manifest son of the Father!

Third, your *work* must be tried. "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's **work** shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's **work** of what sort it is. If any man's **work** abide which he hath built...he shall receive a reward. If any man's **work** shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire*" (I Cor. 3:11-15). When your faith has been tried you think you are all through, but some more trials come on and you haven't spiritual illumination to know the difference, and think your faith is being tried again. Once you understand God's ways you can see whether He is trying your faith,

or your character, or your works, and this sacred knowledge will help you to stand! Mere inspiration and revelation will not take you through these things. You need your soul, your mind, *illuminated*.

Paul tells us in the passage above that various kinds of **works** may be built up **upon the foundation of Christ**. It is of great importance that we understand this potential and its outcome! There are works of great spiritual content and value which are characterized as gold, silver, and precious stones. These are enduring works, raised up by the nature and power of the Holy Spirit. Then there are works with little spiritual content and of questionable value which are characterized as hay, wood, and stubble. These are perishable works, raised up by the zeal of man, carnal, fleshly works which are pawned off as something spiritual and valuable for they are built up upon the foundation of Christ, that is, they are done in His name and professedly for His glory.

Nowhere are these combustible works, made to be burned in the day when men's works are tried by fire, more evident than in the religious world of the carnal church systems of man. The so-called "gospel" in this hour is fashioned to appeal to the carnal mind, offering men blessings, prosperity, instant solutions to problems, a miracle a day, ease and comfort, and all the good things of life, rapture out of tribulation, and in that glory-world above golden streets, harps, and wings to flit about a celestial Disney World with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in. There are no enduring qualities in these works, for the benefits are all *natural, physical, earthly, tangible, for creature comfort* — not *spiritual or heavenly!* I do not err when I say that if all the prayers and faith that are exercised daily for *earthly things*, blessings of money, cars, homes, clothes, physical healing, comforts, and luxuries that pamper the flesh were stripped away from most believer's prayers, their prayer lives would hardly exist at all!

All carnal, man-made church systems, programs, rituals, ceremonies, promotions, outreaches, and efforts are but hay, wood, and stubble before the consuming fire of God. Through the years we have received a steady stream of letters in the mail telling of this great program and that great endeavor for God, with their pleas for financial help. With glib tongues and plausible programs by which the world is going to be won for Christ, well-meaning people are urged to give to further grandiose programs hatched by kingdom-building (their own kingdom) preachers who live in wanton luxury upon earth, which programs are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, and avaricious mind. Through long centuries billions of dollars have been squeezed from God's precious people, often fleeced from the poor and the widows, to build huge temples, cathedrals, church buildings, and institutions of various kinds; to promote innumerable programs and schemes to do this and that for God which, not only did God not ordain, but were in all truth a stench in His nostrils and an abomination before His face.

Whether it be carnal and deceptive operations such as those described above, or merely our own good works to be seen of men, our self-efforts to appear righteous and holy, or our human zeal to do something for God and be pleasing to Him, when all these good religious fleshly works are brought into the blazing presence of God who is a consuming fire they will one and all go up in smoke! *"For the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."* What a bonfire that will be! Oh, yes, my brother, my sister, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it will be revealed by fire. Even all our good "kingdom" and "sonship" works, ministries, outreaches, books, preaching, conferences, and all the rest, shall be tried by fire! EVERY MAN'S work shall be tried by fire! That is the final test. If the work abides the fire and comes out unscathed on the other side, that man shall receive a reward. Those who truly stand the test in *all things* shall receive the **prize** — the HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS! These stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, having the harps of God, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! These are they who shall reign with Christ. Those whose works are all burned shall suffer great loss with embarrassment, shame, dishonor, reproach, humiliation and mortification. Yet God in His rich mercy says, *"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."* This one will have nothing, no reward, no honor, no place, no position of responsibility in God's great kingdom — how art the mighty fallen! He will escape with *only his eternal life!*

A sea of glass like unto crystal! The figure is a striking one, and now in chapter fifteen of the book of Revelation he tells us that this glassy sea which spread before the throne of God was shot with flame, and upon it stood a host of those who had come victorious out of the conflicts of earth, and these have harps and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb — the song of deliverance, the song of the overcomer! Here we see a picture of a people who are neither going through the sea, nor being tossed by it, because they have passed to the other shore, triumphantly victorious. The message is clear — the crystal sea speaks of the **nature in which they stand**, and their **walk** has become stable and transparent!

The sea of glass *mingled with fire* represents the purification that is necessary for every son of God who enters the throne zone. It is not possible to partake of the realm of God's sovereign, unlimited, omnipotent power and authority until we have passed through the crystal sea mingled with fire and been purged from all carnality and self-hood by the quickening radiance of Christ's own pure and divine life. By the regenerating power of the living water which Christ is we lose the scent of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every son of God is today passing through the sea of divine purification, into the state of transparency, which gives us access to the throne-room of God!

It is here that all the fickle emotions of the soul and the relentless passions of the body have been put under our feet until they toss us no more. There is a great calm! There is substance — a solid foundation — under our life and our walk, for we cannot fail to observe that God Himself possesses the same attributes as the glassy sea which surrounds His throne. The sea before the throne is the very nature of God established within a people until they stand and walk in the power of it. The sea is the emblem of mystery in many of the apocalyptic writings. But here we are told that the mystery which surrounds the nature of God is no longer mystery to those who are able to see Him *as He is*. The sea of glass is crystal clear with the light of truth! The glassy sea is thus a beautiful figure for the perfect revelation of the grace, righteousness, and glory of God.

Those who stand upon the sea of glass have escaped from the imprisonment of self into the mind of Christ. They have lost themselves so completely in the life of God that there is no longer any distinction between "I" and "Christ." They have reached the good beyond the good; the right within the right; the truth of which the truth we have known is but the shadow. They have been lifted out of the tossing sea of human passion and carnal understanding into the eternal calm of Christ-consciousness. These love without fear of losing, and worship without ceasing that which is the living God reflected in our own being — our very reality and state of being, *being the homage* we render unto Him who is the source and substance of all.

All who attain to the heights in God are moved to climb the steep and winding path that leads from the valley of the shadow of death to the everlasting heights of divine life and nature. As we scale the heights of mount Zion we **become what we seek!** We shall never enter upon the realization of any reality which is external to ourselves. Knowing is being, and apart from *being* there is no knowing of the things of God! Only those who can stand upon the glassy sea, are those who walk in the spirit and come off victorious in the conflict with the beast of the flesh and the carnal mind. That means waging war with the foul and degrading desires of the flesh and the deceptive illusions of the old Adamic mind — even the "good" religious mind! When the sea waves toss your little ship to and fro in the storms of life, lift up your eyes to the throne in the midst of which is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Understand that that throne is here now — the power and dominion of the Christ within ourselves is strong and mighty enough to cause us to enter into our full heritage in God! To follow Jesus to the heights of victory; to be privileged to gaze upon that infinite crystal sea, the manifested life, light, love, righteousness, and power of Christ in our very own spirits, is the vision John saw and has shared with us. The reality is far greater than the symbol!

The following words from the pen of brother Carl Schwing resonate profoundly within my spirit today: "A glorious visitation of the Holy Spirit draws near. He is going to annihilate us. This will be the true 'Slain by the Spirit' experience. He is the consuming fire of God! He will consume all that is left of

'self.' His holy flames will consume all the marks and traces of our religiousness and self-righteousness. All of our fears and worries, doubts and failures, and all of our pious opinions and judgments of others will become dust upon the holy ground of the Lord. This, the Spirit must do...for our Beloved would then take us unto Himself. He is the most holy temple of God. He will clothe us with the incorruptible garments of immortality. He will give us to have life in ourself. He will make us the lights of the world, lights that will dispel the darkness of the age. All that sit in their pews of darkness will see our great light and shall know and serve the Lord of all. And, they shall partake of the liberty of the sons of God. He will appoint us to be the 'freedom givers' to all mankind, to all creation. He will have us break asunder the gates of hell and set the captives free! He will have us shout the everlasting gospel from Zion's holy hill. And all that are in the graves of earth and of the sea will hear the word of the Lord and come forth, unto judgment. The Father's judgment is with love and wrath, thus, His mercy will prevail and all, in their time and order, shall find reconciliation through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The world has never known or experienced such love, mercy, grace, and power! In the place where hell once dwelt, a garden will appear. Eden will flourish again! Flowers that are everlasting, with blossoms of mercy and scents of compassion, shall bloom profusely. The sounds of sorrow and moans of despair shall be no more. For, in the joy of redemption, the former inhabitants have gone to kiss the feet of God. Hallelujah!"

I'm sure it would be thrilling to stand upon a literal, physical sea of glass and play a harp while waving a palm branch. But that would change nothing within us! How much more glorious to stand in that **eternal calm** where all warfare, strife, struggle, fear, temptation, and failure have forever ceased — far, far above our own soulish efforts, yet deep within our spirits even now! When shall we behold that glorious expanse of righteousness, peace, and joy? When? Only when we ourselves **become** the perfectly manifest life, light, and love of God, eternally at one with Him, and with all that is His image and likeness. This alone is real; all else is but seeming. There is nothing beyond the crystal sea but the throne of God!

TRIED BY FIRE

Tried in the fire, consumed in the flame,
Melted till nothing of self remains;
Tried in the furnace till God only sees
The beauty of Jesus reflected in me.
Tried in the fire till all self has died,
Tried in afflictions with Christ crucified;
With much pain and tears, pressed out of measure,
For God is preparing **HIS** special treasure.
The great Master Builder knows how to make
A man in His likeness with not one mistake;
He works with precision His image to mold —
Not one that's earthly, but one that's pure gold.

Sister Lee Cline

Chapte 175

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and *them that had gotten the victory* over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God” (Rev. 15:2).

We are inclined to lightly pass over many profound statements of truth in the word of God. In glorious rapture John beheld the awe-inspiring scene of the sea of glass mingled with fire, and that illustrious company of “them that come off victorious,” or literally in the Greek text, “*those conquering away from*” the beast, and from the image of him, and from the number of the name of him, standing upon this sea. The King James Bible says that they had gotten the victory “over” the beast, but the Greek preposition is *ek* meaning “out of” or “away from,” signifying the “exodus” of the saints from the bestial nature of the flesh, from the world and all its power, and from the carnal church systems of man. The word, also, not only indicates a victorious emergence from the conflict in these realms, but points to the eternal separation from all these by an abundant entrance into a new and glorious place in God. They are no longer in the fight, but victors returned from it. They no longer utter prayer, the symbol of struggle. Prayer has been turned into song! They sing the song of Moses the servant of God — that song which is the type of thanksgiving for every deliverance from the oppressor that is given to men here below. And the song of the Lamb — which gathers up all earth’s songs of deliverance into one mighty hymn of praise. They have overcome, and the power and wrath of the beast can reach them no more! They now stand upon the glassy sea and behold with unveiled face the beatific vision!

This people, this corporate people, this praising people, this overcoming company, those who had harps and were singing, had been delivered *out from* the beast of the old Adamic nature and its world system; *out from* the image of the beast — the man-made church systems incorporated, organized, and fashioned after the institutions of the world; *out from* the mark of the beast — the idolatry of all human wisdom; and *out from* number of the beast — the fullness of the strength of man.

If you can see it, my beloved, this victory ***away from*** the beast is that work which the apostle sets forth in Galatians 6:14, wherein he says, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*” There are vast multitudes of believers in the church systems today who may have grasped the concept of the death of Christ for them, and go about glibly declaring that Jesus died for them, and yet they do not even faintly perceive the fact that this also means that THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED UNTO THEM. When the Bible speaks of the world in the New Testament, it is not referring to planet earth nor to the created universe, not to the seas and clouds and mountains and flowers, but almost always to the **world system** — the corrupt world order with all its evil devices, with all its vain and false and selfish and corrupt desires, with all its flesh-oriented goals and purposes, its self-centeredness and egotism. The “world” in scripture is this whole carnal system of man’s invention that passes from father to child down through the centuries. It finds expression through government, politics, religion, education, economics, military, culture, tradition, and institutions by the thousands. The result of man’s departure from the life and leadership of the Spirit has been the establishment of a whole vast *system*, which the Holy Spirit testifies is ***passing away***.

If we are God’s called and chosen elect the world has been crucified to us; it is dead. It is somewhat like a man who loves a woman. He greatly loves her and is ravished by her beauty and grace. But one day she dies, perhaps even in his arms. He looks down at her body which just a moment ago

was warm and moving. Now all is still and silent. The light has gone from the eyes. Perhaps, if he really loved her, he might even yet smother her face with his kisses. Wait but an hour or so and that body will grow cold, and a little longer and it will no longer be soft, but now stiff and cold. Wait but a few days and it will begin to rot and stink. A week later one would not be able to stand to go into the room with it. That is what the Lord says should be happening in every saint's life concerning this whole world system, with all its vaunted success, all of its lofty goals, with all its economics, politics, and religion. The world has already received at the cross, its death blow. Our Lord Jesus not only gathered the whole race of men into himself upon His cross, but also the whole world system of man, and all was crucified with Him and in Him. That is what Paul is telling us in the plainest of words! Even its king, the devil, has received a wound in his forehead from which he will utterly perish. So this system is crumbling into oblivion. It still looks quite beautiful to those who love and adore it, but even now we can smell the putrefaction of it. For the sons and daughters of the Most High it has lost its allurements together with all its tinsel and successes which men in the world count of great value and of high esteem.

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

Indelibly stamped upon my memory is the time, many years ago, when we were involved in a mighty and glorious move of the Spirit of God. At that time we were flowing with a group of brethren in Florida who had been led out of the Mennonite denomination as well as various other church movements by the blessing and leading of the Holy Spirit. Those were days of heaven-sent glory and how fresh, how powerful, how awe-inspiring was the word of the kingdom of God and the great truth of sonship that flowed out from the spirits and lips of men anointed and quickened by the Holy Ghost!

Sadly, however, I must report that it was not long until the harlot of Babylon rose up in the midst with her wanton seductiveness and men of God began to be drawn aside by her fleshly allurements and enticements. One of the key brethren in that move was invited to attend an Oral Roberts Ministers Conference where he, with many other ministers, was instructed by supposedly Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered, and Spirit-led men ***how to promote a ministry***. Worldly methods of public relations, promotion, fund-raising, etc. were introduced as instruments of the Holy Spirit to accomplish great things for the kingdom of God. Use your name, put your name to your ministry, promote yourself, post your picture on every page of your publications, always have a project — make that project bigger and more grandiose than any that have gone before — and make it far beyond your financial means, as a tool for raising *more money* to do *greater things* for God. With such cunning craftiness the ministers of God were taught worldly-wise methods and techniques to induce the Lord's people to send them their tithes and offerings in order to build their ministries into an empire and propel their influence into regions of recognition, fame, and fortune — all in the name of Jesus!

When this dear brother arrived home from that conference he was literally *full* of these carnal, Babylonian ideas! Under his leadership the work began to move away from the liberty, leadership, and power of the Spirit into flesh-oriented channels of man's invention. Some precious brethren made their way into this brother's office, weeping, pleading with many tears, even prostrating themselves before him, entreating him in the love of Christ not to follow this new course. But he hardened his heart against them and set himself to promote himself and carry the work with him.

As we sought to follow God and walk in the glorious liberty and leadership of the Spirit and the beautiful light of revelation and truth as He shed it upon our pathway, it was not long before we knew within ourselves that we could no longer walk with God and walk with this ministry, too. The spirit within was calling for a separation. We had no inclination to create confusion, strife, division, or disorder, or to endeavor to draw people unto ourselves or have them follow us out to another pasture. We were content to quietly and unpresumptuously slip away to follow the paths of Father's leading in our lives. While we sensed in our spirits the way of the Lord for us in this, we had not shared our convictions with anyone but continued to walk softly, waiting upon the Lord.

I shall never be able to forget that bright Sunday morning when, standing in front of the church building just before the morning service, a sister in the Lord approached me and said, "Brother Eby, I have a word from the Lord I must share with you." She continued, "The Lord gave me a dream and I saw a funeral in this church. The casket was in place before the platform and the building was packed with people. You were sitting in the first pew in front of the casket. Suddenly, I saw you slip down out of your seat — you crawled under the pew and began to scoot your way under all the pews until you reached the front (entrance) of the auditorium. Then you stood up and simply walked out the front doors." I thanked the sister for sharing the word while within myself my heart was giving thanks to God for this beautiful confirmation I had been waiting for. The message was just this: There is *death* in the pot! There is *death* in the camp! The move of God in this place has come to an end — the revival is dead. You are now attending the funeral. You are sitting in a prominent place in the presence of death. You are not to cause a stir nor even raise your voice publicly in protest. It is time to simply disappear from the scene. "Come away with me, my love!" And so we did.

Ah, yes, we had gotten the victory "away from" the beast, from the beastly system of man, away from the allure of the harlot, away from the path of the flesh, the world, and the devil! To come "out from" is to free oneself to "come into" union with Christ in the Spirit! It is indeed wonderful!

George Warnock wrote in one of his books: "We are told that 'the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for *the manifestation of the sons of God.*' Paul tells us that the creation was 'made subject to vanity'...not of its own will. But when man who was put in charge of planet earth, lost his fear of God — God subjected the rest of creation to vanity. Yet He did so in hope! For He purposed that this defiled creation would arise in new splendor, and into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. 8:19-21). Creation does not know why it is groaning, or if there is any hope. But God knows why, and He tells us why: it is because they have hope of deliverance in *the unveiling of the sons of God...which is nothing less than the Son of God Himself being revealed and shining forth in His many brethren.* And it is for this unveiling that creation is groaning and travailing. For these sons will radiate the glory of THE SON, not their own glory. Their glory must come to ashes, that the Son alone might be glorified in them.

"It was not the fault of the lower creation that the animals became wild and fierce, and the land of fruitfulness became dry, barren, and desolate — it was man's fault. The animals only tear and rend their prey because man lost his fear and respect for God, and in so doing his authority over the animal world and over nature, has been greatly eroded. As the hearts of men are changed, so are the hearts of the wild beasts. We see a touch of this from time to time — as a foretaste I believe, of the glory of the kingdom that is yet to be revealed, when the fear of God returns to God's people, and His sons radiate His glory in the earth.

"Many years ago I read this story about Sadhu Sundar Singh, a man of India who ministered in the early part of the last century. One evening he was sitting outside on a log, near the mission home where he was staying — and the people inside suddenly saw something that startled them. It was getting dark, and a leopard was climbing up the hillside, coming toward the Sadhu who was sitting there enjoying the evening air. They saw the leopard walk over to him, and the Sadhu reached out his hand and gently stroked his fur. Why should wild beasts fear a man such as this, who was

walking in the fear of his Creator — and their's? I heard William Branham tell a story something like that. When he was a park warden he had occasion to go into a certain wilderness area. He left his truck and walked some distance, then suddenly he saw this wild bull charging him. The owners had transferred the bull to this wilderness area because he was a valuable animal — but he was a killer. Brother Branham reached for his gun...but he had left it in the truck. Then he said something very unusual happened. Immediately there came over him a tremendous wave of the love of God for that poor creature — not a prophetic word of power, but a surging of God's love for this ignorant beast. Then he turned to the bull and apologized: 'I am sorry for having disturbed you this way — now go and lie down.' We call situations like this miraculous...because they are infrequent. But when man returns to God from disobedience and rebellion, the authority that he once had over the planet will return. Our Lord Jesus already has this power and authority, and *reigns as a conquering Lamb on the throne*. And He will share His dominion with His many brethren, *in the day of His power*.

“Perhaps many who read these words are asking, When will God manifest His sons in this manner? But the real question is not *WHEN* it will happen — but **HOW** must we prepare our hearts for it to happen? How senseless it would be if we could tame the wild animals that sneak around our home — but **have no power to conquer the wild beasts in our own natures, or subdue the beastly hearts of men that fight against the Lamb and His people?**” — end quote.

Ah, there you have it! If we cannot overcome the beast within us, nor the bestial system of the world, nor the beastly system of man's religion, there is no need to think about the wild lions and tigers! The natural is always a picture of the spiritual, and nowhere is this more true than in the imagery of the book of Revelation.

Long ago, back in seventeenth century England, an anointed preacher of London, John Everard, spoke the following words of truth and wisdom: “Beloved! I tell you, if you but take this key, to unlock this book (Revelation), the precious treasure chest of God, you will find precious jewels come tumbling down to your hand. Every man, before he becomes a spiritual man, was a carnal man, a natural man. And this natural man *possessed his house*, and he is the *strong man* of whom our Lord spoke in Matthew 12:29. And whenever I speak of the *strong man*, or the *old man*, or *sin*, or the *devil*, or *satan*, or *lucifer*, or *antichrist*, etc., I mean and intend one and the same thing, and so does the scripture (as I conceive) and I would have you well to consider this thing; for they are those enemies the scripture most minds us of, and gives us warning to be aware of, and watch against, they be our bosom enemies, that betray us. As for outward enemies, we meddle not with them, for these are our grand and mortal enemies. But the scripture has given these enemies, or rather this enemy of ours, *several names*, that thereby we may come to know him, or by some of them at least; that we may see in ourselves the several effects of all those names, although all is but one and the same thing, even the body and person of Antichrist. So long as this *strong man*, or this *antichrist*, or this *wild beast* keeps the house, that is so long as our own wisdom, gifts, strength, abilities of nature, reason, understanding, will, affections — so long as these keep the house, Jesus Christ is crucified. But when the strong man is bound, and cast out, then is there the revelation of the true Master of the house, the revelation of the spirit of the living Christ” — end quote.

The manifestation of the sons of God is not a doctrine, it is the revelation of the wonderful purpose of God for the next step in the development and triumph of His kingdom. And while it is true, He sets HIS SEAL upon those He has called unto His purposes, there must be also a response on our part, and this is the kind of act that the Lord Jesus is speaking of when he says, “He that has received *His testimony* hath set *his seal* to this, that God is true” (Jn. 3:33). Praise God, there is a people, even in this dark hour, who are setting *their seal* to the truths the Spirit is revealing, agreeing with God, not willing to accept the emptiness of man-made religion as God's instrument for this hour, unwilling to be content to possess only an earnest of the Spirit or to settle for anything less than HIS FULLNESS, and living in daily anticipation of the GREATER GLORY to be revealed in God's sons.

There is such a deep desire within to be freed from every aspect of the character of the beast, cleansed and purified, transformed into HIS IMAGE, until the life and glory and power of God shall flow from our lives setting all creation free. Our spirits shout, AMEN! Those who put **their seal** to the word God is speaking to His chosen ones in this new day of the Lord have a single eye unto HIM. Not a divided vision, for “a doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways...let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord.” Today he wants to be a son, tomorrow he wants to serve the flesh, or join himself to some harlot system, and in all the vacillating between he will receive nothing from God. All who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship now face the hour of TOTAL COMMITMENT UNTO CHRIST AND TO THE TRUTH, even though it means taking a stand against our own flesh, and all we hold dear, while it is dealt with by His cross.

I have said it a thousand times and will now say it again — I believe I speak the truth when I say that many of us have reached the point of no return — there is nothing to go back to, not in the flesh, not in the world, not in the church systems, there is nothing out of which we have been drawn to which we would return, it is all empty, meaningless, lifeless, worthless, it has all been crucified unto us, and us unto it, and we feel that in some measure we have *gotten the victory away from the beast, and away from his image, and away from his mark, and away from the number of his name*. It is vain to come out unless we are committed to **enter in**. We are committed to a course which cannot be altered, for even now as we stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, receiving the harps of God in our hands, it is fixed in its destination — His throne! “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21). Precious friend of mine, have you set YOUR SEAL to the inward testimony of God’s purpose in this hour, and His will in your life? “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. 3:13-14).

I have sometimes wondered if after Adam and Eve sinned, they sensed that all around them God’s creation was falling. Did they recognize that creation was already or would soon begin groaning in pain? Adam and Eve did know that they were now different, and that difference was not good! Their nakedness made them feel ashamed. Their hearts wanted to avoid God rather than embrace Him. For the first time in his life Adam looked for a way to place blame instead of affection on his wife, and Eve passed blame along to the serpent, who had deceived her. For such thorough and complete damage to be reversed, something drastic would have to happen. Something powerful. Something unaffected by the creation-wide disaster that had just occurred. God’s words to Adam and Eve hinted at what that *something* would be and do: a descendant of the woman would crush the head of the serpent! How would that happen? What offspring of the woman would God send to restore all of creation? Amazingly, God would send A MAN to be the crusher! That man is Christ! Ah — it is Christ **in you**, the hope of glory! “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me,” affirmed the apostle. “Greater is HE that is **in you**, than HE that is in the world,” John wrote. THE CRUSHER IS WITHIN US!

In the Olympic games, to which Paul so often refers, there were prescribed regulations for each competitor to observe and obey in order to become eligible to race or to play in the games. These were: (1) Freemen only were eligible. (2) Ten months’ training under a professional trainer or tutor. (3) Particular attention to one’s diet. (4) Special discipline to one’s habits. (5) Repeated and continual exercise and practice.

An experienced trainer or tutor was required for the competitor to become knowledgeable of every need and detail. The scriptures reveal that our trainer and tutor is Christ Jesus our Lord, who is the Firstborn among many brethren, the Captain of our salvation, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and the Head of the body of sons. In His own experience and victory He BECAME all of that — and as we concentrate on the hope set before us, looking to that which is beyond the veil, and looking unto Jesus — Christ arises within us in our own experience and leads us to victory! With a trainer and tutor like this, how can we fail? Let us therefore give the more earnest heed, for the

words that He speaks to us He speaks within — in the crucible of experience — and the words that He speaks unto us, they are spirit, and they are life! Isn't it wonderful!

Every child of God called to sonship is now in school — under the tutorship of the indwelling Christ. For those who are consciously growing up into the image, stature, and fullness of Christ, your daily life and walk with Christ *is the classroom* in which we have special opportunity to learn to live as kings and priests in the government of God. We may feel that we graduated from school a long time ago, but that is a mistake; we hadn't even started to school at that time. When you received the call to sonship and began to be drawn out of your former life, out of your former understanding of God and His purpose, and out from your former religious associations, it was then, and only then, that you entered the school of sonship under the tutorship of the Christ. When God drew you out of the religious system and separated you unto Himself you may have felt that you “graduated” into a new realm — and you certainly did. You graduated from *kindergarten!* And immediately you were enrolled in the first grade of God's SCHOOL OF SONSHIP. In this school there is only one course taught, and that is the course of **overcoming**, which is the hardest course to master and finish known in any curriculum in the world today. This matter of disciplining one's thoughts, desires, emotions, habits; of training one's spirit and soul and body to function on the level of the mind, nature, wisdom, and power of Christ is of the greatest importance and spells the difference between success and failure in the kingdom of God. To finish this course marks the difference between being in the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, or remaining a babe in Christ, a nominal citizen in the kingdom of heaven.

Kelly Varner in one of his sermons shared these challenging and penetrating words: “The Spirit without the Word is fanaticism. Revelation without possession is delusion. Doctrine without reality is vanity. Power without righteousness is treachery. I remember a convention I was in one time with all these air-heads, helium-heads, space cadets. They knew the Bible. And those were the days when I wasn't as sweet as I am now and I said, ‘You know, y'all wear me out. You're preaching overcoming, and half of you sitting in this congregation haven't been able to even overcome in your own marriage.’ There were people sitting there married two or three times (and I'm not condemning anyone who has a second marriage), their finances were all messed up, their kids rebellious and undisciplined — and they were going to rule the world! If you can't rule your own spirit, if you can't rule your own lusts, if you can't rule your own checkbook and credit card, if you can't rule your own children — how are you going to rule the world? Give me a break!”

There are certain basic principles of the kingdom of God that must be a part of the mind-set and experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We must learn to think like God! We must begin to **RULE WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE!** Too many saints are weak, frustrated, and defeated. May the dynamite of God's Spirit blow us all out of the low places of lethargy, discouragement, oppression, and defeat into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy, and triumph in the kingdom. “Strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armor of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world — the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in this heavenly warfare. Wherefore put on the complete armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground in the evil day, and having *fought to the end*, **TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD**” (Eph. 6:10-14, Weymouth).

We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of **UNIVERSAL DOMINION**. But, as Kelly Varner has pointed out, how can a man rule over principalities and powers and worlds and universes if he is unable to *rule his own spirit and his own affairs?* “He that ruleth His own spirit,” said the wise man, “is better than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32). The awful betrayal, trial, mockery, beating, and crucifixion of Jesus is the most shining example. It is difficult to imagine any humiliation more bitter than that. It is

the worst indignity that anyone can be called upon to endure. Few have ever had to bear it. Never was dishonor less deserved, never was dishonor more bravely borne. Through that fierce and heated hour our Lord bore Himself with quiet dignity. Others were convulsed with uncontrolled passion, He alone was calm and self-possessed. Can you not see it — His victory over Himself was greater than His victory over His enemies! In such experiences of provocation, truly, “He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” Ah, yes, we have within us today not only the One who **can** overcome in all things, but the One who **HAS** overcome! He that is *in you is mighty!*

Our God is a God of principle. He does not do anything by chance. It is my deep conviction that what happens in your life and mine is a result of the use or abuse of the principles of the kingdom of God. Learn this, beloved, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: **OUR AUTHORITY IS OVER SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS FIRSTLY IN OURSELVES!** “To him that overcometh will I (consequentially) give power over the nations: and he shall rule them...” (Rev. 2:26-27). “To him that overcometh will I grant (consequentially) to sit with me in my throne” (Rev. 3:21). As I have pointed out many times before, the journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The kingdom of God is ***within you***. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from universe to universe, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the galaxies, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to **MAKE WAY FOR THE KING!** This present time 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 heavenlies. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only an age and 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, heart of His heart, mind of His mind, nature of His nature, life of His life!

To those who love God and revere His word, to those who are enrolled in His great School of Sonship, to those who finish the prescribed course, to those who learn all the lessons, gaining the knowledge within themselves proven in their own experience — there is a glorious ***graduation day!*** In a very real sense, was this not what John beheld in transfixed wonder that long-ago day on Patmos! Methinks he saw the graduation exercises for all the holy sons of God out of the ages. Not in an auditorium, not in a stadium, not in a vast amphitheater was this celebration carried forth, but upon a shimmering sea of glass mingled with fire! There stand all those blessed ones who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, and they have the harps of God, and they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb! They are *“him that overcometh.”* What a divine extravaganza!

Some time ago I read the following story in one of the many magazines that come across my desk. There was a farmer who had an old mule who fell into a well. The farmer heard the mule braying and came to its rescue. But after sizing up the situation, the farmer decided that neither the mule nor the well were worth the trouble it would take to save either. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened along with what he had decided to do; bury the old mule now (in the well) and put him out of his misery. This, the farmer said, would be the humane thing to do. The men immediately got to work and began burying the mule. Of course, the mule became panicky at first. However, as the farmer and his neighbors continued to shovel dirt on him, a thought came to the old mule: every time the men shoveled dirt on his back, he would shake it off and take a step up!

Now the mule did this following each shovelful of dirt that was pitched into the well. *Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up. SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP!* No matter how distressing the situation seemed or how painful the falling load of dirt felt, the old mule fought His panic and just kept right on shaking it off and stepping up. Thus, it wasn't very long before the old mule stepped triumphantly over the wall of the well! What appeared to be the end for this mule was just another chapter in its life and what was meant to bury him actually blessed and saved him! And that, dear

one, IS THE LAW OF OVERCOMING! The fiery trials, the testings, problems, difficulties, painful situations, onslaughts of the adversary, persecutions, obstacles, stones in our pathway — all can be stumbling blocks that trip and defeat, or we can make them **stepping stones to the throne!** Ah, yes, we can allow these obstacles to overcome us, or we can draw from the mighty strength of the *Victor within* and SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! **SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP!** We will soon begin to see that the adversities of life that threaten to “bury” us are laden with potential benefit and blessing — the stepping stones that carry us to a higher realm in God! And when we step out of our own personal well of entrapment, when we step over the wall of that well, we step out into the bright glory of God upon the sea of glass mingled with fire; we receive the harp of God and the divine ability to play its majestic chords of praise while we sing the mighty song of deliverance and triumph — song of Moses and the Lamb. It is graduation day, and now the hour has come to receive the judgment, the authority, the dominion reserved for the sons of the Most High. Oh, the mystery of it!

THE HARPS OF GOD

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, *having the harps of God*” (Rev. 15:2).

Let us now for a moment pay attention to their song. It must not escape our attention that they sing their song upon “the harps of God.” This means “harps provided by God,” just as in the phrase, “the righteousness of God.” Miriam’s timbrel was made by man; so were the harps constructed by David’s order, and used in the temple service of earth. But these are the harps of God! That is, God Himself has given them their instruments of music. He is the craftsman of their harps. He is at the same time the author of their song. Never would they have sung this song were it not for the grace, purpose, and power of God! Never would they have persevered and remained steadfast through the intensity of the fire unless God through Jesus Christ had raised up the stability of the Christ within them. Never would they, therefore, have been able to sing this song, were it not that God Himself had formed them to be His people. **THEY HAVE THE HARPS OF GOD!** It is *His harp* and it is *His song* just as it is *His sea of glass* and *His throne* to which they have now been brought!

It follows that these melodious instruments reveal the great truth that we, as God’s elect, are called and chosen to be instruments of praise in which there is found only perfect tuning. As we receive these harps there is no more of the carnal discord of egocentricity, professional form, and fleshly zeal which have marred our praise. Our spirits, perfectly tuned to the will and way of our Father, will sound a perfect unison with all of creation. As we ascend into the throne zone in our high calling in Christ, there is no dissonance in that glorious rendition, for every fiber of our being vibrates with the praise of the Lamb who has made us kings and priests unto God!

Surely now we can plainly see that the idea is not that everyone will one day go to heaven and learn to play a harp, but that there is a *realm in God* where our entire nature and being throbs with heavenly harmonies, for the strings of our inner son are perfectly in tune with the mind and heart of our Father, because of the mighty transformation wrought by the life of the indwelling Lamb. As this is accomplished in us we all begin to fulfill the injunction of the Psalm which says, “Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth” (Ps. 33:1-4). You say, “But I can’t sing and I don’t know how to play the harp or any of those other instruments.” That’s *not the message!* The “harp” is a symbol of perfect praise pouring forth from all of God’s elect. And not merely the act of *praising*, but the very *becoming a praise* and the *being of praise*, as it is written, “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He **make Jerusalem a praise** in the earth” (Isa. 62:6-7). Again, “So have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah (praise), saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and **for a praise**, and for a glory...” (Jer. 13:11). Yet

again, “Having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...**to the praise of the glory** of His grace...in whom also we have obtained an inheritance...that **we should be to the praise of His glory**” (Eph. 1:5,6,11,12).

The harp in scripture is also symbolic of the prophetic ministry. As the incense connects with the priest's ministry, so the harp connects with the prophet's! We read that the prophet Samuel informed king Saul, “Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, *and a harp before them*, and they shall prophesy” (I Sam. 10:5). We read that king David set apart the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthan, “*who prophesied with a harp*” (I Chron. 25:1-3). And in Psalms 49:4 we read, “*I will open my dark sayings upon the harp.*” The harp, therefore, is symbolic of the prophetic ministry in the highest sense of the word! It bespeaks THE REVELATION AND UNVEILING OF THE DEEP MYSTERIES OF THE WORD, WILL, AND WAYS OF THE LORD! Thus the prophetic harps of the overcomers, as they stand upon the sea of glass, are the prophecy contained in the song of Moses and the Lamb which they sing! THEY have overcome, and now their prophecy proclaims that God's works are great and marvelous, His ways are just and true, and ALL shall fear Him and glorify His name! ALL nations shall come and worship before the Lord, for His judgments are made manifest! Oh, yes! The overcomers, the manifest sons of God, have been brought to their victory for this very purpose — that through them all creation might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! Their song is the prophecy proclaiming the great truth that God's company of king-priests shall bring the triumph of God's kingdom to pass in all realms from sea to sea and from pole to pole! It is truly wonderful!

It is interesting to note that when Israel was in the Babylonian captivity, their harps were silent (Ps. 137:2). That the vast company of God's sons are seen standing upon the sea of glass, approaching the throne, playing their harps and singing their song of deliverance indicates the finality of their deliverance and the fullness of the joy of the Lord in their hearts as well as their prophetic and creative word unto creation. By the victory of the Lamb they have joyfully and authoritatively entered into their ministry from the throne of God to deliver and restore *all things*. These victorious overcomers are seen celebrating the true joy and power of the kingdom of God! They are experiencing within themselves the reality of the kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and *joy in the Holy Ghost!* With kingdom joy, vision, and power they are ready to reign! This is what is happening in the lives of God's called and chosen elect in this hour! Has not God brought us out of Babylon? Have not the heavens been opened to us? Has He not made known to us His great calling, His wonderful plan, and His great purpose in the earth, in His elect, and in the universe? Is not God establishing His throne of dominion within our hearts? Has He not imparted to us a vision and a word for the nations? Are we not playing our harps and singing our song by the unction of His Spirit within? There is power in those harps and there is deliverance in our song! We only play these harps and sing this song in the **throne zone**. It is here that we declare the creative word of the Lord through prophetic worship and praise which has the power to break every yoke, delivering and transforming all creation. Even now we see the power of God's arm which is stretched forth through the prophetic worship and praise of His people! And it is this mighty power of prophetic praise that shall devastate the carnality of the earth realm in preparation for the revelation of the glory of God!

We met these harps and the song earlier in Revelation chapters eight and fourteen. We identify these harpers and singers with the one hundred and forty-four thousand on mount Zion (Rev. 14) and with the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in Revelation 5:8 — it is the same emblem only varied in details. The harps are *always* in the book of Revelation associated with the overcomers, the sons of God. There is a significant difference, however, between the harpists and the song sung in chapter 14 and the scene in our present text. In closing, let us consider this difference.

When John saw the hundred and forty-four thousand standing upon mount Zion he also heard and saw the following. “And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice

of a great thunder: and I heard *the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand* which were redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:2-3). As John stands enthralled by the scene of the hundred and forty-four thousand on mount Zion, he hears a voice, a sound **from heaven**. This sound does *not* come from mount Zion. It seems distinguished from the voice of the hundred and forty-four thousand. It comes out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! It is a voice apart from the mount Zion realm, as we shall see. If you read the text carefully you will notice that it is the harpists out of a heavenly dimension who are singing to the music of their harps — *not* the hundred and forty-four thousand on mount Zion.

“They sing” refers to the harpists whose sound comes from heaven — out of a realm of the Spirit. Thus, the song is sounding forth from the “voices in heaven” and not from the Lamb and His followers on mount Zion. Can we not see by this that the song is for the *benefit* and *blessing* of God’s king-priest company on mount Zion, but it is not they who are at this point actually singing the song! Instead, they are *hearing* the song — it is as though a great orchestra and choir have been assembled out of a heavenly realm to perform before God’s called and chosen elect who are following the Lamb up the mount Zion in order to inspire, quicken, and renew within them the message and revelation contained in the song! Isn’t that marvelous!

And now comes the final proof. “*And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*” Can you see the picture — the hundred and forty-four thousand are standing on mount Zion **listening** to this “as it were a new song” *in order to learn it!* And no man — no man in heaven above, no man in earth beneath, no man anywhere at all in all of God’s vast universe, could **learn** that song **except** the hundred and forty-four thousand which were redeemed from the earth! On the part of the followers of the Lamb on mount Zion this was not a **singing** experience, it was a **learning** experience! Let us now see the enormous depth that streams to us out of this sublime scene. The hundred and forty-four thousand have just been redeemed from the earth realm, raised up out of a natural, earthly, limited, human, carnal consciousness, identity, and state of being into the heavenly, spiritual, divine, infinite consciousness, identity, and state of being of quickened, changed, transformed Christ-men. And in this heavenly state there immediately falls upon their spiritual ears the majestic chords and powerful message of a song which is “as it were a new song,” which at first *seems* new to them — yet, somewhere, far away in the depths of their spirit, it stirs a chord, they have the sense that it is not really new — that indeed, somewhere, sometime, somehow **THEY HAVE HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE!** And now they must **learn**, actually **re-learn** it, just as in all of our spiritual experience we are being *re-deemed, re-newed, re-generated, re-surrected* — that wondrous song!

And now in chapter 15, the very next chapter of the book, the hundred and forty-four thousand overcomers have been *handed* the harps of God and they have thoroughly *learned* that song for they are now *singing* the song. Here we are even given the name of the song — The Song of Moses and the Lamb! Having passed through all the testing and provings of the sea of glass mingled with fire, these now stand triumphantly by the sea, holding the harps of God, and rapturously intoning the victorious song which not only expresses their glorious triumph but prophetically heralds God’s new day of salvation and deliverance for all the nations of mankind! Isn’t it wonderful!

Chapter 176

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb...” (Rev. 15:3).

When Israel, standing on the banks of the Red Sea, looked back and saw their old masters dead upon the shore, their hearts thrilled with joy and the sands of the desert vibrated and re-vibrated as Moses led in the song of victory and deliverance. The allusion here is to the Israelites of old who, after having passed through the Red Sea dry shod, thus securing perfect and blessed deliverance from the bestial system of Egypt, stood upon the shore singing the song of Moses, Miriam and the women playing their timbrels, while their enemies with their chariots and their chosen captains perished in the waters (Exodus 15).

Here is another sea — a sea of glass and fire. Here is another company, standing on another shore, that has won the victory over its enemies. Who might this company be? What might be the sea upon whose shore they sing the song of triumph and praise to their Lord and Deliverer? Methinks I have stood upon that very shore. As surely as the raging sea bespeaks multitudes of surging, clamoring, restless, sinning humanity, so does the exquisite sea of glass represent an assembled throng of transformed saints in whose hearts the spirit of the Lamb rules. This great sea of the sons of God is calm, serene, tranquil, and quiet — the bestial nature has been dealt with and these abide in the peace, joy, righteousness, and power of the kingdom of God. Ah, yes, I have stood upon that shore, yea, and do stand with an innumerable company of men and women whose faces are set and whose hearts are fixed to do only and completely the will of the Father. These are they who live and walk in the Spirit, the firstborn-destined who are being delivered from the power of the beast. The glassy sea is here *mingled with fire* — the fiery trials and processings by which the Father purifies His sons, sharpening their vision, whetting the appetite for things eternal and heavenly, slackening the desire for all that is earthly and worldly.

How the courts of heaven ring for joy as this illustrious company sings the song of Moses the servant of God! But there is a new note and a new stanza in that song. Not only is it the song of Moses but it is also the song of the Lamb! Truly this is one of the most fascinating songs mentioned in all the Word of God! The song of Moses and the Lamb — whatever can it mean? In transfixed wonder John caught the echo of this mighty anthem as it burst from the lips of those who have conquered the power of the beast — the bestial nature of man, and the bestial system of the world. It is the song of the great leader of Israel just after he and his followers had passed in safety through the Red Sea. It is the song of Moses because it voices the praise of those who, like Israel of old at the Red Sea, have been miraculously delivered from an awful tyranny and bondage.

Now what is the song of the Lamb? The teachers and preachers in the church systems suppose it means that the blood-washed throng, the believers out of all the ages, around the throne of God in heaven, whose toils are over and done with forevermore, are those singing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” And among this throng they include all who are saved by free grace alone, including all the baby Christians and all the carnal Christians in all the carnal church systems of man, and including those who achieved an eleventh-hour death-bed repentance, and now stand with all the saints of all the ages before the throne of God in heaven singing, “Worthy is the Lamb!” If this is your conception, my friend, you frustrate the meaning, for that is not the thought conveyed by the Holy Spirit in this beautiful passage. The seer of Patmos, who was in the spirit on the Lord’s day saw, not

a company saved by free grace, but a company of *full overcomers who had **gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.*** These overcomers stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, having been purged and purified in the consuming fire of God, now having the harps of God, and it is they who sing the song of Moses and the Lamb!

The Lamb is first and foremost our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the *body* of the Lamb, that glorious company which has followed Him all the way to mount Zion by way of mount Calvary. The song of the Lamb is not the song of sinners saved by grace, as glorious as that is; it is the song of joy out of sorrow, of peace in the midst of storm, of perfection out of suffering, of light out of darkness, of righteousness triumphing over sin, of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, of life conquering death. It is the song of the **OVERCOMER!** The “Lamb” bespeaks the humiliation and suffering that leads to life and exaltation. Ah, there is no victory without a battle, no overcomer without the powers of death and hell. My soul, consider! what was that which to the seer of Patmos made the harmony complete? It was the vision of a vast multitude taking up the song — the experience — of the Lamb of sacrifice. There was a time when, to that multitude, the spectacle of sacrifice would have brought discord to the heart; but in the completed harmony it brings joy. The sweetest music is the song that is born of experience! Until we thoroughly understand how suffering is the preparation for reigning, we shall never be enthralled by the song of the Lamb. Do you not know, precious elect of the Lord, that this was from the outset of your call to sonship the goal of your being — to ***be made perfect through suffering?*** It was for this that your first innocence was clouded. It was for this that your first joy was dimmed. It was for this that you were lowered from the garden of God to the field of thorns and thistles. It was for this that your first hope was shaken — that you might reach mount Zion by the steps of mount Calvary. The minor chords of testing and trial played together with the chords of faith and patience to harmonize into the symphony of perfection and glory. The wilderness of the Son of man is better than the garden of Adam. The morning stars sang together over your untried nature; but there awaits a yet grander music — when the harps of God shall proclaim that you have conquered all and stand triumphant in His image!

It is also the song of the Lamb because it speaks of the triumph of God’s elect which leads them into the glorious liberty, image, and power of God’s Christ. It is sung by those who have **GOTTEN THE VICTORY OVER THE BEAST** — that is, those who through grace and by the inworkings of HIS LIFE were delivered from the delusions of the bestial spirit and system of this world to follow the Lamb to mount Zion. It is a song of experience, and only those who have overcome all things and stand in the glory of God within the precincts of the **throne zone** are able to join in that paean of praise!

People entertain all sorts of ideas about the song of Moses and the Lamb. Many view these as two different songs, the first about God’s saving power and deliverance, the second about God’s grace and mercy. While those elements are certainly included, it does not by any means imply that this company is singing two songs, one of Moses and another of the Lamb, but that the same song is at the same time the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Truly, the song of Moses is the song of the Lamb! Even as Moses taught his people to sing his song, so the Lamb teaches His people to sing this song. And essentially they are alike, singing the same theme, for the song of Moses is caught up into the greater glory of the song of the Lamb. Thus, the song of Moses and the Lamb is really **one song** sung **only** by the overcomers!

How can we know this? Because John **gives us the song!** Consider what he says. “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, **saying...**” And then the song begins! We don’t know the melody of the song, but that is of no importance, for the great truth the Holy Spirit would impress upon us is that throughout the scriptures a “song” denotes a “message.” In fact, a song represents both *praise* and a *message*. It is praise that bears a message, or beyond that, praise which is birthed out of revelation and experience with God. You can tell the spiritual level of a person by the songs he sings! A person’s “song” will always express his depth of understanding

and relationship with God. When we receive new revelation from the Lord, experientially inworked into our lives, a new song is created. I look back over old sermons, and sometimes I have to say to myself, "I could not preach that again." Thank God, He has been teaching me through the years of my walk in Him, leading into a fuller knowledge of truth and a deeper walk in the Spirit. Oh, yes! There is continuously a ***new song*** — a new revelation, a new message, a fresh word, a higher experience in God for this day, and for all the days to come! Those who sing the new song have outgrown the old ones. They no longer express our experience or satisfy our needs.

God is even now preparing a people, a royal priesthood, sons of the most High; and while the church world continues on with its time-honored traditions and childish delusions, singing about flying away to cabins in the corner of gloryland, or to mansions over the hill-top, a people is arising in the earth with a new and wonderful vision — to become kings and priests unto God — their hearts vibrating with the melodious strains of a ***new song***, the song of a people with a purpose, a company gathered out of the generations, grown up into the fullness of Christ, conquering every enemy within and without, which in due time shall be led forth to reveal to creation the manifest expression of His image, character, and nature, the revelation of His glory, power, and dominion, with an outflow of life, light, and love sent to change the course of history, transform the nations, and restore all men and all things back into God. This is the company standing upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, ***singing the song of Moses and the Lamb***. And what a song it is!

Ah, those who receive ***this call***, those who hold ***this vision***, those who cherish ***this hope***, those who participate in ***this dealing*** and share in ***this experience***, indeed sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! This song can be sung by none but those apprehended, those who have conquered to stand upon the sea of glass and fire. This is the ineffable, preeminent Song; ineffable because it strikes a chord, the vibration of which cannot be discerned by the carnal man; preeminent because it is the Song of the Lamb who stands in the midst of the throne, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the High Priest of ***our profession***, who in all things has preeminence!

This "song" is undoubtedly the truth of the divine purpose of the ages, or the "present truth," as we often call it. Many of those who now read these lines sense the establishment of a new order by the glorious appearing of Christ within. Within my innermost being there is an understanding and a hope that refuses to be quieted or stilled. It is the hope of overcoming all things, awaking in His likeness, with a greater glory and power than anything we have known in the past. My spirit sings the glad Hosannas of a new morning of joy, because of the vision of the greater glory and life of Christ now being raised up in His body on earth. And that song within persists until it purges out all the negative influences of the past, and cleanses me throughout. Ah, my beloved, does your spirit within you sing the glad Hosannas of this new day? Does this new song, this fresh word, this pristine working of life and resurrection power purge out all the error, carnality, sin, and death, making you pure even as He is pure?

This indeed is the glory of this new day to which we are come! The glory of Christ is now arising upon His elect sons. He is among us now in a new and greater degree of His presence, and His greater presence within is imparting a glorious song of joy and victory. Our long battle for the land of our inheritance is coming to an end. We are approaching the throne where reigns the King! We are assured that a new day is dawning not only for us, but for all the nations and for all the peoples of earth! God is about to fill the whole earth with His glory! The song within is Christ giving a fresh word of promise and fulfillment! If we have learned this "song," there is surely much cause for "abounding with thanksgiving," for it means that our great and heavenly Father has taken us into His confidence and revealed to us the hidden things of His eternal purpose. Thereby He has dispelled the darkness with which we were surrounded, and brought us out of our Babylon of confusion. The many unanswered questions which raised only doubts and fears within, have been clarified by the clear revelation of the Spirit. Now we see His glory as it is made up of His infinite wisdom, almighty power, divine righteousness, and unconditional and abounding love. Truly the Lord has put a song in our mouths — the song of Moses and the Lamb! It is a song which grows more melodious as we

continue to sing it unto the Lord and to one another, and ultimately to every nation and people and to all creation! And what joy and peace that song will bring!

As I pointed out, we don't know the melody of the song in a literal way, but that does not matter, for the great truth is that throughout the scriptures a "song" denotes a "message." You could put a hundred different melodies to the words and not one of them would change the message! The message is what God is after and it is also what the overcomer is after. And the message is just this: *"Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest"* (Rev. 15:3-4). Now, my beloved brethren, see if you can sing that song! Someone says, "Well, they are just words, I think I can sing it!" But you see, dear one, it's not a song like the songs of earth — "song" is the symbol, the code word signifying a *message*. Hear the message...see if the message strikes a chord in your heart, see if the message resonates in your spirit.

See if from the depths of being you can confidently proclaim, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways." It is the acknowledgement that all His ways in us, all His works in us, all His dealings in our lives, and everything He has injected into our experience to conform us to His will and image, the good and the evil, the blessings and the tragedies, the joyful and the sorrowful — all is **just** and **true**. Sometimes I write to people and say, "do trust you are experiencing God's very best" — and truly His best is what HE KNOWS is *best for us* even if we do not comprehend it! Daily the Lord manifests His faithfulness to us and we bear witness that His ways are altogether right. There is no denying of the testings and provings that come our way, yet in the spirit the fruits of His dealings are immense and amazing!

Beyond the manifold blessings and the unspeakable glory — also every bitter experience, every valley of the shadow of death, every sorrow and seeming tragedy, all the suffering, testing, proving, pruning, stripping, and fires of purification were **just** and **true** — and the wonderful truth gaining access and blooming in our hearts is that all of God's works in us are *great and marvelous* — *wonderful and awe-inspiring!* Oh, yes! Can you sing that song? Can you truthfully say, "I have never grumbled against your will, I have never accused you concerning the things that have happened in my life, I've never blamed you for any problems and disappointments, I've always confessed that you were just and true and faithful in everything that came my way." I do not ask whether you can *make* yourself sing it, but is it the spontaneous, rapturous melody humming in your soul? He who sings this song does not question God as to *why* this or that happened, or *why* God let it happen, or *why* it never seems to end sometimes. "I trusted you, and look what happened." That's not the right song! Those who sing the song of Moses and the Lamb have come to the place where they are assured and know beyond any hesitation or doubt that always and in all things **God is in control**, there is **divine purpose in all things**, and **nothing can happen outside of God's will**. Oh, what a song is this!

Can you also sing that HE is the Lord God Almighty, and the **King of kings**? I am reminded of something I read some years ago. At that time Bolivia, South America, was facing a national election and the nation was divided between the Christians and the Mayans. As a group of brethren in New York joined in intercession for Bolivia while the election outcome was still unknown, the following prophecy was given:

- *The leaders you see are not the leaders. Many of the leaders in the church who call themselves apostles and prophets are not. Present world leaders and those being elected are not the true leaders.*
- *As it was in the days of Moses, Pharaoh was the recognized leader, but God was leading through Moses.*
- *In the day of (another) Pharaoh, Joseph was the true leader.*
- *In the day of Saul, David was God's anointed leader.*

- *In the day of Ahab, Elijah was leading through the Word of the Lord.*
- *In the day of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was leading through his revelation of God.*
- *In the day of the king of Assyria, Hezekiah's prayer and God's answer through Isaiah were leading.*
- *In the day of Jeremiah, the kings were not leading: Jeremiah alone pronounced the seventy years of captivity and the coming judgment.*
- *In the day of Herod, John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus Christ Himself, who was and is leading.*
- *Though the nations rage, the Lord sits on His throne. They think they are in power, but the Lord puts His hook in their noses and brings them down where He wants them to be (Ezekiel 38:4).*
- *It is God who raises up leaders and takes them down, and His true, chosen leaders are about to emerge — those who have been in the time of transition and preparation, who will speak with a clear voice God's will and heart for this day.*
- *Many of the leaders you see are not the leaders, Jesus is leading, and His true leaders are emerging.*

The song continues, *"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?"* Who is the fool that would dare to doubt God's authority and power, who is the fool who would blame God for anything? The inference is that all the fools of the world shall, in the final outcome, fear the Lord and glorify His name. ALL shall honor Him and give Him glory! Is that the song within your heart, my beloved? *"For Thou only art holy."* Can we not see by these beautiful words that our only hope of holiness is Him living in us?

The song goes on, ***"For all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest."*** Can you sing that song, my beloved brother, my precious sister? Oh, I would to God that all who name the name of Christ could sing that song! How many people in hundreds of nations around the world have lived and died through long millenniums without ever hearing the only saving name known to man? It is strange that those who call themselves Christians, who believe that God is the all-wise Creator, that God is all-powerful and infinite in love, and that His Christ died for every man and is Himself Lord of all, will, in the very next breath consign the vast billions of earth's inhabitants to eternal damnation in hell. A television preacher taught on this very subject one day, and assured everyone that if those heathen went to hell forever it certainly wasn't God's fault. He used the illustration of a snakebite victim who couldn't make it to the hospital in time to be healed. What an absurd, weak, and inattentive God that preacher serves!

What a commentary on the Christians' weak faith that they so often speak and act as if the kingdom of God might perhaps not win out, as if the gates of hell might ultimately prevail, as if the unbelief of Adam were stronger than the claims of Calvary and the sin of man more powerful than the precious blood of Christ! Perish such craven fears! God plans and executes; what He initiates, He completes. Redemption is not a lifeless philosophy, but a living force, and a divinely omnipotent power. The Saviour of the whole wide world is not a dead Christ lying in a tomb to which we make pilgrimages, but is "the first and the last, and the Living One...alive forevermore" and "has the keys of death and of hell" and "has *all power* in heaven and in earth" who "is ***not willing*** that ***any*** should perish, but that ***all*** should come to repentance." Let us then sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, let us sing with all our heart and might that ALL NATIONS SHALL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE, FOR THY JUDGMENTS ARE MADE MANIFEST! Let us press on in full assurance that His kingdom shall consume all other kingdoms and that His cause will triumph in all realms everywhere until GOD IS ALL IN ALL!

There are millions of sincere believers today who are defiled by the carnal-minded doctrines of the harlot church systems and they can neither learn nor sing this song! Their hearts are unable to confess the glad truth that all nations shall come and worship before our glorious Father because His judgments are made manifest. Either they suppose that all the nations from Adam until now are beyond restoration to the love and salvation of God, or they hold to the erroneous notion that God's

judgments only punish and destroy men or drive them to blaspheme His name. Their hearts are unable to perceive the wonderful truth that it is indeed the manifest judgments of God which *induce* all the nations to come and worship before the Lord! Somehow they cannot sing that song! How my ransomed soul exults with joy unspeakable and full of glory, giving thanks to God for birthing this glad anthem deep within my spirit so that now I can sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! Isn't it wonderful!

The song of Moses and the Lamb reveals the two-fold ministry of the sons of God: *judgment* and *mercy*. On the one hand they shall exhibit His surpassing grace, while, on the other hand, they bring His manifest judgments in the earth. The more the spirit of revelation unfolds the truth, the clearer we see God's judgments in proper perspective, that they are corrective in nature and designed to bring forth a state of rightness in the earth. They are not executed, as many believe, in unmerciful and unholy vengeance, for *mercy* and *grace* shall balance the score. Judgments are desperately needed, but they are ever tempered with mercy, and when they have fulfilled their purpose, the judgments end, and the whole earth shall be full of His life and glory. Mercy recognizes the need of justice. Mercy knows that every mountain and hill must be brought low, but mercy is there to *fill up the valley* once the subduing has taken place. As the Psalmist wrote, "*Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face*" (Ps. 89:14). And again, "*I will sing of MERCY and JUDGMENT: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing*" (Ps. 101:1). Truly these words are reminiscent of the song of Moses and the Lamb!

With this thought of judgment and mercy firmly in mind, let us consider some certain and indisputable promises of God to specific peoples and nations. We all know the awful magnitude of the sin and judgment which came upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude tells us that they are "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal (Gr: age-during) fire" (Jude 7). The fire was not quenched until it had finished its work and those cities were so completely destroyed that today there is no remaining trace of them to be found. Archeologists can only conjecture as to where they may have been located. One would think that after such a complete work of judgment you could just forget about Sodom and Gomorrah and forever "write them off." And yet, the Lord holds forth the promise of the eventual restoration of such an infamous city-state as Sodom! Not only that, but His engagement to do this is linked up to His promise to restore the people of JUDAH!

Speaking to backslidden Jerusalem as to a harlot, God declares to her in His great mercy, "As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she or her daughters, as thou hast done, and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: *therefore I took them away* as I saw good. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins; but thou didst multiply thy abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done. **When** I shall bring again **their captivity, the captivity of Sodom** and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, THEN WILL I BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF THY CAPTIVES IN THE MIDST OF THEM. When thy sisters, SODOM and her daughters (including Gomorrah)...SHALL RETURN TO THEIR FORMER ESTATE, **then** thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate. For thus saith the Lord God: I will deal with thee as thou hast done...nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed. WHEN THOU SHALT RECEIVE THY SISTERS, thine elder (Sodom) and thy younger (Samaria)...I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Eze. 16:48-62).

All of this will be much easier to understand when you remember that Sodom, Jerusalem, and Samaria are only a short distance from one another. They were *sister cities*. This promised restoration of all three — has this wonderful thing been accomplished? History shouts aloud that it has not — not yet! But fear not, dear ones, for the same God of faithfulness and omnipotence who declared, "And so ALL ISRAEL **shall be saved,**" also promises, "SODOM **shall return to her**

former estate.” Not their former estate of wickedness, certainly, for then the long ages of judgment would prove fruitless. Jesus saw this coming restoration of Sodom when He announced to the citizens of Capernaum, “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works that have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, IT WOULD HAVE REMAINED UNTO THIS DAY. But I say unto you, that it shall be **more tolerable** (favorable) for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (Mat. 11:23-24).

When these two cities rise up in the day of judgment, under the ministry of the manifest sons of God, it will be far easier to bring the people of Sodom into obedience to the kingdom of Christ than the people of Capernaum. According to the estimation of Christ, although the people of Sodom were extremely vile and wicked, yet, if the mighty works which were done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom THEY WOULD HAVE REPENTED. Seeing that such is the case, if God should fail to manifest His sons and show such wonderful works to the people of Sodom, He would be most unfair and altogether **unjust!** Capernaum, therefore, will have to be dealt with much more severely! These verses can have no other meaning. And if the judgment is the same for the people of both of these cities — eternal damnation in hell-fire — then Christ’s promise that it will be “more tolerable” for the people of Sodom in the day when God’s judgments are made manifest is absolutely meaningless. How unscriptural and ridiculous are the ignorant traditions of men!

A. P. Adams has written a masterful monograph on the restoration of Sodom and I here share a portion of his scholarly wisdom. “We need not dwell upon the history of the destruction of Sodom, all are familiar with it, or may very easily make themselves so. We know that the city was so wicked that ten righteous persons could not be found within its walls and God destroyed them all by ‘a horrible tempest’ of ‘fire and brimstone’ (Ps. 11:6). ‘Terrible!’ you exclaim, ‘what extraordinary sinners they must have been to have deserved such a fearful visitation as this!’ Why, no, *they were not sinners above all men* (Lk. 13:4); in fact they were very ordinary sinners, not near as bad as many cities that are referred to in the Bible. Their sins were just the ordinary transgressions of all populous and wealthy cities, ancient and modern. What were they? ‘Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy; and they were haughty, and committed abomination’ (Eze. 16:49-50). These are not extraordinary, unusual sins. What city ever existed, or does now exist, that could not be truthfully charged with every one of the sins enumerated above? Many a city has been far worse than this! The above language would not begin to describe the ‘iniquity’ of Paris, London, or New York. But more surprising still, Sodom did not begin to be so bad as the so-called ‘holy city of David,’ proud and magnificent Jerusalem! The sin of Sodom was ‘*a very little thing*’ in comparison with the city of Jerusalem (Eze. 16:47). Think of it! We know that the sin of Sodom was ‘very grievous’ (Gen. 18:20). What then must have been the sin of highly favored Jerusalem, if in comparison therewith the sin of Sodom was ‘*a very little thing*?’

“Suppose we take the orthodox view of this case and see how well it will stand investigation. The case of Sodom is clear-cut and unequivocal. We *know* that the Sodomites were exceedingly wicked sinners (Gen. 13:3). We know that when they were destroyed there were *no righteous persons* among them. We know that they perished in their sins, and that none of them escaped, *all* were destroyed (Lk. 17:29). Hence it is positive that these wicked sinners have all gone to an **endless** hell, if the orthodox view is correct. Is such a view in harmony with the Bible teaching in regard to Sodom? As we have already noticed, the sin of Sodom was comparatively ‘a very little thing.’ If the doom of Sodom for this comparatively ‘very little’ sin is **endless torment** WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE DOOM OF JERUSALEM? What ought to be the doom of Capernaum, and of the cities that reject the Gospel? for they also are *worse* than Sodom (Mat. 10:14; 11:23-24). Sodom did not sin against light; they knew nothing of the true God or of Jesus Christ the Saviour. I know that Lot was among them, a righteous man, but we have every reason to believe that he was more interested in his worldly prosperity than in the moral welfare of those around him.

“At any rate, rejection of the truth is not mentioned in the enumeration of the sins of Sodom. Would their guilt have been any greater, if they *had* committed that sin? Certainly it would, for it is on that very account that other cities are spoken of as worse than Sodom. This was the very reason why Jerusalem was worse — because it sinned against great light; this was the very reason why Capernaum was worse; and this was the very reason given by Jesus Christ Himself why it should be *‘more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment’* than for those cities that rejected the Truth. How does the idea of its being ‘more tolerable’ for one than for another in the future process of judgment, comport with the idea of the same endless torment for all? Not at all! It is arrogant nonsense to talk about **more or less tolerable endless torment**, and anyone ought to be ashamed to believe or advocate any such absurdity.

“But graver still is the question — how can we vindicate the justice of God in His dealing with Sodom if the orthodox view is correct? Jesus plainly tells us that if Sodom had had the light and advantages that other cities had, IT WOULD HAVE REPENTED; that light was withheld through no fault of their’s, and they perished in their sins and are lost. Why did they not have that light? Why did not Sodom have as good a chance for salvation as any other class of human beings? That they did *not*, Christ plainly declares, and now their doom is sealed and they are hopelessly lost, according to the popular view, when if they had had as good an opportunity as others they would have been saved! You cannot reconcile this case with justice and equity on the ground of prevailing theology. ‘I will bring again **their** captivity, the captivity of SODOM,’ says the Lord. ‘Thy sister SODOM and her daughters shall return to **their** former estate.’ What does the personal, plural pronoun **their** refer to? the city or the people? The **people**, of course! So all through this beautiful prophecy, the most cursory reading will show that by the term **Sodom** is meant in every case the inhabitants of that ancient city. The pronouns **‘they,’ ‘their,’** and **‘them’** cannot refer to the city or to the land specifically, but to the **people** — the **inhabitants** of Sodom!” — end quote.

Another striking example of God’s dealings with nations and His future plans for them is found in the ancient nation of Assyria. It was once one of the six great empires that have ruled the civilized world, preceding Babylon. In Zephaniah 2:13-15 the Lord pronounced His judgment against Assyria, saying, “And He will stretch out His hand against the north, and **destroy Assyria**; and He will make **Nineveh** (the capital of Assyria) a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand.” Today, thousands of years later, there are still only some dirt mounds covering the site of Nineveh, nor does the kingdom of Assyria exist any more at all! How thoroughly does God execute His word!

But now, hear this! “And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day...yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt: He shall smite it and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord. In that day there shall be an highway OUT OF EGYPT TO ASSYRIA, and the ASSYRIAN shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall ISRAEL be the third with EGYPT and with ASSYRIA, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, BLESSED BE EGYPT MY PEOPLE, AND ASSYRIA THE WORK OF MY HANDS, AND ISRAEL MINE INHERITANCE.” To say that there will not be a restoration of the nation of Assyria and that God will not save that nation would be a blatant repudiation of the Word of God. And notice, too, Egypt today is a *Moslem nation* and the State of Israel is gathered in unbelief, a *secular State*; but according to the above prophecy Egypt also shall come to know the Lord and SERVE HIM AS A NATION ALONG WITH ISRAEL AND ASSYRIA. What anticipation this stirs in our hearts!

Now hear the words of the Lord against two other peoples, Moab and Ammon. “Therefore as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab **shall be as Sodom**, and the children of Ammon **as Gomorrah**, even the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation” (Zeph.

2:9). This judgment would seem to be final, and would be ***if the judgment of Sodom is forever sealed in eternal punishment*** — but it is only final ***until*** the judgment is completed! For God says of Moab in Jeremiah 48:47, “YET will I bring the captivity of Moab ***in the latter days...***” Again, in Jeremiah 49:6 the Lord promises concerning Ammon, “And ***afterward*** I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord.” If one reads only a portion of God’s words, the facts are too few to calculate rightly the curve of God’s purposes. May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God enable us to see beyond the weeping of the night that we may behold the JOY THAT COMETH IN THE MORNING!

When every judgment shall have fulfilled its purpose, the judgments will end, and ALL NATIONS shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. “And He will destroy in this mountain (the kingdom of God) the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the veil (of ignorance and blindness) that is spread over *all nations*. And He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord shall wipe away tears from off *all faces*. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in HIS SALVATION” (Isa. 25:7-9).

The Lord is King! Lift up your voice,
O earth; and all ye heavens rejoice:
From world to world the joy shall ring,
The Lord Omnipotent is King!
The Lord is King! Who then shall dare
Resist His will, distrust His care,
Or murmur at His wise decrees,
Or doubt His royal promises?
The Lord is King! Child of the dust,
The Judge of all the earth is just;
Holy and true are all His ways:
Let every creature speak His praise.
One Lord, one empire, all secures;
He reigns, and life and death are yours:
Through earth and heaven one song shall ring,
The Lord Omnipotent is King!

“Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for *all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest*” (Rev. 15:3-4).

Nothing is more evident in the Word of God than the fact that God has a great and wonderful plan which He is working out among the nations of earth. Many saints recognize that God has a predestined purpose for each of His people, an appointed end for Israel, a glorious purpose for the Church, and a foreordained plan for the overcoming sons of God. We must also understand that the Lord has a determined plan and purpose for ALL NATIONS. God is actively dealing with NATIONS!

From the first dawn of human history God has had the formation, development, and destiny of nations in mind and purpose. The present nations of earth had their origins in the early days following the Great Flood. In Genesis chapter ten is found a most remarkable and comprehensive list of the descendants of Noah who became the heads of the families and tribes which subsequently developed into nations. Even so-called higher critics have often admitted that the tenth chapter of Genesis is a remarkably accurate historical document. There is no comparable catalog of ancient nations available from any other source. It is unparalleled in its antiquity and comprehensiveness. You would do well to read the entire chapter.

The descendants of Noah migrated over the whole face of the earth, forming tribe after tribe, city after city, and *nation after nation*. Let all men know that it is the Almighty God who is the designer and architect of all the nations in the world! The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all be pre-arranged by the will of Him who “worketh *all things* after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:11). The truth of this cannot be made any plainer than it is by Moses when he declares, “When the *most High divided the nations* their inheritance, when *He* separated the sons of Adam, *He set* the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deut. 32:8). Paul refers to this very passage when he says, “And hath made of *one blood all nations* of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and *hath determined the times before appointed*, and the *bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord*” (Acts 17:26-27). How plain it is that it was GOD who, from that long-ago beginning, set the bounds of habitation or the national boundaries of *all nations*. These boundaries were established in relation to the vast multitude of Israel peoples and with a view to their being able to *seek after the Lord*.

Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and planted Israel of old at the crossroads, to the end that ALL NATIONS *should seek after the Lord*. Out of Israel came the Christ; out of Christ has come the church, His bride (Eph. 5:21-33); out of the church comes the manchild, the overcoming sons of God who are destined to reign with Christ and deliver the whole creation that it might be fulfilled which God promised father Abraham: “And in thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED” (Gen. 22:18). ALL NATIONS *shall be blessed!* What a prospect! From the very beginning God not only designed the nations of men that dwell upon the earth; He also planned and purposed to *bless them* — each and every one of them! This signifies not merely the blessing of Israel, nor the blessing of the church, nor the blessing of the saints of God within the nations; it is THE NATIONS THEMSELVES that must come under the gracious hand of God in blessing and quickening. Oh, the wonder of it!

The sweet singer of Israel sang of this blessed hope in the spirit of prophecy: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among ALL NATIONS. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee! O let THE NATIONS be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt JUDGE THE PEOPLE righteously, and GOVERN THE NATIONS upon earth...yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him: ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM” (Ps. 67:1-4; 72:11). What a word! It is obvious that all nations do not today serve the Lord, neither do all kings (rulers) fall down before Him. China does not serve the Lord, neither do its rulers acknowledge Him. Iran does not serve the Lord. Japan does not serve the Lord. Great numbers of nations do not today serve the Lord, and few of their rulers fall down before Him. But the day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Saviour. If that day never comes, then the Bible will have to be relegated to the scrapheap of ancestral errors. But the promise is sure: “Arise, O God, *judge the earth*: for Thou shalt INHERIT ALL NATIONS, **ALL NATIONS** whom Thou has made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things” (Ps. 82:8; 86:9-10).

Many precious “fragments” reveal God’s ultimate purpose for mankind, when “ALL the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and ALL KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord’s and HE is the governor among the nations” (Ps. 22:27-28). For further confirmation of God’s gracious intention toward the nations let us consider the second Psalm. In this wonderful prophecy the Father is addressing the Son, saying, “Ask of me, and I WILL GIVE THEE THE NATIONS FOR THINE INHERITANCE, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession” (Ps. 2:8). Surely the will and plan of God is revealed in this most gracious request, and surely this was the purpose for which Jesus *came* and was *sent*. “The Father *sent* His Son to be the Saviour of THE WORLD” (I Jn. 4:14). With this divine plan in view, well may David triumphantly sing, “O let THE NATIONS be glad and sing for joy, for Thou shalt *judge* the people righteously, and *govern* the nations upon earth...God shall bless us, and ALL the ends of the earth shall fear (reverence) HIM” (Ps. 67:4-7). “ALL NATIONS shall call Him blessed...and blessed be His

glorious name forever, and let THE WHOLE EARTH be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen” (Ps. 72:17-19).

And this, precious friend of mine, is the message of the song of Moses and the Lamb! All the holy sons of God sing that song, for it is the song of redemption for all men and every nation. **Only** the overcomers stand upon the glassy sea intoning this hymn of salvation for all! **Only** the enlightened elect of the Lord, in whose hearts have been birthed the beautiful truths of the reconciliation of all and the triumph of the kingdom of God, are able to *learn* that song and *sing* that song! Out of all the inhabitants of the earth, **only** those who have received the call to sonship, leaving the precincts of religious Babylon, and coming under the purifying fires of God mingled in the crystal sea have been given voice to intone the beautiful strains of the song of Moses and the Lamb! The multitudes in the church systems of man have not and *can not* at this time learn this song, because of their unbelief. Oh, ye blessed sons of God, lift it up on high, let the refrain ring throughout the unbounded heavens and reverberate unto the extremities of earth — for the time is at hand!

Chapter 177

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying...Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: and *all nations shall come and worship before Thee*; for Thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:3-4).

Nothing is more evident in the Word of God than the fact that God has a great and wonderful plan which He is working out among the nations of earth. Many saints recognize that God has a predestined purpose for each of His people, an appointed end for Israel, a glorious purpose for the Church, and a foreordained plan for the manifest sons of God. We must also understand that the Lord has a determined plan and purpose for ALL NATIONS. God is actively dealing with NATIONS! Many wonderful prophecies reveal God’s ultimate purpose for the nations of mankind, when “ALL the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and ALL KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord’s and HE is the governor among the nations. Yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him: ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM” (Ps. 22:27-28; 72:11)). It is obvious that all nations do not today serve the Lord, neither do all kings (rulers) fall down before Him. China does not serve the Lord, neither do its rulers acknowledge Him. Turkey does not serve the Lord. Egypt does not serve the Lord. Vast numbers of nations in Europe, Africa, Asia, and even in the Americas do not today serve the Lord, and few of their rulers fall down before Him. But the day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Redeemer!

That is the prophetic message in the song of Moses and the Lamb! All the holy sons of God sing that song, for it is the song of redemption and kingdom blessing for all men and every nation. **Only** the blessed company of the overcoming sons of God intone this song of salvation for the nations! **Only** the enlightened elect of the Lord in whose hearts have been birthed the beautiful truths of reconciliation, manifest sonship, and the triumph of the kingdom of God, who have departed out of the precincts of religious Babylon, passing through the purifying processes of the sea of glass mingled with fire, have been given voice to sing the beautiful strains of this song of Moses and the Lamb! Others *cannot* at this time learn this song, for their minds are blinded by the deceptions of the harlot church systems which see only doom and gloom for the nations and eternal damnation for the vast majority of earth’s inhabitants. Rejoice, O ye sons of God, and lift the song up on high!

Do you not think that it is most significant that the song states clearly that all the nations shall come and WORSHIP before the Lord? It does not say that they will profess to be Christians, or that they will be baptized, join the churches, attend services, study the Bible, keep the traditions, observe the rituals and ceremonies, or a thousand and one other things that people do to distinguish themselves as “Christian.” Oh, no! But all nations shall come before the Lord and — **worship!** The thing that makes all the difference is what is meant by “worship.” The late Carl Schwing stated it so well when he wrote, “Today, as always, the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Such worship is not part of the mainstream’s preplanned programs or rituals. It has nothing to do with the day of the week, nor the hour of the day, nor the location. It does not matter if we are standing, kneeling, or sitting. Nor does it matter how much time we spend, or how many words we speak. It is the joy of *worshipping* Him face to face and hand to hand and heart to heart. It is a divine bonding of our spirit with His Spirit. It is a deeper knowledge of Him, a *knowing* of Him, the pathway of Life. When we enter this place of profound worship in the spirit, we have gone beyond the natural senses of seeing, touching, feeling, doing...into the realm of knowing that He is face to face with us...knowing that His hand is holding ours...knowing that the conversing is from His heart to ours and from our heart to His. Perchance, we would see His face, or touch His hand, or feel His

heartbeat, because He who hears in secret rewards us openly...it is because He has anointed our closet with the oil of His presence, and has given us a flashback of a time we have long forgotten.” Think of it! All nations shall come before the Lord and shall WORSHIP! No wonder only the elect sons of God can sing this song — only the *ministry* of the sons of God can deliver the nations into this place! The church systems bring people and nations into the practicing of *religion* — the sons of God bring them before the Father as WORSHIPPERS! Worship *in spirit and in truth!* What a **song!** What a **transformation!** What a **destiny!**

This is the hour, my friend, when the song of Moses and the Lamb is ringing out through the corridors of the world for all mankind to hear! Here let us pause long enough to call your attention to the thought that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is an infinite musician, and sings a song that is infinite in every perfection connected with song or singing. Has it ever dawned in your understanding that the firstborn Son of God is the consummate, superlative, and transcendent Singer, and that He Himself is the leading voice in this great song of Moses and the Lamb? We often hear of David sweeping his harp and singing his sweet psalms, but why should we overlook the fact that the Lord has His harp, and is the choir-leader in that ultimate song of complete victory which is sung on the shores of the Glassy Sea? John tells us in another place that he heard the voice of Jesus like the sound of many waters! When the great waves billow up and break on the sea-shore, they give forth all the sounds of the octave, from the deepest bass to the highest treble; and so the voice of Jesus sounded to John — His voice leading a multitude of voices — like the beautiful music of many waters on the rocks at Patmos.

I have heard it, too, and have stood enraptured in that heavenly choir as my voice has blended with His and with those elect sons of God singing just as the writer to the Hebrews has shown: “For it was an act worthy of God and fitting to the divine nature that He, for whose sake and by whom all things have their existence, in bringing many sons into glory, should make the Pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren; for He says, *I will declare (reveal) Your name to my brethren: in the midst of the worshipping congregation I WILL SING HYMNS OF PRAISE TO YOU!*” (Heb. 2:10-12, Amplified).

THY JUDGMENTS ARE MADE MANIFEST

“Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; *for Thy judgments are made manifest*” (Rev. 15:4).

We are living in an hour when God is moving mightily in the hearts of His called and chosen people preparing them to bring forth righteous judgment in the earth. “For the time is come that *judgment must begin at the house of God*” (I Pet. 4:17). Judgment begins at the house of God, saith the Lord! Oh, how that message has been butchered by the ministers of Babylon! Do you know what most folk believe it means? They think it’s saying that God is going to bring the hammer down on His people. To them it speaks of severity or an awful day of accountability and reckoning. That’s not what the inspired apostle is saying at all! First of all, the “judgment” is not a negative, it’s a positive. It translates the Greek word *krisis* from which comes our English words crisis, critical, and criteria. A *krisis*, a crisis or critical time, is a **turning point**. Very sick people often reach the point of crisis where their fever breaks, or they regain consciousness; it is the turning point in their illness, the crisis where their condition begins to improve.

God’s judgments are always unto victory! In the New Testament context God’s judgments are neither punitive nor vindictive, but rather therapeutic and corrective. Ray Prinzing once pointed out: “The certainty of justice and correction is sure — not as a negative whipping as payment for sin, but as a chastening to teach, a discipline to learn — *‘For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness’* (Isa. 26:9). The process is not an end in itself, but the means to an end — through all the judgments a vital correction is made, bringing forth a *‘godly*

sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation' (II Cor. 7:10). His judgments do not save us, but they condition and prepare us to receive HIM who is our salvation. They cause us to turn to the Lord in repentance, and we find He has been drawing us to Himself through it all."

People quote the scripture, "Judgment must begin at the house of God," and their first thought is, "Oh, my, Ananias and Sapphira are going to fall over dead any minute now!" But that's not what this passage is saying. The King James translation is faulty. "Judgment must begin *at...*" "At" is the Greek preposition *apo* meaning "away from." It's not a picture of God bringing wrath down upon the people of God, but it's a picture of His righteous, redemptive judgments flowing like a river *out from* or *away from* the house of God! It is not the house of God *receiving* the judgment, it is the house of God *dispensing* the judgment! Young's Literal translation reads, "It is the time of the beginning of the judgment *from* the house of God." The Concordant New Testament says, "It is the era for the judgment to begin *from* the house of God." The Emphatic Diaglott renders, "Because the season is coming for the judgment to begin *from* the house of God." The message is clear — contrary to what we have been taught and have believed — the time is not coming for judgment to begin UPON or AT the house of God, rather, the time comes for judgment to PROCEED FROM THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD!

As the prophet has said, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain (kingdom, government) of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains (strong kingdoms), and it shall be exalted above the hills (weaker kingdoms); and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the ***law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people...***" (Micah 4:1-3).

Can we not see by the passage above that the house of God, the mount Zion of God, and the holy city Jerusalem, are the *source* of the law of God, the word of God, and the judgment of God! Oh, yes, the judgment does indeed begin or start with each one of us as He does His wonderful work within; then as our own house has been thoroughly judged and made right, and the sons are perfected and made ready, this judgment goes *from* or *out from* the household of God to bring correction and blessing to the nations. It cannot flow out until it has first been wrought within. It is within God's own people that the judgment of God does its perfect work. Therefore do we stand upon the glassy sea singing with all our hearts, "All nations shall come and worship before Thee; FOR THY JUDGMENTS ARE MADE MANIFEST!" Where are God's judgments — their reality, power, purpose, and accomplishment — made ***manifest***, made apparent, visible, plain, clear, discernable, perceptible? IN THE LIVES OF GOD'S ELECT!

Ah, here is a people that knows the ways of His judgments, a people in whom and through whom the righteous judgments of God can be executed! The scriptures are continually revealing this grand and glorious truth. The Lord Jesus Himself explained it on this wise: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son...and hath given Him authority to execute judgment...because He is the Son of man" (Jn. 5:22,27). To the faithful in Christ Jesus we now proclaim this message — that judgment which is committed to the Head Son is *executed through His body*, His many brethren. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and ***judgment was given unto them...***and they reigned with Christ" (Rev. 20:4). "I beheld and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and ***judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom***" (Dan. 7:21-22).

Many people hesitate to believe that the saints will judge the world (and even angels!) because of the words of Jesus wherein He said, "Judge not that ye be not judged..." (Mat. 7:1). But Jesus wasn't telling us not to judge! He went on to say, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mat. 7:2). If you

consider with reverent honesty these words of the Lord, who is the righteous Judge, you will see that Jesus was not telling us not to judge, rather, He is showing us HOW to judge! At another time Jesus said, “WHEN ye judge, judge **righteous judgment.**” Ah, that is the crux of the whole matter! DO NOT JUDGE UNLESS YOU CAN JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT! That is why the judgment is given only to the *saints*, to the overcoming *sons*, to the *house of God*, to the *holy city Jerusalem*, and to the *mount Zion company*!

The Greek word for judge in the words of Jesus above is *krino* meaning “to discriminate, to exercise discernment, to make a decision.” To tell us not to judge would be like telling parents never to make a wise decision for their child. So the reason the adversary created that religious spirit — that we shouldn’t judge — is because if we don’t have judgment we have no victory, for judgment and justice are unto victory. Without judgment no decisions are made. It is like the morals in today’s society — no absolutes, no black and white, it’s all gray, it’s all “relative,” and our children and young people are crying out for those absolutes. Jesus taught absolutes, and He didn’t teach us not to judge, He taught us **how to judge**. After speaking of judging He went on to say, “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Mat. 7:3-5).

It should be plain to every understanding heart that divine judgment will not be given into the hands of hypocrites. That is the point the Lord is making! All judgment is committed unto the SON, therefore judgment is given only to SONS. To the hypocrites the Lord is saying, “The problem is you can’t see your brother. The reason you can’t see your brother is because you have a beam in your eye — in your vision, in your understanding. In how you see your brother you have a beam, a huge obstruction, a grotesque perversion.” The Greek word here means a beam so big that it could hold up or support an edifice — it’s a joist, a log. The mote is just a little speck, a grain of grit that blows into the eye. You get onto your brother about the mote — the speck — that is in his eye, which you can’t even correctly discern because of the beam, the huge chunk of humanity, that is in your own eye. It is of great importance that we see how it is that the MANIFEST JUDGMENTS OF GOD are revealed only through that company that has crossed over the sea of glass mingled with fire and been purged and purified, have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. These sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, proclaiming that the time has come when all nations shall come and worship before the Lord, for *within them* HIS JUDGMENTS ARE MADE MANIFEST! Oh, the mystery of it!

If we are not judging by the nature of Jesus, if we are not judging in the same spirit He does, if we are not the personification of His goodness, forbearance, mercy, long-suffering, and redemptive power, then we are not the manifestation of HIS JUDGMENTS and are worthy of being censured and removed from the throne of judgment. Judgment doesn’t flow out of what you know. Judgment doesn’t flow out of a title, position, or office. Judgment flows out of the life and nature of the Son of God! “...for *THY judgments are made manifest.*” Ah, my dear brother, my precious sister, do you desire a part in the glorious ministry by which the world shall be judged? Then my prayerful recommendation to you is that you draw very close to the heart of Jesus, sit at His feet, tarry long in His presence, fall intensely in love with Him, learn His ways, be filled with His Spirit, be joined in one mind, life, and nature with Him and He will create within you the heart of a redemptive sonship judge! His judgments will be manifest IN YOU. The wonderful result will be that all nations will come and worship before Him! That is the mystery.

It is the uncovering of that people in whom God has inwrought and birthed His righteous judgments to deal with the sin, ignorance, and rebellion of men, bringing deliverance, producing a mighty change unto salvation and righteousness. He will deal with every man according to the measures needed to correct and make right what is wrong in him. Is that not how He has dealt with us, His firstfruit company? If you yet entertain the carnal notion that by judgment God will *sentence* every

man according to what he deserves, then Jesus would have to apologize to those men who crucified Him, because He didn't give them what they deserved! Rather He prayed for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Do you believe God answered that prayer? The lovely One from whose gracious lips these redemptive words fell also said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I know that *Thou hearest me always...*" If I were to say, "I am sincerely convinced and truly hope that I shall see every reader of these lines get exactly what they deserve," would it not strike terror in your soul? Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact: **BECAUSE OF CALVARY you deserve the best God has to give and all men deserve the best of God through you!** "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; *for Thy judgments are made manifest.*"

The following words by brother Scott Paris are so instructive here. "When your heart is after God, you can be comfortable in His holy presence, for His concern is for the heart. His courts of holiness cannot be tramped on by those whose hearts are cold and who externally produce shows of humility and personal commitment. Father never has, and will never be satisfied by external displays of godliness or religious activity. New truth from the seven golden vials is beheading you to the old letter-of-the-word interpretation. You abandon your heart to His will and look eagerly for His full manifestation in you. And in your brokenness, and only in brokenness, do your hands drip with His oil. And your vessel overflows with His living water. You are chosen to restore the ancient ruins, and to recover the people lost to generations of desolations. A word from your lips delivers a man into the kingdom of Father's dear Son. You are reclaiming what the enemy has claimed, you are delivering to the Father what past generations have let degenerate. Your hands, your words, your acts of love, flowing with His presence, shall restore a generation to God. With untold joy, you realize that it is not too late to experience the fullness of God. Yes, it is clear now. So clear. You were never called just to sit in a pew. You were called to minister from within the Father. He called you to be redeemed, and to redeem. Your life is now to flourish with His life, resurrection life, as a priest of God and of Christ (Rev. 20:6). How could you have missed it? To be converted merely to hold on until the end was never Father's purpose and intention, but to flourish with His love as all creation is gathered into Him. We came out of His fullness to enter into His allness. He is 'all in all' — end quote.

THE TEMPLE OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY OPENED IN HEAVEN

"And after that I looked, and behold, *the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened*" (Rev. 15:5).

"And after that..." How wonderful this is! But after what? Ah, after we can sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, after all these beautiful fruits are expressed in our walk, after all the righteous judgments of God are manifest in our lives, after all that — not before, not during, but **after** — "*I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*"

The tabernacle was erected in the wilderness and the temple was a permanent building on the same plan builded in Jerusalem. Both buildings were divided into two apartments — the holy place and the most holy place — the latter being typical of the realm of the fullness of God. The word "tabernacle" in our text is the Greek word *skene* meaning a "tent." It refers to both compartments, holy place and most holy place, for in the wilderness both were housed in one tent structure made of skins. The word "temple" is in the Greek *naos* meaning "to dwell," thus indicating the dwelling place of God, or the most holy place. The "testimony" is the ark of the covenant containing the *testimony of God*, that is, the tables of the law, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. Thus the expression "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony" signifies "the tent of God's dwelling containing the ark of His covenant" — that is, THE MOST HOLY PLACE — that is what John saw opened in the heaven of the Spirit of the Lord!

Truly, *we are* the temple of the living God, as God has said! The scriptures about the temple of God are so beautiful, so clear, that we are surprised when we hear people speaking of the temple of God as something the Jews or the Antichrist will build over in Jerusalem. *We are* God's building! *We are* God's house! *We are* living stones built up a spiritual house — the temple of the Lord! God dwells *in us!* Your body is the *temple* of the Holy Ghost! There is a temple of the testimony, the most holy place, within each one of us. This most holy place is our spirit, where we receive the witness of God. It is where His life (golden pot of manna) dwells, where His word (tables of the law) is revealed, and where His divine choosing (Aaron's rod) is known. This most holy place of God is within us as the sacred temple of our being. The only problem is that the world hasn't been able to see the Christ in us!

That the temple, or most holy place, was *opened* bespeaks a truth higher and far more glorious than that of the *rent veil*. In that long ago temple on earth centuries had passed and it seemed as if that veil would hang there forever shielding the glory of the Lord. And then a lone and desolate figure, upon a cross on a hill outside of Jerusalem, cried as He died, "*It is finished!*" Suddenly the earth shook and reeled, like a drunkard, the mighty immovable rocks rent and split. In that awesome moment two huge invisible hands reached down and took hold of that veil in the temple, so strong that six yoke of oxen could not pull it apart, and those divine hands tore it asunder from top to bottom. I have heard people say that when that veil was rent at the crucifixion of our Lord, the two compartments of the holy place and the most holy place were *made one*. But that cannot be! Yes, the veil was *rent, split* — but the veil was *still there!* It had only been split down the middle, like the curtain on the stage of a theater. The compartments were still divided.

In His resurrection and ascension the Lord Jesus did not stand in relation to His elect in a most holy place from which the veil had been removed, for of His entrance into that realm of fullness in God the writer to the Hebrews testifies, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, 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 our forerunner is for us entered***, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:18-20). Again, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to ***enter into the holiest***, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated ***for us, THROUGH THE VEIL***, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20).

Can we not see that Jesus went ***through the rent veil*** into the fullness of divine life and glory. By that rent veil He opened and consecrated the ***way for us to follow, to pass THROUGH the veil*** into that glorious realm. NOWHERE IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS DOES IT SAY THAT THE VEIL IS REMOVED! The veil was *rent*, but not *taken away*. The way into that most holy place consecrated for us is *through the veil*. You can't pass "through" a veil that isn't there! Therefore the veil remains to this day! We will understand a great mystery when we see that the veil is the converging point between the "in part" realm and the realm of God's FULLNESS. The way into the fullness of God, into the full stature of sonship, has been opened by Jesus, our forerunner. By His resurrection and ascension He has entered in! And now we, His younger brethren, have boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the Holiest — but that is only one half of the divine equation. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest...*let us draw near.*" It is a call to God's elect to enter in through the rent veil, into the place to which the blood has been brought, where our great high priest lives, where the ineffable glory of the Most High God shines so brightly, where the golden pot of manna of His incorruptible life is revealed, where the heavenly law of His divine nature is disclosed, where Aaron's rod signifying His divine priesthood on behalf of all creation officiates — there to live and walk and work always in the fullness of the Father!

Christ Jesus has opened the way into the Holiest of all! This is the full salvation and the full inheritance of God that belongs to the saints! Oh, the glory of the message! For fifteen centuries Israel had a sanctuary with a most holy place into which, under pains of death, no one might enter. But now the call goes forth: Enter in! The veil is rent! The way through has been consecrated for

you! God wants to welcome you to His bosom, into His fullness. Henceforth you are to live in union with Him. Son of God, daughter of God, the Father longs for thee to enter in, to know and dwell in His fullness forevermore! This has been “present truth” in our generation. Multitudes of God’s elect have received the call to enter *beyond the veil* into the fullness of God! Yet — when the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is **opened** in heaven, something transcendent transpires — the veil is **removed!** In fact, even the outer covering of skins that enclose the “sanctuary” is likewise **stripped away** and the most holy place of God stands opened, revealed in the heavens! None of the coverings that have concealed His glory is any longer there. There is no need for any to have boldness to “enter in beyond the veil,” nor is there any need for any to “come out from behind the veil.” THERE IS NO MORE VEIL! The temple of God stands wide open in the heavens of the Spirit, revealed for all to see! It is most solemn to contemplate that no longer do men only enter in to that most holy place, but there is also released from thence a mighty transforming ministry right out of that center of holiness and power!

Ah, yes, *we are the temple of the living God!* The only problem is that the world has not been able to see the glorious fullness of God in Christ within us because of the veil, the outer covering of flesh. But here the veil is removed, the ark of God is seen, the full glory of God is revealed, the sons of God are *manifest (unveiled, uncovered)* and GOD IS SEEN! Just as a curtain opens at the beginning of a Broadway play revealing the set and the characters in the play — so God draws back or removes the veil so that no man has to pass through the veil in order to behold the glory of God. It is a *manifestation, a revelation* of the full nature, glory, and power of God out of His temple of sons! Oh, God, what a word! But not only is there glory streaming out of the temple, there are also seven angels having the seven last plagues. What can it mean? The Word of God tells us very plainly that the source of *judgment* is the same as the source of *mercy*. Both flow from the heart of God! Both are essential to His nature. Both can be understood only at the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore both are *redemptive* in character! Chapter fifteen of the Revelation gives the source of all the judgment messages that follow. God reveals His innermost sanctuary, the place of His throne, which is also the place of His heart, and shows us that judgment flows from there. Great is the mystery!

THE SEVEN ANGELS COME OUT OF THE TEMPLE

“And the *seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues*, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles” (Rev. 15:6).

Let us now consider one of the significant “keys” to understanding the book of Revelation. The “revelation” means an “unveiling” or a “revealing.” This revelation is given in symbols, and only the spirit of truth from God can decipher the symbols. The visions were given to John “in the spirit” and it is only “in the spirit” that understanding comes. The reasonings of the natural mind are completely fruitless and entirely futile. There are key words throughout the book. One of the key words is the term “temple.” We find that word first used in chapter three, verse twelve, and then appearing a total of sixteen times throughout the book. When you follow through you find that God promises to make the overcomer a pillar in the temple of God, God measures the temple, opens the temple, speaks out of the temple, sends forth the ministry of His messengers out of the temple, and many other wonderful things. All that happens concerning the temple takes place in relation to the *very same temple*, which temple **we are!** Understand what is happening *to* the temple, what’s happening *in* the temple, what’s happening *around* the temple, what’s coming forth *from* the temple, and you will see clearly what God is doing *to* His people, what God is doing *in* His people, what God is doing *around* His people, and what God is bringing forth *out of* the midst of His people. God’s people are His *temple people!*

John’s vision now returns to the seven angels with the seven last plagues. The ministry of the symbolic “seven messengers” streams forth from the precincts of the ark within the temple — from the very throne of God — from the very heart of God — the heart-throne of mercy and of judgment.

The seven last plagues come *out of the temple!* It should be plain to any thinking mind that when we look at these seven last plagues we are not seeing something that is coming from the Russians, nor from the Red Chinese, nor from some ecological disaster, nor from some alien attack from outer space, nor out the bottomless pit, nor from the mouth of the great red dragon, nor from the antichrist in Israel, for these are things which proceed out from the very *glory in the temple of God*, that is, out from the *midst of God's called and chosen elect!* The vials are indeed judgment vials — and is it not the *saints* who shall **judge the world!** Judgment is coming out of God's temple, but keep in mind, my beloved, that nothing breaks forth out of the temple of God that has not been first *worked into* that temple!

Now consider the scene! The seven messengers come out of the temple, having the seven last plagues, clothed in pure and dazzling white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. In consideration of these beautiful truths it will be instructive to look again at the significant scene in chapter eight of the Revelation. “And I saw *seven angels* which stood *before* God; and to them were given *seven trumpets*” (Rev. 8:2). Before God! Before the throne! In the Holiest of all! Is it not clear that the position of these seven angels with the seven trumpets is identical with the position of the seven angels with the seven last plagues, as well as the seven lamps of fire, which are identified as the *seven spirits of God*? The great truth is that these are the same *seven angels* of the *seven churches!* Therefore, the sound of their trumpets is a sound that comes out of the midst of God's elect! Consider this, my beloved. Seven lamps of fire are burning before the throne, right where the seven angels proceed from. Ah, it is a **ministry** out from the midst of God's elect — *seven trumpets* — a seven-fold *message*. They are sounding forth a *word* in the power of the *seven-fold anointing of the Spirit!* And now they are *seven messengers* bearing *seven vials of the passion of God* — and they go forth again under that same *seven-fold anointing!* These messengers represent the coming forth of a powerful proclamation and operation of the Spirit that comes directly from the throne of God! They come out of the *naos*, out of the innermost shrine of the temple, out from the deepest depths of the divine Spirit, and out from the manifest presence of the Lord in the temple of His body, right out of the heart of God in His called and chosen elect. The ministry that goes forth is HIS MINISTRY — not the programs of man, not the schemes and plans of carnal men building kingdoms, supposedly for God, but actually for their own ego trip. For this ministry they are anointed to bring judgment upon God's carnal people, to bring chastening and purification, to correct what is wrong in the house of the Lord! Oh, how wonderful these things are!

As you follow these seven angels all the way through the book of Revelation, you find that their relationship is to everything that happens in the three realms men live in upon earth. They sound the trumpets that affect the earth-realm. These same angels pour out their vials into the earth-realm. Follow these seven angels and you will see how they are identified with *every activity of God that affects the earth-realm!* The vials are God moving in a ministry out of His temple of sons in a seven-fold dealing to effect the purification of all the people of God yet dwelling in the low realms of the flesh and the carnal mind — the vast multitudes of nominal, immature, carnal Christians. Out of this qualified, holy temple of His dwelling proceeds this ministry.

This ministry is represented as “seven angels” or “seven messengers” who are dressed in the garb of **priests**, they come out of the temple arrayed “in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.” Nearly all commentators agree that the description alludes to the vestments of the priesthood, signifying that they come walking in the nature and power of divine priesthood, thus denoting a **positive** work of God rather than a **negative** one. The gold around their breasts represents the divine life and nature; their heart is the heart of their Father. Such oneness with the divine nature of God, their ministry is totally righteous, executing the will of God to perfection and unto victory. They are not sent to destroy men's lives, but to deliver, purify, mature, and transform them!

The question follows — Why do the messengers come out of the most holy place, out of the “temple of the tabernacle of the testimony” — that is, specifically, out of the place of dwelling of the

“testimony” which is the **ark of the covenant**. It is designated that it is from the **dwelling place of the ark** that the seven messengers come forth bearing the seven last plagues in which is filled up the wrath or the passion of God. Let us consider with all solemnity this ark which seems to be the authority, purpose, and power behind the activity of the seven messengers!

It is a certain box or chest, not very large, some five feet long and three feet high and broad, resting in the most holy place. It had other functions as well, for when Israel traveled through the desert, the ark always went before them, carried at the head of the procession by the priests, and all the multitude *followed* the ark. It preceded Israel as they entered their promised land, and was carried before them in all of their battles, gaining the victory over their enemies. It brought blessing, power, glory, and triumph wherever it went! It represents a truth — and that truth it really is, that dwells in the sanctuary and that is moving on before them and on which their eyes are always fastened for inspiration, hope, direction, and victory. The central truth of the ark is that *they are God’s chosen people*. How can we know this? We know because it is just that — THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. It is the ark of the “covenant” between God and His people! God has entered into covenant with His people, making them uniquely HIS, and the ark is the testimony of that covenant, the place where God and His people meet and converge. God’s presence, life, nature, glory, and power in and upon that ark, together with the people following and exalting the ark, constitutes the *covenant* between Yahweh and Israel. That truth — the union between God and His people — not any mere box of wood and gold — is the *reality* which leads Israel into the place of their inheritance!

It is inside the ark, this truth of their union with God, in the shape of three sacred and venerable objects — two stone tablets, upon which God had written His law, a golden pot of manna miraculously preserved, and a rod with buds upon it which had been the divine evidence of His priesthood among them in the house of Aaron. God’s law, that is, His *nature*; God’s *incorruptible life*; and God’s *divine priesthood, order, selection, and anointing* — those are the SPIRITUAL REALITIES represented within the ark of the Lord’s covenant. These are the **power** within His covenant with His people! The power of God’s covenant with you, my beloved, lies in His nature, His life, and His ordination. Apart from these you can never **be** the people of God! What qualifies you as a son of God is the inworking of His divine nature, His incorruptible life, and His mighty hand of dealing. This is the “ark” of His covenant! These three realities grouped together within the ark constitute the one truth — that God is our God and we are His people, the expression and manifestation of Himself in the earth! He has taken us for Himself, we belong to one another, He is our inheritance, we are His image and glory, His life is our life, His heart is our heart, His mind is our mind, His nature is our nature, and His purpose is our purpose. His land is our land! In Israel of old, it was that truth which they set at the head of their army; around that truth the silver trumpets blew; behind it the whole multitude of people marched; and when they camped that truth was set at the very center of their encampment. They followed after it all the day-time, and they clustered around it all the night. No wonder that the ark in which the symbols of that great and eternal truth were enshrined came to be as God present in their midst! When it was lifted up it was indeed God rising to go against His enemies and theirs. When it was set down upon the ground it was God Himself planting Himself among the many thousands of Israel. Oh, the wonder of it!

And now, how far off all this seems! How long ago, how far away this caravan of Israelites trampling along through the weary sand between Egypt and the Promised Land, with their strange ark borne along before them! But if we have really got what the picture means, and if you have really minds and hearts to look not at the symbol across the ocean and across the millenniums, but to grasp the *spiritual reality* it conveys to us, I hope to make you see in that procession following the ark the picture of the **new covenant** now established between God and His spiritual people, the picture of a life reconciled, sanctified, regenerated, quickened, begotten again, covenanted, given away and dedicated to God, a people joined to the Lord as one spirit, His very own sons, to bear His image, to manifest HIM in the earth, and bring His kingdom to pass.

The soul led and protected by its covenant with God — that, then, is what the ark represents. I think we often hesitate at that word “covenant.” It has an ancient sound. It was a word under which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob conceived their relationship with God. It was also the arrangement between the nation of Israel and Yahweh. But now it often seems as if the word had a hard kind of “contractual” sound about it. It would seem to us as if God is standing and weighing out His love and blessing, grain by grain, against the scrupulously exacted equivalent which man is called upon to render. It seems to miss the whole idea of freedom and spontaneousness which we rather love to make prominent in the thought of our relationship with God. It seems as though God is saying, “If you will keep up your end of the deal I will keep up mine, we’ve got a contract you know, and I’m going to hold you to it.” It appears as though our relationship with God is performance based. It demands too much self-effort and places too much responsibility upon **us** to measure up to God’s requirements.

Yet, is it not true that it is impossible for God to do anything for man, without man’s meeting God with a response? Is it not true that we must “yield” ourselves under the mighty hand of God, in order for Him to exalt us? God smote Saul of Tarsus down on the road to Damascus and chose him as a special vessel unto His purpose, but did not Saul respond, saying, “Lord, what will you have me to do?” The Lord instructed him to go into the city and perform certain things, and Saul arose and obeyed, and became the great apostle God had chosen him to be. That is covenant! God cannot bless and use a people unless the people are obedient. God cannot speak to a soul unless that soul will listen. God cannot lead a man unless that man will follow. “As many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons* of God,” — **not** “as many as are *pushed, shoved, or compelled!*” The kingdom of God is embodied in this reality of necessary mutualness in the relationship of God and man — covenant. “Draw near to me, and I will draw near to you.” “Do this, and you shall live.” “If you will be my people, *then* I will be your God.” “I will be a Father to you, and ye shall **be** my sons and my daughters.” “The marriage of the Lamb is come, *for His wife hath made herself ready.*” “Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.” In every case, for God and man to come together both must do something, God cannot meet live men as the sunlight strikes a dead rock, merely giving itself to what is helpless, but as the sunlight strikes a live tree which must open to receive its bounty. There is no covenant with the rock. There is a covenant with the tree!

Jesus is called “the mediator of the *new covenant.*” Ah, the believer has entered into a covenant with God! It is a great and precious truth. What does it mean? Jesus said of this covenant, “This is the new covenant *in my blood.*” Therein lies the secret power of this covenant! “In my blood” signifies the power of HIS LIFE. “The *life* of the flesh is *in the blood.*” Blood denotes life — and the new covenant is not a written, dry, cold contract on paper. Oh, no! This covenant is ***in His blood, in the power of HIS DIVINE LIFE!*** It is a LIVING CONTRACT, binding by the energy of a united life as we are *made one in Him.* “He that is joined to the Lord ***is one spirit!***” — that is the Living Covenant! “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will *put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people...*” (Heb. 8:10).

That is a man’s covenant-consciousness under the new covenant. The covenant is in the power of His indwelling life. It is not the tablets of the law in a wood and gold box, but the power of His divine nature released in a people! It is not a golden pot of manna in the ark, it is His incorruptible life raised up within us! It is not Aaron’s rod that budded laid in a chest in the most holy place, rather it is *His anointed ministry* imparted into our lives by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven! And when a man becomes aware that out of that inward covenant where God has met and joined with him in the depths of his being is arising the impulse and destiny of his life; that what is keeping him, guiding him, empowering him, and filling him with understanding, wisdom, faith, joy, righteousness, and power all issues from His union with God in the spirit — that man has himself become the “ark” of the **covenant!**

When our spiritual mind begins to comprehend that God has entered into a living covenant with all His people, then we are able to understand clearly why God would send His seven-angels-ministry to pour out the vials of plagues upon His people. We are living in the hour when God has a controversy with His people because *they are not keeping the covenant!* He is leading, but *they are not following!* Untold millions of the Lord's redeemed people are carelessly and ignorantly living beneath their privileges. He is speaking, but they are not listening. He is calling, but they are not responding! God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, for those who spread the table before them feed them the husks of God's word, and not the corn. He has redeemed them for a purpose, but they have other plans. They expect to be blessed, but will not be obedient. They have polluted the sanctuary, they have walked after the flesh instead of the spirit, they have mistaken the soulical for the spiritual, they have loved the outward forms of religion while despising the reality, having a form of godliness they deny the power thereof, they have chosen law over life, error over truth, and have broken the covenant of life which would draw them into the Holiest of all.

Therefore the Lord will come to His people as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purge the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness (Mal. 3:1-3). This is also the ministry of the seven angels and the seven plagues! Purging is getting rid of unwanted and unnecessary material. When Hitler came to power in Germany he instituted a "purging" of the government. He cast out all those who were not in favor of his agenda and whom he believed he could not trust to cooperate completely with him. Those were put out of office. When a conspiracy to get rid of him was discovered there was another purge. Those involved in the purge were not just relieved of their responsibilities, they were executed. Every time there was a change of leadership in the old Soviet Union there was a purge of the high officials. Many were demoted to a lesser office, some were retired altogether, while others were promoted to higher positions of power. Some were even put to death. This is what is called a "purge."

The Lord comes forth out of His holy place to *purge* and to *purify* His people! The only difference is that in this purge He is not getting rid of some of His people, but He is getting rid of the **one man** who is deceiving and polluting His people — old Adam. Oh, yes! It is the old Adamic man with his carnal mind, his human mentality, his earthly desires, his fleshly ways, his distorted vision, his vain philosophies, his soulish religion, his demonic lies and deceptions — this is **the man** He comes to purge away! Purging and purification are simply the PROCESS OF ELIMINATION. The fiery ordeal does not make the silver any better or any more silver than it already is. The intense heat of the furnace does not improve the quality of the gold. It merely removes the impurities so that the gold is *pure* — *unmixed* with the dross of no value.

The message is just this: If you are a carnal Christian living below God's high purpose for you — breaking His living covenant of righteousness, glory, wisdom, and power — THE SEVEN ANGELS HAVING THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES ARE COMING AFTER YOU!

Chapter 178

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, *seven angels having the seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the wrath of God...and the *seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues*, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts *gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God*, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 15:1,6-7).

When our spiritual mind comprehends that God has entered into a living covenant with all His people, then we are able to understand clearly *why* God would send His seven-angels-ministry to pour out the vials of plagues upon His people. We are living in the hour when God has a controversy with His people because *they are not keeping the covenant!* He is leading, but *they are not following!* He is speaking, but *they are not listening!* He is calling, but *they are not responding!* He has redeemed them for a high and holy purpose, but they have other plans. They expect to be blessed, but they are not obedient. They are living far beneath their privileges as the people of God, they have polluted the sanctuary, they have walked after the flesh instead of the spirit, they have mistaken the soulical for the spiritual, and have preferred religion over reality.

Therefore the Lord will come to His people as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purge the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness (Mal. 3:1-3). **THIS IS ALSO THE MINISTRY OF THE SEVEN ANGELS AND THE SEVEN PLAGUES!** The Lord comes out of His holy place in a ministry to *purge* and *purify* His people! This is the Lord's ministry coming out of the midst of God's called and chosen elect! The “seven messengers” bespeak a mighty move of the Lord as a people goes forth under the seven-fold anointing of the Spirit! For this ministry they are anointed to bring God's righteous judgments upon the Lord's carnal people, to bring chastening and purification, to correct what is wrong in the congregation of the Lord!

In this wonderful process of purging the miner mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner. I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. I'm sure if the ore had feelings it would have absolutely no desire to *be* refined! It's the refiner who goes after the ore. Somebody says, “I sought the Lord.” Well, that's how it appeared to you, my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you. He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. You are ore brought up from the depths of sin and death, yet polluted with impurities and distracting, incompatible substances. While we praise God for His mercy and grace so lavishly bestowed, the fact remains that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked — who can know it? But now, praise His name! the ore belongs to Him. That is what happened in redemption, we became His property, purchased by His blood. But my, what a mixture, even of religion and carnal, fleshly, self-efforts to serve God, we have had! So little of the gold of *His nature and power* has been seen embedded there among all the earthly impurities.

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but not in their pure form. They come mixed with, or imbedded in, various other kinds of rocks, minerals, and metals. No jeweler would want to work with natural gold with bits of rock or sand in it. Nor could such impure stuff be beaten into thin sheets, nor fashioned into fine

rings, bracelets, or necklaces. And no one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, gold and silver as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. In that state they can serve no high purpose. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing this is called **refining**.

Our lives as sons and daughters of God are like that! There is so much that is worthwhile in us, such a precious treasure of God's own life within our spirit, but so much also that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. So much that is of the spirit, and much that is of the flesh, the carnal mind, and the soulical religious nature. So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has a mixture! And that is why there has to be the furnace of fire. That is why there must come from the fiery presence of the divine glory the seven angels having the seven last plagues filled with the passion of God! The ore which God's own people are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fulfill any useful or high and holy purpose in His plans. Of these He says, as He said to the seven churches of Asia, "With you I am not well pleased...I have somewhat against you!"

Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees each of His children, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure precious metal content, but it is ugly and disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use His people in that condition of mixture, so He comes to them as a refiner's fire. And immediately they wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and I might add, He is showing up in a **form** that they did not expect. Yes, it's the same Jesus, the lovely Saviour who so graciously saved us by His grace, but He comes now, not to forgive, and bless, and thrill, and coddle, and wink at all our childish ignorance and carnality, but He comes as a refining fire to purify the sons of Levi! He comes now to lay the axe to the root of every tree that bears no good fruit! It is necessary that testings come. It is necessary that God's people be tried in the fire. It is the fierce heat of **this oven of God's dealings** that separates the gold from the dross. It is the seven-fold heat that purifies the gold, and we must not be amazed or troubled by it. The fire of God brings the separation and purity without destroying. Isn't it wonderful!

"He shall **sit** as a refiner and purifier of silver..." He sits — this is a process that requires time, this is something that is important to Him, something He must patiently sit and preoccupy Himself with, not a work to be rushed nor accomplished with one grand sweep of His hand. To the one being refined it becomes very monotonous, for it seems the process will never end. He SITS! From the moment the Lord's people were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, the Lord has been planning and preparing to move in sovereign power to accomplish His great work of purifying and refining what each and every one is as His instrument in the earth. He examines the ore, ugly, shapeless, not representative at all of that beautiful vessel He has in mind; but there it is, just a hunk of jagged, dirty ore, with too much alloy. He moves to change that, and under the crucible they go!

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES" (Ps. 12:6). There are the seven angels, the seven messengers — the seven-fold word of the Lord! This word of the Lord is not only purified by the refining fire of God, it is also a burning word which **purifies** all unto whom it is sent! Seven is the number of perfection. It reveals the great truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until His people have been perfectly cleansed, refined, and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold — ah, it is HIM. The silver — it is of HIM. How marvelous is the grace by which He has birthed us out of His own Spirit — making us "partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). Yet we must be "purified seven times." It is like the grades in school, the farther along you go the harder the lessons become!

How long, think you, would it take a workman with a hammer and chisel to crush the ore and extract the gold from the rocks in which it lies so closely embedded? But if they are flung into the great furnace, and fires fanned to torrid heat and the draught roars through the burning mass, eventually a

great glowing stream of pure and fluid metal, from which all dross and rubbish are parted, flows into the waiting mold. This is a parable of what God will do for His people whom He has purchased with His own blood! At first the surface of the melting metal may be dark and lurid — deep orange red, over which a flickering flame shall pass; but, as the process is pursued, the color will become lighter, the dark fumes will pass off, and the metal shall bear the appearance of a highly polished mirror, reflecting the beholder's face. The process may be long and hot; BUT THE RESULT IS SURE! Ah, no one looks forward to this refining process, but come it must! No one will *enjoy* the ministry of the seven messengers out of the temple having the seven last plagues, but meet them they must! "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*" (Eph. 5:25-27).

I would like to tell you that the fire will get cooler, I would like to assure you that God is going to reduce the temperature, I would like to promise you that God will not add to the fire another reagent, I would like to give you my word that the "plagues" poured out upon you by the seven messengers will not really be that difficult and painful, but as God's minister I cannot tell you that. Everybody wants to hear about the good, the gifts, the blessings, and glory all around. And while we praise God for His goodness and blessings day by day, I can assure you that ***none of that will bring you to perfection and full stature in Christ!*** Only the consuming Holy Ghost fire of God can bring the scum to the surface of our lives, where He scoops it off. More fire and more heat and more and more impurities rise to the surface to be removed by His dealing hand. The process continues hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year until He can look into the molten silver and see His own image, His own reflection, His own face perfectly and clearly, and *nothing else!* So long as He can look into that furnace and not behold His own face clearly and purely and precisely and perfectly — the heat stays on. In the same way, as soon as one of the angels' plagues has finished its purifying work, another plague is poured out. There is an intensifying scale until the word of the Lord in us has been ***purified seven times!*** "TAKE AWAY the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the silversmith" (Prov. 25:4).

This is not a moment for fine words or eloquent speech. This is an hour for very plain speaking. The prophet Malachi asked the burning question, "Who may *abide* the day of His coming? and who shall *stand* when He appeareth? for HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, AND LIKE FULLER'S SOAP: AND HE SHALL SIT AS A REFINER AND PURIFIER OF SILVER..." Indeed, who may abide — endure — wait for — the day of *His coming*? The vast majority of the Lord's precious people are content in that spiritual place where they are. So many are satisfied with the forgiveness realm, the blessing realm, the gift realm where all is received by free grace through faith. Everything in these elementary realms is free! There are no conditions, no qualifications, no price — neither is there any great attainment in God. It is the realm of children, of babes in Christ. "Ask, and you shall receive." To the spiritual children Jesus promised, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?" (Mat. 7:11). The world of little children receiving gifts from their parents is a blessed world indeed! But spiritually it is just that — the world of *little spiritual children*. It pains me to say it, but the truth is that even most of the ministers in that realm are themselves just *babes in Christ*.

The question follows — Who will wait for the day of HIS COMING, for His coming as a REFINER'S FIRE? Ah, beloved, this is not the blessing realm! It is something beyond the gifts, blessings, and benefits obtained by grace through faith. In that realm you truly have been purchased by the Lord and are His possession — but you are but ore, mixed with many impurities, unworked, undealt with, and of small value in the courts of His kingdom. So now God will bring His people to the REFINING, PURGING, CLEANSING, AND PURIFYING REALM! It is the realm of the making ready of the bride, of qualifying for sonship, of preparation for the kingdom, of readiness to rule and reign with Christ as kings and priests unto God. And who shall stand — or who can withstand — who can stand against it, who can escape it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refining fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth! The seven angels with the seven plagues are coming! And yet, there is blessed consolation even in that,

for the plagues are the **last plagues** — finishing, completing, and perfecting the work of God in His people! The **last!** Aren't you glad!

THE SEVEN VIALS GIVEN TO THE SEVEN ANGELS

“And one of the four beasts *gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials* full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 15:7).

There is nothing in prophetic imagery more striking than this picture of the seven angels issuing in solemn procession, from the sanctuary of God's manifest presence and glory. One of the four living creatures, in the midst of the throne, signifying the spirit of sonship authority from the throne, delivers to the seven messengers the vials from which the *passionate correction* of God is to be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth-realm, the world of the carnal Christians.

Our translation “vials” is completely misleading to the English reader. The word is better rendered “bowls.” The present day use of the word vial usually relates to a small, slender bottle. The word in the Greek text is *phialas* and refers to a flattish and rather shallow bowl or basin, to which a handle was attached, able to contain liquids, and designed to either drink them from it or pour them out. It was in these also that the incense in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple in Jerusalem was carried, which was the type of the scene John beheld in spirit when he wrote, “*And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (bowls) full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints*” (Rev. 5:8). It seems very evident to me that this very fact is teaching us the great truth that when the work of God's wrath or passion is complete, **all the people of the Lord will be sending up their prayers, thanksgiving, and praises** as a sweet savour, as the fragrance of incense, into the presence of the Lord. Oh, yes!

The “plagues” poured out of the bowls bring the spirit of purification and transformation into the lives of men. This is not an act of judgment, that is, of *punishment*, as we think of it, but rather an activity of purification! It recalls the action of the angel in Isaiah's inaugural vision, taking a burning coal from off the altar and touching Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6:6-7). Beholding the manifest glory of the Lord Isaiah had cried, “Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” But the coal placed on Isaiah's lips does not mean Isaiah's judgment, punishment, or destruction; instead it is good news, for the angel says, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is *taken away*, and thy sin *purged*.” Purification does not come easy! Hot coal *burns*, as does the cauterization of an infected wound. Surgery might take away a part of us in order to make us well; we may not want to lose anything, but pain and loss may be necessary in order for us to experience actual healing.

Most commentators, when viewing the plagues poured out into the earth, interpret them as *divine judgment* or *punishment*. They tell us that “plagues” bespeak wrath, torment, and destruction of the wicked. Those who tell us this say that the seven last plagues are the common figure of divine terribleness toward the guilty, the final retribution upon rebellious mankind on earth. But if this be so, why, I ask, yea, *why* are there such crescendos of celestial music, such scenes of heavenly rejoicing, such positive declarations affirming that because God's judgments are now made manifest ALL NATIONS SHALL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THE LORD! And why is the sign of the seven angels with the seven last plagues declared to be GREAT and MARVELOUS — WONDERFUL and AWE-INSPIRING! Why not say that the sign of the seven angels with the seven last plagues is **terrible** and **frightening**, or **grim**, **dreadful**, **grievous**, **appalling**, **distressing**, **fearsome**, **horrendous**, **monstrous**, and **terrifying**? But no — the sign is **great** and **marvelous** — **mighty** and **wonderful**! Furthermore, if their work is that of vengeance and destruction why do they step forth from *before the ark of the covenant* — *from the very presence of God upon the mercy-seat*? And why do they come forth in the garb of *priests*? And why do they come bearing the very

bowls which carry the incense *which is the prayers of the saints*? My, what a shallow, confused, misguided mind-set the teachers have who teach the book of Revelation!

With these truths fresh upon our minds let us remember that the seven angels are commissioned to “pour out the bowls of the passion of God *upon the earth*” (Rev. 16:1); and they are also the seven spirits of God “sent forth *into all the earth*.” Is it not clear that the seven spirits of God sent forth into “all the earth” is but another picture of the seven angels pouring out their vials “upon the earth”? It is the same seven-fold administration of God affecting the earth-realm! It is the mighty word and working of God by His Spirit! Oh, yes, there is vengeance, wrath, passion — but it is directed at the carnality and error in men, not to destroy them, but to consume the carnal mind-sets, manifestations, and works that grow out of the fleshly and soulical nature. It destroys the religious sham of Mystery Babylon, not consuming the people, but bringing down the apostate system that enslaves them!

Do you long to truly affect and impact the earth-realm, my friend? Do you want to see a mighty shaking and change in the earth? Does your heart yearn for God to move in mighty spirit-power to bring forth the word of God in such authority and with such illumination that it will overwhelm all the kingdoms of the flesh and all the soulical powers of man, bringing a glorious change and transformation? How our heart cries out for this!

Our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray that great *sonship prayer* in which are included these magnificent words, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done *in earth as it is in heaven*.” Is it possible — faintly, vaguely possible for God’s will to be done in earth in the same totality and completeness *as it is done in the heavens of God’s Spirit*? In heaven the will of God is done absolutely, totally, completely! But on earth — you know about Osama bin Laden, you know about Fidel Castro, the Islamic Fundamentalists, the Chinese Communists, the gangs, pedophiles, drug lords, and godless humanists. If you take the terrorists into account, and all the vulgar movies, the divorce rate, the crime rate, the sexual immorality, the crooked politicians, and the apostate religious systems — do you still think the will of God can be done in earth as it is in heaven? I’m going to tell you something. You’re dreaming, it’s wishful thinking, it’s a pipe-dream; you’re whistling in the dark; you’ve got your fingers crossed hoping for the best — **unless** you know **which earth** the Father’s will has to be done in first, completely! It is significant to note that neither Luke nor Matthew records Jesus as asking for the Father’s will to be done ON earth, but rather, IN earth. “In earth” does not mean the outer world of mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, and oceans; nor yet the outer world of governments, organizations, institutions, churches, agencies, cities, farms, and buildings. Man himself *is the earth!* “The first man is of the earth, earthy...as is the earthy, such are they also that *are earthy*...and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. 15:47-49). “But we have this treasure in *earthen vessels*...” (II Cor. 4:7). “Dust *thou art*, and to dust thou shalt return.”

My interest is not “Thy will be done in earth...” and earth is that which is outside of me, farthest away from me, over which I have no control. The cry of my heart is, “Thy will be done in *this earth that I am*” with the same totality and completeness and absoluteness as it is done in heaven. And when God’s will is done in this earth that **I am**, and that earth which **you are**, and the other earth that your family, friends, and neighbors **are**, soon it will take care of the whole earth, within *and* without!

THE TEMPLE FILLED WITH SMOKE

“And *the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power*; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Rev. 15:8).

From the glory and power of God came a smoke, filling the inner temple. Smoke is frequently a symbol of the presence of the Lord in His burning holiness. Smoke is from fire, and our God **is** a consuming fire! When He came down to give the law, “Mount Sinai was altogether *on a smoke*, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a

furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Ex. 19:18). Before Isaiah was cleansed from his sin, he saw the vision of the Lord, high and lifted up, His train filling the temple, with the attendant seraphim veiling their faces and their feet, crying to one another of the holiness of the Lord of hosts (Isa. 6:1-4). Then “the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was *filled with smoke.*” When Aaron and his successors offered the sacrifice on the great day of atonement, the Lord ordered that “he shall take a censer full of *burning coals of fire* from off the altar before the Lord...that the *cloud of the incense* may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.” (Lev. 16:12-13). When the tabernacle of Moses was raised up and dedicated, a smoky cloud of glory filled it, and Moses was not able to enter into it because of the cloud of the glory of the Lord (Ex. 40:34-35). When Solomon built his wonderful temple it was large, everything was built to order, and when they had finished it the whole nation assembled, lifted their hands, and dedicated it to the Lord. God honored their work by filling it with the *glory cloud* and it was so filled with the smoke of His presence that no man could enter in and the priests could not stand to minister because of it (I Kings 8:11-12).

Let us further consider the import of the cloud of God’s glory which filled the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. That temple was without doubt one of the most magnificent structures ever designed and raised up by the hands of men from the dawn of history even unto this day. You will remember that when the building was finished they brought the ark of the covenant and all the holy vessels from the tabernacle of David upon mount Zion and the priests deposited them in their proper places in the temple. Solomon then assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, and all the people of Israel gathered themselves unto king Solomon at the feast of tabernacles. When every priest was in his place, and all Israel assembled before the temple, the great choir of Levites, arrayed in fine linen, having cymbals, harps, and lyres — stood in the outer court at the east end of the brazen altar, and with them 120 priests blowing trumpets; and when the trumpeters and singers were joined in unison, making one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and other instruments for song and praised the Lord — ***then the house of the Lord was filled with the glory cloud so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God!***

Now, we are prone to think that when the temple was finally completed and dedicated to God, the Lord sent His glory down from heaven. We conceive that the Lord rained down His Spirit upon that temple, or that the cloud of His presence descended from heaven and funneled its way into the house and filled it with glory. The simple truth of the matter is this: The glory of Solomon’s temple was *not* a descending glory! It was not a glory that came down, not a glory that was somehow injected into the house, but rather, the glory that filled the house was simply the ***breaking forth*** of all the glory of God that had been ***built into the house!*** There were the wonderful cedars of Lebanon transported from the mountains of that land. There were the beautiful marble stones mined from King Solomon’s own mines, hewn with exactitude and fitted together before ever they were brought to mount Moriah. All the beams for the roof and the pillars of cedar were carved to precision and polished, made to join each other; so that as the walls arose, no sound of hammer or chisel was heard. The gold was the finest pure gold, all of the ornate work was of the greatest and grandest craftsmanship. Every board characterized within itself something of God’s own glory. Each stone embodied within itself the beauty of the glory of the Lord. All the fine linen, the brightly colored tapestries, the coverings of gold, the furnishings of silver, and all that went into the building portrayed God’s attributes, bespeaking the majesty of the God of Israel. As each item was fitted into the structure something of God’s own glory was set into the very fabric of the building. The greatness of God, His nature, character, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, might, and power — all was represented in what the building was!

Thus it was that when the priests, the elders, the king, the musicians and singers, and all the congregation of Israel lifted up their voice in praise, magnifying the Lord, God didn’t have to bring any glory down. Oh, no! The glory that was ***built into the house — ERUPTED OUT FROM THE MIDST OF THE HOUSE!*** The breaking forth of the glory out of the house was the natural and

unavoidable result of the glory that had been set into the house. It simply broke out and burst forth! I think it is time for God's people to wake up to the real and true purpose of God within us as His temple in the earth! I find in these days that many of the Lord's elect are just flowing along with the move of God, filling their heads with knowledge, gaining a lot of revelation, learning the terminology, singing the songs, mouthing all the right things, but without that deep and vital working of God within which transforms the life and nature. We cherish the hope set before us, while continuing on in our natural pursuits, struggling with our daily issues, awaiting God's appointed hour when all of a sudden, boom, bang, the Lord will descend from heaven, pour out His glory, infuse us with divine life, wisdom, and power, and in an instant we will be transformed and step forth as the manifest sons of God, walking the earth glowing in the dark with lightning bolts flashing from our finger tips.

You can't deny it — some of us have been waiting for that! God's got an hour, God has ordained a day, and when that time comes glory is going to fall down out of the heavens, great things are going to transpire, and we will be changed and filled with His glory. Let me assure you, my beloved, that's *not* how it's going to happen! You see, God is not *pouring out* His glory in this day. Oh, no! God poured out His Spirit, He shed forth His glory two thousand years ago and the mighty working of that poured out Spirit has been in the earth since that blessed day. So God's work today, or tomorrow, is not pouring out His glory — His work today is ***in-working*** that glory! Is not this what Paul had in mind when he wrote, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; ***in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: IN WHOM YE ALSO ARE BUILDED TOGETHER FOR AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT***" (Eph. 2:20-22). Ah, God is building His holiness *into that temple which we are*. He is building the glory in! He is inworking within each stone, each board, each tapestry, each *son* in this glorious house the very life, nature, wisdom, and power that HE IS. All this marvelous work of God in our lives is triumphantly carried out by the Holy Spirit within the temple of our body. The glory that shall be revealed in us will not be a descending glory, it will be an ERUPTING GLORY! It will be the "built in" glory BREAKING OUT! The simple truth is just this: If there is no divine glory worked into the inner fabric of our lives, there will be no glory to break forth in the great day of His unveiling. If the power of God, the nature of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God, the incorruptible life of God has not been established and raised up within us in our daily experience and walk on this earth, then we might as well forget about any such thing breaking out of us to deliver creation and set men free, for such a thing will not happen.

It is the will of God that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened, and that we might know what hope God had when He called us. Let us consider the Headstone of this wonderful temple of living stones. Jesus, when He trod the pathways of earth, was the temple of God in that day. Standing in the court of Herod's magnificent temple He declared, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again" This angered the Jews, and they retorted, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days!" But they did not understand that He spoke spiritually of the ***temple which was His body***. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead His disciples remembered that He had said this and they believed upon the word Jesus had spoken. Oh, yes, Jesus was the temple — the indwelling and incarnation of God on earth!

It is of great importance that we see how Jesus became the temple of God. Do you know, my beloved, what made Him the temple of God? Was it just because the Holy Spirit without measure dwelt in Him? Was it because it was not Him, but the Father in Him, doing the works? How wonderful are the words of the firstborn Son of God, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." Can we say that? How many of us, sweating by the side of the freeway in the scorching afternoon sun, our car broke down, no phone to call for help, no water to drink, and the kids are screaming, would truthfully be able to say to the first person who stopped, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father!" Let us consider with care the words the Father spoke from heaven at the river Jordan when He declared the sonship of Jesus. He said, "This is my beloved Son." But He didn't stop there! There is another significant phrase connected to that wonderful sonship declaration: ***"...in whom I am well pleased!"***

THIS IS MY SON! What words are these! But what made Him a Son? It wasn't His preaching, surely, for Jesus had not yet preached His first sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth. It wasn't His miracles, certainly, for Jesus had not yet turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. It wasn't His prophetic office, for He had never yet revealed the secrets of any man's heart. It wasn't His casting out of devils, for not one demon spirit had fled at His authoritative word. It wasn't the signs, wonders, miracles, or the raising of the dead to life again, for Jesus had not done even one of His mighty works when He came to the Jordan. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" was spoken of Jesus at the end of thirty years in the carpenter shop of his father, Joseph. This was not "my beloved Son in whom I am going to be well pleased just as soon as His miracle ministry gets under way and He has died and risen and ascended." Oh, no! The Father was *pleased* with the Jesus of the carpenter shop, the Jesus who had heard and learned to know His voice, the Jesus who had learned His ways, the Jesus who submitted to His dealings, the Jesus who obeyed all that the Father commanded Him. He was pleased with the Jesus who learned mercy, truth, discernment, love, forgiveness, purity, holiness, wisdom, righteous judgment, faith, and obedience in the nitty-gritty of everyday life in the dusty streets of the far-flung Roman outpost of Nazareth. The nature of God, the character of God, the word of God, the ways of God, and the will of God has been meticulously ***inworked into His very state of being*** — and *that* is what made Him a Son in whom the Father was *well pleased!* Surely now we can plainly see that the glory that was manifested through the next three and a half years of Jesus' sonship ministry was simply the ***breaking out, the bursting forth*** of that glory which had been inwrought and established as the inward law of His life! It was not really a descending glory — it was an ERUPTING GLORY!

Many of us have been anticipating the Father's voice announcing ***our sonship***. The day will surely come when again the Father will speak out of the heavens of the Spirit, proclaiming, "These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased!" Today it is my deep conviction that we have not yet heard that voice — the reason we haven't heard it is because God will never make the first declaration until He can also make the second. God will never say, "These are my sons," until He can say, "*in whom I am well pleased!*" He is still working on us, the temple is still *growing unto* an holy temple in the Lord! Can you not feel the blow of His hammer upon you? Can you not discern the working of His chisel, the fine instruments of His divine craftsmanship? Can you not feel the blast of His furnace as He watches over you in the fire to see His image come forth?

Ah, sometimes we suppose that the work is almost accomplished, we imagine that the silver in us is approaching its absolute purity. But then the great Refiner adds a chemical reagent (as it were) which reacts with the impurities that remain in the silver and those impurities rise to the top. The beauty is obscured. He then rakes all those impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver returns to its former beauty, reflecting mirror-like the flames. Without doubt, now the process is complete! But no, the great Refiner adds another reagent and the same thing happens all over again. This process goes on day after day after day — the work of God in us! We look at one another and think we all reflect the beauty of Christ from within. Then God casts some circumstance into our life and suddenly the beauty of the Lord in us becomes clouded over as things come to the surface that we were not even aware were in our hearts. Yet — the process is sure, and the refining *will end*. In that blessed day Father will stand us up in our own Jordan and we and all creation will witness the voice that comes from heaven — "THESE ARE MY BELOVED SONS, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASSED!" And then shall we go forth in the power of the ***emerging, erupting, exploding glory of the Lord!***

NO MAN COULD ENTER THE TEMPLE

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; *and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled*" (Rev. 15:8).

Let us return to Solomon's temple for a moment. It is stated that when the temple was complete, at the time of its dedication, the glory of the Lord so filled the temple that not one of the priests could enter into it to minister. There was not a man who could approach that dazzling glory or stand within

the precincts of its awesome power. What a marvelous thing that is! Here in our text it says that no “man” could enter into the temple because of the glory of God and His power. That is, no man, no flesh, can minister. God is about to move in a new and transcendental way, bringing forth His sons in the power of His kingdom. *Nothing* of the flesh will enter in to this new realm in God! It means that only a refined, pure, perfected people will be able to stand in the fullness of His glory! God is calling upon us to lay down our lives, that His life might be raised up in us.

It’s not just about *ministering* — it’s about **entering in**. “No man was able to **enter into the temple**, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” Men would be able to enter the temple, the *naos*, the most holy place — but only *after* the final plagues have accomplished their work! The temple, the *naos*, the most holy place was opened, there was no veil, no covering of skins, nothing to keep one out — except the intensity of the glory of God and His power! How utterly awesome! The most holy place is the symbol of the fullness of God, the fullness of His glory and power, incorruptible life, divine nature, throneship, kingship, priesthood, and manifest sonship. Will others be able to enter into this glorious place in God? Absolutely, for we are but the *firstfruits* of His redemption! God will bring many more sons to glory and more besides that — until HE IS ALL IN ALL! But no man can enter this realm until the seven angels with the seven last plagues, the seven last stripes, the seven last chastenings and corrections have finished their work in the earth-realm, burning out all the flesh, the carnality, the sin, and corruption, and the smoke of the burning has cleared away. Consider this! The crystal sea mingled with fire accomplishes this work in the firstfruits, the seven angels with the seven last plagues accomplish the same work in rest of the Lord’s people. That is the mystery!

No man (of those upon whom the plagues were falling) could enter into the Holy of holies, into the fullness of His presence and majesty, until the perfecting and transforming work of the Spirit is finished in them! When the purification is finished they will **be** the *bride* made ready, the *holy city*, New Jerusalem, having the glory of God, whose light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. At the time God performs this upon His people at large, no one will be moving into a higher place in God **until the plagues have fully done their work!** Ah, yes, God is opening the door for all His people to come on up and come on in! But it is impossible to enter into the heights of God short of perfection! Our Father in His great mercy and wonderful purpose is preparing just the ministry to change all His people who today ignorantly sit in the pews of the religious systems of man — the ministry out of the most holy place, the ministry of the sons of the most High, the seven messengers having the seven last plagues. What a work that will be! That is the mystery.

Chapter 179

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

Man has been trying to understand the book of Revelation for two thousand years and the reason so few understood is because they applied the natural, carnal mind to it. They tried by human reasoning to analyze it, work it out, and make it fit some events in the outer world, past, present, or imagined future. Throughout the centuries of history since John penned his words on Patmos men have made the visions of the book “fit” with just about everything there is in the world. Some supposed that it applied to events in Israel and the Roman Empire in the days of the early church, climaxing with the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jewish temple, and the priesthood in A.D. 70, followed by the gospel spreading throughout the earth. Martin Luther made the book fit the events of his day. Emanuel Swedenborg applied the book to events of his day. The Seventh Day Adventists interpreted the book in the light of events of their early days. Charles T. Russell found the great world-shaking events leading up to and including the First World War in the Revelation. When I was a child, Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, the Pope, and Emperor Hirohito of Japan were believed to be, in differing interpretations, the beast, the false prophet, or the image of the beast. In this view the book of Revelation was *being fulfilled* by these world leaders and the events they precipitated, they were going to take over the world, and if you did not take the mark of the beast which they would impose, you would be killed. And in our day people are literally sitting on the edge of their seats, listening to prophecy teachers, reading news magazines, watching CNN and Fox News, expecting the book of Revelation to fit the dramatic events unfolding before our very own eyes. I am confident in saying, however, that all these prognosticators, prophecy mongers, and eschatological soothsayers will be just as disappointed and disillusioned, when proven wrong, as were all the other commentators throughout the centuries!

The book of *Revelation* is just that — it is the *Revelation of Jesus Christ!* Christ is the *spiritual man*. Therefore, the book of Revelation is a *spiritual revelation*, a *spiritual book!* When the text speaks of the *earth* it has a different significance than the literal, physical land masses, mountains, valleys, and seas of our planet. It symbolizes the earth in a spiritual dimension. When it speaks of *sore boils* (Rev. 16:2) it indicates a spiritual condition. When it speaks of the *sea* it refers to the state of being of the masses of sinning, restless, surging, tormented humanity. The *rivers* and *fountains of waters* are spiritual rivers and fountains of waters. On and on we could go, but I am sure my reader gets the point!

I beseech you, look not to the outer world to discover where this *unveiling of Jesus Christ* is fulfilled, but look altogether within yourself, and it may be the Lord will show you these things, and a thousand times more than my feeble pen can write. My earnest prayer for all who read these lines is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God will open your eyes and give you understanding; for this day I seek to put such a key into your hands, that unlocks all the deep mysteries of this book; even as a fine jewelry box, which we know not which way to open, yet having found the secret lock of the drawers, they all respond to the turning of your key, and all the precious jewels come to your hand. These, my beloved, are mighty, sublime, inexpressible things we have now in hand, and if God be but pleased to give us this key of which I speak, these things will be easy to us! This I pray — that the Father of glory may give us the grace to do — to deliver into the hands of God’s called and chosen elect such a secret key, that will take all the blessed visions of John and so unlock them, that you may come to see what are the great purposes and workings of God in His people, which before were dark and hidden, and you could not discern what they meant; now they will unfold as a rose and fall easily into the comprehension of your spiritual mind. But, yet, it is not I, nor anything I can do, that will accomplish this, though I should preach for weeks on end, or write volumes that would fill the whole earth; nothing will avail until Christ Himself be pleased to rise up within your soul and work

these things in you, by His own power. The hearing of the ear, and the seeing of the eye will not do it, it must be the *experiential quickening* of these things within your heart, that must teach you these things: it must be the *seeing of the spiritual eye* and the *hearing of the spiritual ear* that will make us with Job **see the Lord** and **abhor ourselves in dust and ashes** (Job 42:5).

The first prerequisite to being taught by the Spirit of Truth is a readiness to lay down any, and all, preconceived ideas of what the scriptures teach, with a holy disposition to sit in brokenness before the feet of Jesus and accept what the Spirit teaches. It is an obvious fact that all Christians believe many doctrines simply because they have been handed down from generation to generation. Our forefathers, our church, and our brethren believed them for generations, and we believe them because they did. Much of what we believe, we believe because people for many years and long centuries have believed thus, but not one precious child of God in a thousand ever takes the time or expends the energy or spiritual initiative to discover the origin of his beliefs, and whether they are truly scriptural or express the heart of God. We just blindly follow on in the traditional path because father and mother and friends and brethren believe that way. But because our fathers, or the majority of Christians, have believed a thing is no guarantee that it pertains to the realm of truth! We made this startling discovery when in the great moving of God the streams of light began to flow from the realms above and the blessed Spirit of Truth began to dig down deep beneath the surface of the scriptures, beyond the letter of the word, beyond the sacred page, opening to our astonished understanding the *deeper things of God*. We soon found out, however, that when the Spirit begins to bring to light, and uncover the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God, many immediately commence to fight against it.

The things the Spirit reveals are always different from what men have previously believed, and how often they are surprised and astonished! The truth is *light*, and the light reveals the great darkness in the carnal and childish concepts conceived by the natural mind which interprets through the intellect the dead letter of the word; and because the truth is so contrary to the ideas treasured and nourished for so long, many are incited to fight against it. Because they are not seeking truth, and not contending for truth, they set themselves to defend to the death their old established doctrines, never taking the time to search out whether they are right or wrong. Oh, how subtle, how deceitful and foolish the heart of man! Only the Lord knows what is in the heart of man, and He says, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." We can be fully convinced in our heart that we are standing for the truth, when the opposite is the case. How we need to have our hearts circumcised and broken before God, and our eyes opened, and our ears unstopped, so we can understand and see and hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches!

Most of what is taught by the church systems of earth contains some element of truth. Most Christian church doctrine has some truth in it, enough to make it acceptable to the people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that there is much mixed with it that is not truth at all, and this is what has created all the divisions between the children of God. It isn't the truth that divides, it is all that is false that is mixed in with the truth that separates. Truth mixed with falsehood ceases to *be* truth. Since the book of Revelation is one of the most supernatural books in the New Testament, and linked to man's complete redemption, why is it so variously taught and conceived? Who is responsible for distorting the truth, and what gain is made by doing so? Perhaps Paul furnishes an answer in these words, "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" (1 Cor. 2:14).

THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAGUES

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and *pour out the vials of the wrath (passion) of God upon the earth*" (Rev. 16:1).

Chapter sixteen of the Revelation describes the outpouring of the seven last plagues John saw in his vision. The seven angels waited until a loud voice out of the most holy place of the temple

commanded them to go and pour out the seven bowls of the passion of God upon the earth-realm. The voice John heard seems to be the voice of God, or of Christ, or of God's elect, since no other person is allowed to enter the temple until the work of the seven last plagues is over. The Greek construction of the sentence emphasizes the power and authority of the voice that commissions the messengers!

It should now be plain that chapters fifteen and sixteen belong together, and that chapter fifteen constitutes a mighty prelude to the events pictured in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation. There we saw the overcoming company standing victorious upon the crystal sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. We found that song was sung at the occasion of the eve of the pouring out of the seven last plagues. Seven angels stood in priestly attire, ready to receive the command out of the temple of God to go and pour out the last of the plagues, or chastisements and corrections, of God. This is not an ominous or frightening scene at all, for the seven messengers are not only in priestly attire, they are also beautifully arrayed with costly, precious stones; and there is a reflection of both the mercy and reconciliation of God and of His holiness in their very appearance.

The seven messengers have come forth out of the temple of God, which is filled with the smoke of His manifest presence, ready to fill all the earth and reveal God's determined passion to correct once and for all everything that is wrong in the lives of the Lord's people who dwell in the carnality of the soulical religion of the earth-realm. And in their hands they hold seven bowls, filled with the passion of God! When these shall have been poured out, God's passion shall have come powerfully upon all His people, and His work of purification and purging is finished. This is indicated by the number seven, symbolic of completeness — a completed work. But this was also directly stated by John when he says that in these is *finished* the passion of God. And this does not mean that God has no more passion and no further perfecting work to be wrought, but that in the context of bringing all His blood-bought people out of the carnality and immaturity of the systems of Babylon, this will be a completely successful administration. As you can see in the chapters that immediately follow, the great city, Babylon, shall be completely destroyed, the bride of Christ shall make herself ready, and the way is opened for the holy city, New Jerusalem, to descend into the midst of mankind!

As dew distilling from the heavens comes the revelation of Jesus Christ from every scene of John's visions. It is the drama of God's great plan of the ages wrought out first in His called and chosen elect, then in all His people everywhere who call upon His name, afterward in all the nations of earth, and finally in all the vast creation of God. Everything is viewed from the divine and heavenly perspective. It is not the history of Satan's activity in men and upon the earth, but the all-conquering power of God's Christ! It is the *spiritual drama* of Father's dealing in the lives of His people. It is preeminently the *revelation of Jesus Christ*. The word "revelation" means to *unveil, uncover, or take the cover off*. The *unveiling* of Jesus Christ — that's what is happening in the midst of the saints! That is what is taking place in the earth today! That's what the book of Revelation is all about! And that's what the ministry of the seven angels with the seven last plagues of God's passion is about! As that which has been hidden in Jesus Christ is revealed, uncovered, brought out into the open and exhibited, the glory of Jesus Christ shall come upon all His people and shine forth from the temple of His body in all the earth. Christ *in us!* Ah, *that*, my friend, *not* the rapture, IS THE HOPE OF GLORY! The Revelation of Jesus Christ must be *upon, within, and out from His people!*

As the seven angels are prepared to pour out the seven bowls of God's passion, they are operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. This pouring is called the *plague*, for the outpouring of God's passion or zeal is indeed a plague to the carnal mind, the soulish disposition, and the flesh life! As you follow these seven angels all the way through the book of Revelation, you find that their relationship is to everything that happens in the three realms men live in upon earth. They sound the *trumpets* that affect the realms of heaven, earth, and sea. These same angels later pour out their *vials* upon the heavenly realm, the earth realm, and the sea. No individual part of man, and no man among the Lord's people, can escape God's passionate purpose! The seven angels having the seven trumpets

come out of the temple of God in heaven, and the seven angels with the seven plagues also come out of the most holy place of the temple! The seven angels blowing the seven trumpets were heralds of God's great perfecting work in His firstfruits company. The seven angels pouring out the seven vials are God's moving in a ministry out of His temple of sons in a seven-fold dealing to effect the purification of all the people of God yet dwelling in the low realms of the flesh and the carnal mind. All the soulical operations in the lives of God's dear people, all the self-hood, every vestige of the believers' own mind, will, emotion, desire, and inclination to religiosity shall completely and forever be brought to an end! Out of this qualified, holy temple of His presence proceeds this mighty ministry! Oh, the wonder of it!

Let us consider with care the significance of the word "plague." It is translated from the Greek word *plege* meaning "a wound caused by a stripe or blow." *Plege* is translated in the King James Bible as "wound" or "wounded" four times; it is rendered "stripes" five times; and is rendered "plagues" only in the book of Revelation, and that twelve times. The Greek word is derived from *plesso*, and *plesso* in turn comes from *plasso*, through the idea of flattening and it means to mold or form. Can we not see by this that these plagues are not for the purpose of destroying but for the purpose of molding and forming! It is a wound, but a wound with the idea of fashioning us into HIS IMAGE. It is like when a surgeon operates on a person — he takes his scalpel and makes an incision in their body; that is a wound, but it is a necessary wound in order to remove or repair something in their body. It is not an activity of violence, but a ministration of love, concern, and wise purpose. When a person has a tumor the surgeon has to wound them in order to remove the tumor or that person will die. Thus, the "seven last plagues" may be characterized as the "seven last stripes" or the "seven last scourgings" or the "seven last chastenings" in which is filled up the passion of God to correct His children. The "plagues" poured out of the bowls bring the spirit of purification and transformation into the lives of men. This is not an act of judgment, that is, of *punishment*, as we think of it, but rather an activity of purification! "Last" plagues in which the passion of God is "filled up" or "complete" signifies that these are the *last* or *final* purifying dealings of God with a people. There is the same truth as it pertains to the individual — that is, each one of us in our journey into God. The unproductive natural life and human consciousness, the flesh with its lustful, sinful disposition, the soul with its emotional tendencies and its religious inclination, the carnal mind with its humanistic reasoning, planning, and scheming — **all must suffer the seven plagues!** Make no mistake about it — God will touch *everything* in the lives of His people! That is the final outcome of redemption, for He has redeemed us unto Himself and for His pleasure and purpose!

Therefore the Lord will come to His people as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purge the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness (Mal. 3:1-3). This is also the ministry of the seven angels and the seven plagues! Purging is getting rid of unwanted and unnecessary material. The Lord comes forth from His holy place in a ministry to *purge* and to *purify* His people! He is not getting rid of some of His people, but He is getting rid of the **one man** who is deceiving and polluting His people — old Adam. Oh, yes! It is the old Adamic man with his carnal mind, his earthly desires, his fleshly ways, his distorted vision, his vain philosophies, his soulish religion, his demonic lies and deceptions — this is **the man** He comes to purge away! Purging and purification are in reality just the PROCESS OF ELIMINATION. If you want to purify water, you simply filter out the impurities, leaving the water pure or unpolluted. The quickened spirit of the regenerated man is *pure spirit* in the image of Him who created him. But our spirits have been so mixed, so polluted by the uncleanness of body and soul! Purification does not make water something different or greater or more than it is. It merely removes the impurities so that the water is *pure* — *unmixed* with the contaminants. Now it can **be** and **do** what it was created to **be** and **do!** That is the calling of every child of God!

The message is just this: If you are a carnal Christian living beneath God's high plan and holy purpose for you — breaking His living covenant of righteousness, glory, wisdom, and power — THE SEVEN ANGELS HAVING THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES ARE COMING AFTER YOU! You can't escape, because IN THEM IS FILLED UP THE PASSION OF GOD!

When the temple is filled with God's glory a great voice speaks out of the glorious temple introducing the seven "plagues." This immediately draws our attention to the Old Testament ministry of Moses. His ministry was on behalf of the children of Israel bound in servitude in the land of Egypt and Moses says, in effect, "Now, we're going to draw a line and begin the process of deliverance from Egypt." How does he begin this? The Lord instructs Moses to ask Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go out into the desert in order to celebrate their festival of worship. Can you not see the mystery? **WORSHIP IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!** The entire scene of chapter fifteen of the Revelation is *worship!* When Moses goes in before Pharaoh he says, "Let my people go — let them go and **worship!**" Pharaoh, the representative of the world system, responded, "No — who is Yahweh that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I know not Yahweh, neither will I let Israel go." It was following that initial confrontation that the plagues began!

So the concept of plagues carries us back to the plagues poured out upon Egypt at the hand of Moses. It's important to remember that the plagues were sent upon the *Egyptians*, not upon Israel, not upon the Lord's people, but they were the judgment upon *Egypt*. What was the purpose of the ten plagues? If God's intention was simply to free His people Israel, couldn't there have been a more efficient way? If we're already suspending the laws of nature by the miraculous, the entire Israelite populace could have been released with one great swoop of God's hand, and then the Egyptians could have been destroyed in an explosion of fire and brimstone. But God's purpose was to execute *judgment* upon the Egyptians. God said to Moses, "Observe! I will be making you *like a god* to Pharaoh" (Ex. 7:1). God was in the process of breaking and diminishing Pharaoh, and exalting and glorifying Moses! Hence the Nile river, recipient of the Hebrew male babies who were drowned at birth, turns to blood as the first plague falls upon the Egyptians!

Scripture reveals that the primary purpose of the plagues that were inflicted upon the Egyptians was not to force the Pharaoh to give the Israelites the freedom they desired. Rather, the primary purpose of the plagues was to reveal that all the gods of Egypt were in fact *false gods* — *no gods at all* — and that Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, was the one, true God. "Against *all the gods* of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Yahweh" (Ex. 12:12). Beyond this, however, lay the goal of liberating the Lord's people from the dominion of Egypt, its Pharaoh, and its gods. The plagues served to weaken the enemy in order to provide the people of Israel with a military victory. Therefore, just as those who lay siege to a city first cut off the water supply, then prevent food from being acquired, then frighten the citizens with all sorts of noises, then weaken their bodies and finally kill them off, so Yahweh initially turns the nurturing Nile into blood, then destroys the food supply, then harms the Egyptians with boils, then terrorizes them by arraying the forces of nature against them, and finally kills off their first-born.

The contents of the seven bowls are called *plagues*. The plagues in the Revelation are a striking spiritualization of the plagues the Lord sent upon Egypt! As we look at these plagues we see that they are likened unto the literal plagues upon Egypt, but we know that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book of spiritual truths and spiritual experiences* addressed to a *spiritual people* and which can be perceived and appropriated only *in the spirit and by the spirit!* Can we not see by this that the **spiritual plagues** come upon the **spirit of Egypt** (also designated as Babylon) within each of us to bring the release of our spiritual man from the dominance of the carnal mind that we may march out of the bondage of the flesh, the Adamic nature, the human identity and consciousness, the falsities of religion, the spirit of the world, and enter into the full realization of our inheritance in our promised land — *the fullness of Christ!* Is that truth not infinitely more blessed and meaningful than literal plagues falling upon the nations of earth! Truly *these plagues* bring THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

The plagues of Egypt were sent upon the people, spirits, and kingdom that held God's people, Israel, in servitude. The plagues in the book of Revelation are, therefore, related to God's *spiritual people*— for the message is sent to the *church!* It is the Lord Jesus talking to His *body!* The Egyptian typology is an emphatic way of saying that these "judgments" or "dealings" of our Father are but a

prelude to His great deliverance of His redeemed people from all their enemies! In the book of Exodus the plagues came upon Egypt to get Israel out of Egypt. In the book of Revelation the plagues come upon the Lord's people, the church, to get Egypt out of the people! The plagues in the Revelation represent those dealings God sends into the midst of His people to break the religious bondage of spiritual Egypt, the spirit of *this world*, the controlling of the *flesh*, the dominance of the *soul*, the ruling of the *carnal mind*, the tyranny of the *religious systems* of man, and the whole realm of *sin, limitation, and mortality!* The plagues are not against God's people as His people, but by them the Lord is breaking the power of every kingdom within that rules them, usurping the life of the *spirit*. As each of the plagues is poured out God is saying to the "Pharaoh" of every believer's own personal "Egypt" of bondage, "LET MY PEOPLE GO!" Referring to the plagues of Egypt the Psalmist said, "*He gave also their cattle over to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts*" (Ps. 78:48). The "cattle" is the symbolic figure for the whole bestial nature of man and the "flocks" signify the whole bestial system of man! Our Father will bring His people out of their Egyptian bondage by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm! And what mighty shakings, boils, bloody waters, scorching heat, darkness, frogs, thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, and great hail shall take place in the lives of God's people as He effects this glorious deliverance! He judges, discredits, humiliates, weakens, and destroys everything that is contrary to the pure life of Christ. He is leading His people "out" of Egypt in order to bring them "in" to the fullness of their inheritance in Christ! Many of God's elect have already experienced these things, and we know experientially by what a ***mighty hand and outstretched arm*** our Father has delivered us into His kingdom! Therefore we also know that God has an appointed time for all the rest of His people, and He will surely bring it to pass by HIS MIGHTY POWER!

This is how the woman-bride of chapter nineteen makes herself ready! The bride is so purified and made glorious within until in chapter twenty-two John beholds a *pure river* of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the bride-city. Jesus spoke of this river when He said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*...he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, *out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water*" (Jn. 4:14; 7:38). The stream of teaching, preaching, and ministry flowing out from the church systems of man has been so polluted with error, falsity, deception, carnality, and foolishness — something must ***purify*** the stream!

You see, beloved reader of these lines, God is not against *you*, God is not out to get *you*, God is against your enemies, the Egypt within you, the spirit of this world and the spirit of man's carnal religious orders which control and deceive God's people — God is judging the very Egypt within His people in order to deliver and lead them out into His great purpose and inheritance — the fullness of Himself. The Lord said to Moses, "Take a look at your enemies because after today you're going to see them ***no more for ever.***" What a word that is! That is what the plagues are all about — to deliver God's people out of their *spiritual Egyptian bondage*. Many have made "bricks" under the whips of their "taskmasters" for so long that they are not even aware there is a free and glorious life beyond the river of Egypt! What a wonder it will be when all the dust settles and they discover the TRUE RICHES AND THE GLORIOUS AND ETERNAL REALITY!

A spoiled child throws a tantrum in a toy store, wanting every toy in sight. His parents try to hold and comfort him, but since he knows his parents won't correct or punish him, he spits on them. Onlookers watch in amazement, and the parents pretend to laugh it off. Similarly, when believers think God won't do anything about the carnality in His people and the pollution in His church, they spit in His face. But God is not an indulgent parent! That is why we have the graphic picture of the "seven *last plagues*" in chapter sixteen of the Revelation! The seven *last* plagues, the seven *last* stripes, the seven *last* scourgings are the seven *last* dealings of God His people must pass through in order to be delivered from Babylon and perfected in Christ. They are both the severity and the goodness of God revealed! The judgment against the carnal nature and systems of man will be so severe that God's people ultimately will cry "enough!" The dregs of the cup will prove so bitter that the "prodigal son" will be glad to leave the swine pens and the swill troughs and return to Father's

house of goodness, provision, glory, and honor. The seven plagues will have served their purpose! They are nothing to be fearful of, rather something to rejoice in! The **passion** of God toward His people is filled up, fulfilled, completed, and consummated in these seven *last* plagues! When this seven-fold work is accomplished the delivering and transforming work of God in His people is FINISHED! Ah, great is the mystery!

A Captain, years ago in the days of the sailing vessels, was leaving England. His fourteen year old boy was begging to go with him but the mother was reluctant to let him go. Finally the father prevailed upon the mother and the fourteen year old boy went with the father's promise to the mother that he would watch after this boy. He said to the boy, "You will have to be a sailor." So after they were out in the sea the boy was aloft in the riggings. Suddenly, unexpectedly, a fierce wind came up and it whipped the arm around and the boy was left dangling there precariously. The next moment, if that arm continued to turn, he would fall upon the deck and be brutally killed. The boy, in shock, was afraid to jump toward the water. The father quietly, slowly, pulled out his revolver and pointed it at the boy. He said authoritatively, "Son, if you don't jump, I'll shoot!" The boy knew his dad, and knew he meant business. More afraid of the gun, he made a leap for the water. He had no sooner hit the water than great big strong arms brought him back on deck.

May I say to you today — the wrath, the passion of God is a gun pointing at you! It's loaded with the power of God which is able to both kill and make alive (Deut. 32:39). God says, "I'll have to shoot if you don't jump." Oh, yes! God will judge you, my friend, and he will judge that Babylonian religious system you cling to, until you come His way, until you jump into His great ocean of love and divine purpose where you will find underneath the everlasting arms of His deliverance. Because He loves you, because He is committed to you, because He has a high purpose beyond your wildest dreams for you, He will save you, and in His omniscient wisdom He will do *whatever it takes* to cause you to abandon yourself to the ocean of His loving purpose. That is the wonder of it!

You may have read the following story. It's the story of an American couple who go to England, celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. Both the man and his wife are fanciers of antiques, pottery, and china. When they come to Sussex they pass a little china shop. They instantaneously stop, back up, and go in. Their eyes single out a little tea cup on the top shelf. "May I see that?" he asked. "I've never seen a tea cup like it. It's beautiful!" But suddenly the tea cup *spoke!* "You don't understand, I haven't always been a tea cup. There was a time when I was red...and that I was clay. My master took me and rolled me, and patted me over, and over, and over. I yelled out: '*Leave me alone!*' But he only smiled and said, '*Not yet.*'"

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the tea cup said. "Suddenly I was spun around, and around, and around. 'Stop it...I'm getting dizzy and this scares me!' I screamed. The master only nodded and said, '*Not yet!*' Then he put me in an oven...I've never felt such heat. I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled, and I knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening, and I could read his lips as he shook his head — '*Not yet.*' Finally the door did open...whew! He put me up on the shelf and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. Then at once he brushed me, and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible, and I gagged and thought I would die. 'Stop it! Stop it!' I cried. He only nodded — '*Not yet.*' Then suddenly he put me back into an oven, not the first one, but one *twice* as hot. I knew I would either suffocate or explode. This time I begged, I pleaded, I bargained, I screamed, I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening, nodding his head and saying, '*Not yet.*'"

"Then I knew there was no hope, and I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and he placed me on a shelf. One hour later he handed me a *mirror* and said, 'Look at yourself.' And I did, and I said, 'That's not me...it couldn't be me! I'm *beautiful!*' 'I want you to remember,' he then said, 'I know it hurt to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you, you would have dried up. I know it made you dizzy and scared you to spin you around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it was painful and hot and disagreeable in the

oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were horrible and suffocating when I brushed you and painted you all over, but you see, if I had not done that you would never have hardened. There would have been no color, no value, and no beauty to your life! And if I had not put you back into that second oven, you would not have survived for very long, the hardness, the quality, and the beauty would not have held. Now...you're a **finished product...you're what I had in mind when I first began with you!**"

Ah, my beloved, that little story beautifully illustrates the purifying and transforming work of God in His called and chosen elect. It also points out the purpose, the power, and the process of the *seven last plagues*. How ominous they seem! But the end is beauty, quality, and value inwrought in the lives of those who become the bride *made ready* for the marriage of the Lamb! Personally, I am very glad that I did not know all the processings that lay ahead when I began this journey years ago. God in His great mercy and grace hid from my eyes the trials, difficulties, disappointments, traumatic experiences, temptations, failures, and burning furnaces of testings that were to bedevil the path that He had prepared for my feet. I knew practically nothing about my own inexperience, immaturity, weaknesses, and inbred carnality and sin. I set my face to be conformed to the image of God's Christ, but I did not know at that time that transformation does not come in waves of glory and ecstasy, but rather in horrible pits of darkness and in blasts of heat from the fiery furnace of affliction. That is the mystery.

THE SEALS, THE TRUMPETS, AND THE VIALS

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was *silence in heaven*...and I saw the seven angels which *stood before God*; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was *before the throne*...and the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it *into the earth*: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (Rev. 8:1-6).

"And I saw another sign *in heaven*, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the passion of God. And I heard a great voice *out of the temple* saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the passion of God *upon the earth*" (Rev. 15:1; 16:1).

These visions reveal the great truth that in the outworking of God's kingdom purposes, *first* something happens *in the heavens*, and then as a *consequence*, certain *events* take place *in the earth-realm*. John sees seven angels standing before the throne of God in heaven, and they are given seven trumpets. As they prepare to sound their trumpets fire from the censer of the priesthood is cast into the earth. It is a heavenly, celestial scene! But as each angel sounds mighty things transpire in the earth, in the sea, upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and in the heavens that govern the earth man. In the next scene the seven angels are standing in the temple of God in heaven. The temple of God is filled with the manifest glory of God, and to the seven angels are given seven bowls containing seven plagues, in which is contained the fullness of the passion of God. A great voice out of the temple of the body of Christ in the heavenly places of the Spirit of the Lord commands the seven angels to go forth and begin to pour out the bowls of the passion of God upon the earth-dwellers. As each bowl is poured out there are solemn and marvelous events that transpire in the earth, in the sea, upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and in the heavens that govern the earth man. Every divine action that affects the earth-realm issues forth from the heavenly, celestial realm! The sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls both originate out of the heavens of the Spirit and accomplish the will and purpose of God within a people who are walking in the earthlies!

We have mentioned previously that John actually saw throughout the visions of the book of Revelation **three** series of dramas, each with **seven** parts. There is the drama of the seven **seals**, then that of the seven **trumpets**, and finally the seven **bowls**. As we meditate upon these great truths, surely we can see that the opening of the seals is **the revelation of Jesus Christ!** A revelation is an **unveiling**, and it is Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, who is unveiled unto us and within us as the seals are broken. Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ is the **first** of this trinity of dramas. The further truth is that all our glorious Father wrought out in the life of Jesus in order to reveal the fullness of God in Him — in sonship — must now be wrought out also in God's firstfruit company of "many sons" brought to His very own glory. God's called and chosen elect, purified, perfected, grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, is therefore the **second company** to be brought to full and complete redemption, restoration to the life, glory, wisdom, and power of God! The **third company** brought into perfection and the fullness of God is the rest of the Lord's people who are presently enslaved in the bondage of religious Babylon.

The point we wish to make is just this: As the loosing of the **seals** brings the revelation of **Jesus Christ**, the first Son, so the blowing of the **trumpets** accomplishes the very same work of God in His called and chosen elect, the **many-membered body of Christ**, or the **manifest sons of God**. These are seen in chapter twelve as the manchild caught up into the throne; in chapter fourteen as the 144,000 with the Lamb upon mount Zion; and in chapter fifteen as the overcomers standing upon the glassy sea, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. And just as the trumpets show the work of our Father in His chosen firstfruits company, so the pouring out of the seven **bowls** depicts the deep and awesome dealings of God with the **rest of the Lord's redeemed people — the church!** Thus the seals represent the work of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the trumpets show the work of God in His many-membered son company, and the bowls reveal the work of God in the rest of the Lord's saved people — the seven churches of chapters two and three of the Revelation. Three series of dramas, each with seven parts! Three is the number of completeness, seven the number of perfection. These three dramas with their seven parts reveal the great truth of God's COMPLETE REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION OF HIS PEOPLE, BRINGING PERFECTION, LIFE, AND GLORY!

There are three stages in the redemptive program (in relation to the church), and a full and complete redemption wrought in each stage. Jesus has already been perfected, resurrected, glorified, enthroned, and come to dwell in the midst of His people! Multitudes who read these lines are even now in the process of full perfection, redemption, and glorification as sons of God! And our Father has a wonderful plan and purpose to restore all His precious people back into the perfection and glory of God! He will, in fact, restore the **whole creation**, but the three series of dramas now under consideration speak of His dealings with His church prior to the restoration of the world and all things in all realms. God must first bring forth the perfection of glory within His manifest sons and within the beautiful and glorious bride of the Lamb, so that the **nations** can then come to their light and walk in their light, even the light of salvation! Isn't it wonderful!

It is my deep conviction that the "third part" (the third part of the trees, the third part of the sea, the third part of the ships, the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters, the third part of the sun, etc) mentioned so often in connection with the **second drama**, the sounding of the trumpets, bespeaks the work of God in His **firstfruits son company** in contrast to all the rest of the Lord's people who are dealt with later at the pouring out of the bowls. When this "**third part**," or the **manifest sons of God**, has been thoroughly processed by the Lord, when the work of perfection and maturity has been fully accomplished in them, there remain yet multitudes, yea, untold *millions* of the Lord's people who are still just babes in Christ and slaves to the man-made (erroneous) creeds and carnal religious systems of Babylon. But their day will come, too! And it is significant to note that just as soon as the seven bowls are emptied out upon this last portion of the church — **BABYLON BEGINS TO FALL AND THE BRIDE IS SEEN HAVING MADE HERSELF READY FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!** What great and glorious things God has in store for His people!

Never lose sight of the beautiful progression in the succession of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls. Each is greater and more far-reaching than the one before! In connection with the seals there is no mention of the *scope* of their effect — for the seals are the unveiling of ONE — the unveiling of Jesus Christ! Under the trumpets, however, we find that their work affects *one third* of everything! One third, but far short of *all!* Beyond doubt, this signifies a select company! But under the bowls **everything** is affected — the whole earth, the entire sea, all the rivers and fountains of waters, the full sun, the very seat of the beast, the full length of the river Euphrates, all the kings of the earth, the whole biosphere, the great city Babylon, all the cities, all the nations, every island and every mountain — absolute totality — all of EVERYTHING! This by no means indicates that all of those *literal* things will be transformed by the ministry of the seven plagues, for the literal things themselves represent **spiritual things in the lives and experience of God's people** — and it is **they** who are meant, it is **they** who are delivered, changed, and perfected!

The following words written by brother Paul Mueller are so meaningful here. “That which our Father intends to do with all mankind, He shall first accomplish in the lives of His chosen and set-apart remnant. If the remnant of the Lord cannot receive the new covenant and walk in the light of its principles and purposes, how can we expect the masses of the world to receive it? Beloved, it is impossible! As our Father's chosen remnant in the earth today, we must grow in the Spirit to know our Lord in greater fullness. Then we will gladly, and with renewed hope and expectancy, lay aside the old, dead works of the past age! Then every person among us will cease teaching and preaching, for all the elect will know Him in Spirit and in Truth, whom to know is Life eternal. And this is just the basic principle of the new covenant!

“Then we will blaze a new trail into the kingdom of God for the multitudes to follow. It will be a new and clear trail or highway into the fullness of the kingdom of God! *‘It shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away’* (Isa. 35:8-10)” — end quote.

Chapter 180

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“And the first (angel) went, and poured out his bowl *upon the earth*; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore *upon the men* which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image” (Rev. 16:2).

The Revelation is obviously not a prose composition. It is a drama, a moving picture of the unfolding kingdom of Christ in a world of carnality, sin, and death — a picture taken not with a cinematograph, but with the camera of divine revelation. Again and again throughout the book of Revelation we have noted that the vast majority of the events portrayed in the visions of John takes place in one of three realms — heaven, earth, or sea. These, of course, are not the literal, outer heavens of the universe, nor the physical planet earth, nor the actual seas of water. As we know, these symbolize three realms of life through which we pass on our journey from the depths of the kingdom of darkness unto the heights of the kingdom of life and light in Christ. As the voice from heaven declared, “Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you...” (Rev. 12:12).

Let us understand that there are three realms of conscious dwelling. One is the “sea,” and it is a beginning, as seen in the first chapter of Genesis. The sea bespeaks the *lowest* realm of life and consciousness. The consciousness which dwells in the sea, does not know anything about God. When you are raised out of the sea-realm into the “earth,” you enter a realm which is higher than the sea, but lower than heaven; an in-between realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea; yet, in the true sense it is not entirely heavenly or spiritual, nor absolutely wicked and degenerate. In simple terms it is a realm of *mixture*. You first meet God in this earth-realm, and this, my beloved, is the ***carnal religious church realm*** of the past two thousand years. In this realm you are brought into an *earthy* conception of God and of spiritual things; you see Christ as a literal flesh and blood man; fleshly Israelites and Jews are God’s chosen people; the temple of God is something the Jews will build some day in the earthly Jerusalem; the cross is the old rugged cross of Golgotha’s hill; hell is a literal place of fire and bodily torment; the coming of Christ is a glorified man crashing down out of the atmospheric clouds; heaven is an astral location out beyond the Milky Way with actual mansions, golden streets, river, and trees; and grace and spiritual life are ministered to saints through physical acts of water baptism, communion, and various other outward church rituals, ceremonies, and sacraments.

It requires neither the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God nor any deep spiritual experience with God to believe in a physical Jesus, or in a big God sitting somewhere upon a literal throne, or in obeying church rules and regulations, or in performing rituals and ceremonies, or in waiting to be raptured away to some far-off heaven somewhere. These things are not taught by the Spirit — they are conceived by the natural, ***earthy mind***. They are all *pictures* of reality, but not *reality itself!* They are like the toy soldiers and dolls little children play with. Today we see untold millions of these “earthy” Christians in all the historic Christian denominations as well as in the great mega-churches, with their members looking to scripted programs under charismatic leaders, promising them health, wealth, and worldly success. Earth dwellers! We see other millions in doctrinal circles of behavior, like robots going to church, paying tithes, participating in church programs, obeying church laws governing eats and drinks, dress codes, appearance, hair style, do’s and don’ts of all kinds, careful in their parental responsibilities, working at being good employees and neighbors, faithful followers of clean moral principles. Yet, their circle of good works, conformity, and self-effort righteousness becomes a comfortable isolation that resists deep spiritual experience and living spiritual reality, obscures spiritual vision, stagnating the need to mature into the measure of the stature of the

fullness of Christ. Not only are sea, earth, and heaven three realms of spiritual life and consciousness collectively, but on the individual level they also speak of the triune make-up of man — body, soul, and spirit. Each of us is thinking and living on one of those three levels!

“Heaven,” on the other hand, is the *highest* degree of life and plane of consciousness unto which man can attain; the spiritual, divine, heavenly, and incorruptible life in Christ, in the power of His resurrection, sharing His nature, mind, glory, wisdom, righteousness, and power. The “heaven dwellers” are that people that has been truly quickened, transformed, and raised up to sit with Christ in the highest heaven of God’s Spirit. When we have been raised off the earth, and have been released into the “heavens” of the Spirit and dwell there, then we are conscious of the *true realities*, of things that are *not seen*, the *spiritual realities* of the kingdom of God, which are the *things eternal*. The realities of the kingdom of God are spiritual; they are infinite; they cannot be put into forms, nor can they be touched in earthiness. They are only seen, known, and touched in the spirit and by the spirit.

Do you not think that it is most significant that the plague of the first bowl is poured out, not *upon* the earth, as the King James Bible reads, but *into* the earth, according to the Greek text. The angel pours this dealing of God *into* the earth and *into* the men who have the mark of the beast, and who pay homage to his image. The plague is poured out *into* the lives of the Lord’s people who dwell in the earth-realm of carnal, soulical religion! This dealing of God’s passion originates out of the heavenly spiritual temple of God’s spiritual elect, and it is the very *passion* of God Himself towards His people! It is a *move of God* that is poured out right into the midst of the earth-realm! Oh, the wonder of it! Can you discern the ways of His working? How can God bring about the deliverance and the transformation He desires? Must He first clear a stage on which He can then bring something new? That is not the way in which God works! He does not work so in nature. He does not first clear the forest, so that He may have room to plant new trees. He drops the seeds on the ground; and they sprout and grow towards maturity side by side with and under the shadow of the trees, and eventually overtake the existing trees and displace them, when these grow too old and weak to maintain competition.

God has acted the same way in history. He did not sweep Canaan clean of its inhabitants before He brought Israel in to inhabit it. No! He brought Israel in among the Canaanites, He poured the “plague” right out into their midst, that by conflict with the Canaanites Israel might become strong, and gain a footing in the land. So does He act in the individual life! He does not first cleanse the heart of its demon inhabitants, that the virtues of Christ may find a house swept and garnished and already fit for their abode. The heart’s new guests have to take the heart as they find it, and turn out the demon inhabitants, and sweep and garnish it for themselves. God kindles the flame of grace in the heart, and sends its rays out to overcome the darkness, and to penetrate into every corner and dislodge the shadows. And that is what God has done with the world! He did not sweep the corruption of the pagan world away and make a clear space for the new kingdom of God. He brought in the new kingdom, weak and feeble as a new-born child, which to all appearance might easily be crushed, and raised up the Christ in the midst of the darkness of that day in a glorious body of many-members, which in due time crushed and brought to naught all the pomp and power of Rome and all the gods of the nations! That is what we see when the angel “pours out his plague into the earth.” God pours out His passion right into the midst of the people of God, a mighty activity of God, which in due time will purge and purify them all unto His purpose! Aren’t you glad!

THE PLAGUE UPON THE “MEN”

There is a very important truth in these words, “And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the *earth*, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the *men* which had the mark of the beast” (Rev. 16:2). How very meaningful is the divine signification as to *upon whom* the plague falls — “upon the *men* which had the mark of the beast.” How tremendously important, how vitally significant is EVERY WORD OF GOD! We need to pay attention and give earnest heed to the

precise terminology of the Holy Spirit for He never speaks *carelessly* nor apart from *divine purpose*. It is instructive to note that in every case the collective noun “men,” throughout the entire Revelation, refers to men other than the overcoming company of firstfruits — the spiritual elect of the Lord. The singular word “man” is used of both overcomers and men in general, but “men” is never so used, in every case applying only to unbelievers or to those carnal religious folk who bear the mark of the beast and who pay homage to his image — the worldly church systems of man. The chosen and separated elect are “redeemed from **among men**, being the **firstfruits unto God and the Lamb**”(Rev. 14:4). The message here is clear and unmistakable — “men” signifies the natural man, the carnal man, the **Adamic man** — indeed, the FLESH! Does that not reveal to us clearly and unquestionably **who it is** that God is dealing with by the seven last plagues! He is dealing with the earth-realm of carnal Christians who are walking **after the flesh!** God is laying His hand of dealing upon the flesh within His people and within His church!

After forty years in the wilderness God was ready to bring Israel into their land of promise — their full inheritance. Joshua and Caleb were the only ones who had been circumcised — the rest of the men of Israel who had been born and raised up in the wilderness had never been circumcised. But now the order is changing, Israel has just crossed over the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua, and there will now be an entering in to a new experience and place in God — possessing all that God has prepared for them and called them to. There on the west side of Jordan Joshua brings out the flint knives to circumcise this new generation before they enter into their inheritance. They cannot enter in by the strength of the flesh! Those born in the wilderness had never been taught about circumcision, there had been no cutting away of the flesh, and the reproach of Egypt was still on them. Their flesh had never been dealt with — all they ever knew was the mighty miracle hand of God — water out of the rock, manna from heaven, clothes that never wore out, freedom from sickness and disease, and the Shekinah glory in their midst. They knew God in the *blessing realm* where every material thing your carnal heart could desire would be bestowed purely by *His grace*. Indeed, none of the blessings they had received were obtained by either their righteousness or their faith — they were in very fact *miracles of mercy* — for they were full of unbelief, murmurers, complainers, disobedient, rebellious, whoremongers, idolaters — the carnal, yet *blessed*, people of Yahweh! If God had not preserved them by His mercy, they would have all perished. Oh, how the world is full of them today! But now the word comes — God is going to bring you into a new place, a new experience, a new glory — your full inheritance! And the word of the Lord is to *circumcise them all!* Before they can possess their possession *the flesh must be cut away — removed!*

Ah, Joshua and Caleb, those mighty men of faith and power with God, were the only ones who had been circumcised. There was no flesh left in them! Joshua and Caleb are beautiful types of God’s firstfruit company, His chosen and separated elect. There are those who have come under the knife of circumcision and they have been in the wilderness and watched as a generation is born that has not been circumcised. Only *they* understand the way of the Lord, only *they* know what is required to enter on in to God’s fullness! They are the firstfruits! The work has already been wrought in them and it is at *their word* and at *their hand* that the carnal, fleshly people of God shall now at last be brought under the flint knives. They are as the seven angels out of the temple bearing the seven last plagues to be poured out upon all the **men** who have the mark of the beast — for the purging and purification of all God’s immature, carnal, flesh-oriented children!

In this connection Ricky Evans once wrote, “Circumcision is no fun, especially if you are older, but it is a necessary part of God’s working in our lives. Israel was told to circumcise their male children on the eighth day (Lev. 12:3). In the natural it is better to circumcise a child of eight days rather than waiting until one is grown. A child will not have the problems in healing as an adult will. The older one gets the harder it will be to cut away the flesh. It is much more painful for a grown man to go through circumcision than a baby. How true this is in the spirit! The longer we hold on to the flesh the harder it is to deal with it. The pain is greater and the memories of that pain seem to be magnified beyond measure.

“The eighth day speaks to us of a new beginning. Circumcision is meant to be the start of a new beginning. They had just crossed over into the Promised Land and what is the first thing they do? Cut away the flesh. Now don’t you know they thought this was a carry over from the wilderness? The wilderness was a constant dealing with the children of Israel to get Egypt out of them. They had come out of Egypt but there was still a lot of the ways of Egypt in them. Now they have crossed over into the border of the Promised Land and it seems things haven’t really changed. They are still dealing with the flesh! They are still struggling with their carnality!

“True circumcision is of the *heart* and not of the outward flesh (Rom. 2:29). It is out of the heart that such things as evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness and blasphemies come (Mat. 15:19). It is the heart that needs to be dealt with, not just outward actions. The law will force us to change our outer actions and yet not touch the inner man of the heart. Joshua and Caleb were men of *another spirit* than the rest of the children of Israel (Num. 14:24; 32:12). They had a heart that had been circumcised and not just their flesh. Circumcision was meant to be a sign of something that had taken place in the heart (Rom. 4:11). Of all those who came out of Egypt only two had the true circumcision, Joshua and Caleb. They were of a *different spirit*. Something had been done in their heart!” — end quote.

The scriptures set forth two men who represent two humanities. The mind and nature of each of these men is very different. One is an outer man of flesh, subject to mortality, being totally concerned with self-preservation, physical provisions, comforts, and blessings, always minding the natural fleshly things. Although it longs to live forever, it cannot attain to, nor realize immortality. The other man is an inward man, a spiritual man, who minds the things of the spirit, concerning himself with spiritual blessings of the mind of Christ, of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and all the fruits and abilities of the spirit. The first man is Adam. Adam is a kind of humanity! The second man is Christ. Christ is the new humanity! The scripture states that Adam is a *figure* of one to come. We know that a figure has its end when the fulfillment has come. Some people believe that man is to be restored to what Adam possessed before he fell. But Adam is just a type, a figure of **one to come**. Not a figure of God, but of another man. Jesus was not in any way an offspring of Adam. He was not the first Adam come again. He was the **second man**, and the **last Adam**. He is the **new man**, the **new humanity!** The Son of man came down from heaven, not out of Adam. Every one of us walks in the consciousness, nature, and power of one of these humanities. Adam is the uncircumcised man of flesh. Christ is the circumcised man of spirit! Adam has not changed from evil to good. He has not been cleansed and made holy. He is deaf, and can never hear the spirit. He is blind, and can never see reality. He is dead, and can never express life. The Son of God’s love is rejected by this man, Adam! If one has the new man birthed within him but continues to walk after the mind and nature of the old man, then that one **MUST BE CIRCUMCISED!** It is impossible to enter on in to our inheritance in God until the flesh is cut away!

You will understand a great mystery when you see clearly that God is judging and bringing to an end the earth man, the flesh man within each of us. And He will also execute this work in all of His redeemed children everywhere! The seven last plagues are destructive — not destroying God’s people, but destroying, removing once and for all and completely the old man of sin who sits in the temple of God ruling over all the thoughts, ways, and religious actions of the Lord’s carnally-minded people — showing himself that HE is god! I believe that God is giving us the true understanding, the correct perception, that the purpose of the plagues is to **strip away** that man of flesh, that man of sin from the temple of God! As you follow through the book of Revelation you see that it is all a **removal**. It is the **unveiling** of Jesus Christ. The unveiling signifies an **uncovering**, the **removal** of the covering that has concealed His life within the vessel. All through the book everything is being shaken! The seals are **loosed** — removed from the scroll. When the trumpets sound, a third part of the trees and all green grass is **burnt up**; a third part of the creatures in the sea **die**; a third part of the ships is **destroyed**; a third part of the sun, moon, and stars **disappear**; and a third part of men is **killed**.

And now, under the seven last plagues, ALL THESE THINGS AND MANY MORE COMPLETELY PASS AWAY! **All** the trees are burnt up, **every** mountain and **every** island flee away, **all** the heavens are rolled up as a scroll, for the first heaven and the first earth **pass away**, and in the end there is **no more sea**. Babylon the Great falls and is burned with fire — nothing is left but the new heaven and the new earth, the glorious city of God with the Lamb upon the throne, and the glory of God radiating throughout the whole earth. And brother, none of this is happening literally in the outer world! Every bit of it is taking place **within** God's people! Isn't it wonderful!

The goal of our spiritual journey on this earth is to be shaped into the likeness of our Master, Jesus Christ. Little by little, God chips away at the outer, the parts of our personalities that interfere with the revelation of the character of Christ. Like the sculptor who chips away the pieces of stone until the image he sees within is revealed, the Lord removes from us the image of the earthy until HIS IMAGE WITHIN US becomes clearer and more complete.

I was deeply moved by the following words sent to us in a letter from a dear sister in Christ. "This mundane whirling earth that we call home is so far removed from the reality of freedom in the realm of our quickened spirits. Indeed we have been *'fenced with bones and sinews and clothed with skin and flesh.'* We wallow in this earthly personality ascribed to us at birth. Our very genes have descended from someone else's bidding. Our character traits and patterns sift through us from a sieve which was held by another's hand. Our environment holds us captive until we cry out — Who am I? Ah, blessed question! The answer is clear to those who can receive it. My true identity is SPIRIT, and until I have been quickened from above, *I am Adam* — ruddy clay, sensuous, rebellious, limited, groping, grasping for something beyond my reach. But after that quickening, *I am Christ*, for there are only two corporate men in the world — Adam, who is of the earth realm consisting of time, and Christ, who is of the eternal realm consisting of timelessness.

"So, I am *truly* at home when I am in the eternal realm, and I am loath to be *'fenced with bones and sinews and clothed with skin and flesh,'* this body of humiliation, gravitated to this earth. The Psalmist prayed, *'O that I had wings like a dove — then would I fly away and be at rest.'* My prayer is, Father, enlarge my spirit; enlarge my capacity to envelope You and to be enveloped. You can inhabit only my spirit. You cannot and will not inhabit my personality, my talents, my weaknesses, my strengths, my intellect or my dullness. They all must go and be replaced with You — let me lay aside my burial shroud woven from the fibers of this earth so that I may arise and shine in a transfigured glistening garment of YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LIFE! When that manifestation is reality, will You then say, *'These are my beloved sons in whom I am well pleased, hear ye them!'* Ah, Father, I fall prostrate at your feet!"

Some years ago a dear brother set forth this principle so beautifully in a little writing that came into my hands. He wrote, "I received a letter from New York while sojourning in Florida which contained the following: *'The report has gone around that you died last week. Of course we know it is not true, but how do these things get started?'* I had to reply to this letter somewhat after the following manner, *'In the language of Mark Twain I must say that the report of my death is greatly exaggerated — and yet somehow or other the same report is true.'* The offices of death are many. According to the apostle Paul, death is one of the most helpful and necessary things that can be performed. He advised the habit of 'dying daily,' and this prefaced the glorious possibility of being born daily also! There is something back of the 'idea' of death which is replete with substance for meditation.

"When you die to anything you are through with it. Just as in the relative sense of the word when a man dies he is immediately separated from all his possessions; good, bad, or indifferent. His debts are cancelled so far as *he* is concerned. His estate is disintegrated almost immediately, and no longer is attached to him. Like a cloud of dust in a hurricane, his entire affairs are scattered in all directions. Not understanding *Life*, the greatest enemy is death. It deprives Life of its manifestation. When Jesus became conscious of Life, He could pass in and out of the shadow called death almost as if passing through a purifying fire. When He arose from physical death, even His disciples did not

recognize Him until He allowed Himself to take on enough of the former form, to which He had died, for them to do so. All along the way to Emmaus, they could not distinguish the man with whom they had been for three years. 'I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again.' And He took it up *on a higher plane!*

"When the eagle is born or hatched, it means death to a thing or state of things called 'egg' — and in this new process it is impossible to carry any of the old estate with you. Many are seeking the *new birth*, but they do not want to go through death to get it. In other words, they want to hold on to old stages of development, and at the same time try to express new capacities. It is quite as impossible for a caterpillar to fly as it is for an egg; both must perform the *death* upon the thing of which they want to be rid, and re-embodiment themselves with the new reality, before they can attain the expression they are seeking. When you learn the proper interpretation of the word 'death' you will see that it becomes a friend (O death, where is thy *sting?*), for it is a cleansing, liberating process. It is a letting go completely and ascending to a place where the former things cannot enter in, and have nothing whatsoever to do with the present manifestation. Instead of getting rid of things temporarily, man *dies completely* to the idea of its manifestation. In the new place he finds himself as incapable of experiencing his former limitations as an eagle flying over the abyss would have in experiencing the cramped quarters of the eggshell from which it evolved.

"A tiny plant starts from its cell and the seed dies. It pushes forth a bud, the flower comes, and the scales or outer leaves die, and the flower is born. The fruit pushes out into manifestation and the flower dies, and so it goes ever onward and upward into the more glorious manifestation of Life here and now. The never-ending merging into new and lovelier states takes place when what you have been and have obtained is ready to die, and when the 'last enemy' has become a friend and thus the 'sting' has been taken from it. The offices of death are oblivion to that which is outgrown and of no further use. If you have not already died to much of the *conscious thinking* of yester-years, you are suffering from arrested or retarded mental development. If you have not died to many of your previous stages of development and former states-of-being, then your growth is indeed stunted and you are a spiritual dwarf. And so death, when properly understood, becomes the friendly enemy. It is that which throws a veil of oblivion to outgrown states and cast-off limitations and causes the Magdalene to look about and see that she has no accusers. Suddenly she is dead to the thing called *harlot* and all that has gone with it, and she is born at the same instant to something that cannot experience or even understand the former state of things. The friendly enemy has released her!" — end quote.

The same wonderful truth is uniquely expressed in a dream a sister shared with us in one of her letters. She said, "In the dream I saw an old lady — tall and skinny and rather bony — quite frail, too, and she looked as old as the hills. She was stiff and shaky, could hardly walk, but she kept tottering along. In desperation she was grimly and tenaciously holding on to the little crevices in the wall against which she leaned as she continued down a long hallway. She held her head high, almost arrogant in manner, as though to say, 'I'll never give up, I'm not going to fall,' while it was obvious she was already collapsing. As I watched, feeling sorry for her, gradually, she slid to the floor — and suddenly I saw her and the wall no more.

"At the time this dream came I prayed earnestly that the Lord would let me come across this poor old lady who needed so much for someone to help her — but of course I never found her — and soon forgot all about the matter. When the Lord brought it back to me, He let me know that I was the old lady! The old lady is the nature that doesn't want to die, and fights desperately to have its way, because that is its nature. No wonder she looked as old as the hills — she's been around since Adam! She has traveled a long, long corridor down to this day, and while nothing in her wanted to die, at last she sensed that she would, or she wouldn't have been holding on for dear life. How glorious that we have discovered that God had already decreed that He would have a people in the beauty of the life of Jesus Christ, because He Himself would totally overcome the limitations of sin and the power of death to become the resurrection and the life for all creation! I don't know how to

explain it, but somehow I feel that I'm not hanging on the cross any longer — yet the cross is still working in me. I am dead, and my new life is hid with Christ in God!

“In my time I've been through deep waters alright, and through the fires — and I know not what lies ahead. Yes, dying is painful in many ways, but I've discovered that after every dying episode, our blessed Lord comes with a baptism of holy Love that literally lets us drink in His very substance — a healing balm that comforts, strengthens, enlightens, transforms, and raises us up into perfect wholeness in an altogether new and higher dimension of life, victory, and glory! When the old lady totally collapses the wall disappears, too — for the old lady *is indeed herself the very wall that separates us* from the fullness of the indwelling Christ! What a *death!* What a *life!*” — end quote.

Men would not fear the plagues if they understood that they are sent just because THE OLD IS TO BE REMOVED SO THAT THE NEW CAN BE SEEN. God has greater things prepared for His people than they have ever dared to imagine, but the old to which they cling has to be removed. The plagues are the divine *storm* that sweeps it all away! The new order is the kingdom of God. It isn't destruction that is occurring, but a **creative birthing**. Ah, what pain there is in childbirth! Is it not like the pangs of death itself? Yet it brings forth a new and wonderful life! The old is removed, so that when the dust settles, the new and greater glory can be seen by all. It is not an ending, but a beginning!

The late George Wylie once explained the truth this way. “No creature has the power to lift itself above what it is by nature, nor act above what its nature allows it to. When you see a bird floating around on the water of a pond, and you hear it go ‘Quack, quack’ you know it is a duck. It was created a duck, it was hatched a duck, and a duck it will remain, all it can ever do is what the nature of a duck demands of it. It will spend most of its life on the water, for it is in its nature to do so. On the farm we had one female duck. She laid 18 eggs one year, and mother thought that was too much for her to handle, so she took half of them and set them under a broody hen. They all hatched at the same time. The mother duck took her little flock out on the pond which was close to the barn. The hen with her little ducks wandered down by the pond when the little ducks were just a day old. That was her undoing... As soon as the little ducks saw the water they were in it, and away they went out into the middle of the pond and the poor old hen stood on the shore frantically calling them to come back, but they paid no attention to her, nor did they understand her language. It wasn't long until they met up with the mother duck and her little flock, and that was the last the poor old hen ever saw of her little brood. She couldn't follow them for it was not her nature to be on the water, nor could she be, for she was not physically endowed with the equipment to live on water.

“The ducks were perfectly at home on the water for God had designed them for that kind of life. They loved it, and God had given them the physical equipment for it. Though they can also fly when necessary to move from one place to another, they can never soar up into the heavens as the eagle does. You will never find a duck up in the lofty crags of the mountains where the eagle makes it home, nor soaring away into the heavens until it is a mere speck in the blue sky, as the eagle does. The duck cannot do this, nor has it any desire to do so, for it is not in its nature. All it can ever be is a duck, and it can only act according to what its nature demands. This is also true concerning the natural man, the outer carnal part of man. He cannot, by his own efforts, change himself, nor lift himself any higher than what he is by nature. He will remain what he is in his carnal state, unable to find life and reality, nor with any desire to do so, until the Spirit of God begins to work in his life. Let us not think that it was by any act of our own human will that we came to God, or sought any higher relationship with Him, for as Jesus said, ‘NO MAN CAN come unto me, except the Father draw him.’ The natural man by nature has no desire for God nor spiritual life until the Spirit of God reaches down into his depths and touches the strings of his spirit and begins to woo and stir that hidden, unknown inner man.

“Let us not think that after Christ has quickened our spirit and come to live within us, that our old nature has been transformed. It hasn't! It is as it always was, contrary to God and His ways, and

there is no way that this old nature can be spiritual or fulfill the will of God. Even when it takes a religious bent working in the church, working so hard **for** the Lord, it is impossible for it to do the will of God. Like Cain of old, it will always do childish, carnal things and offer them up upon the altar before the Lord. This is why it must be put off, crucified, dead, buried, swept away, and the new nature, the divine nature take its place. The old man and all his works, even his good religious works, must die, and the new man be raised up to live within our beings, for it is God's will to reveal His Son in us" — end quote.

As I mentioned earlier, when Israel entered into their land of inheritance they possessed the land, not by bringing things in, but by kicking things out. In like manner, the book of Revelation portrays for us *our inheritance*, and the entrance of all God's people into our promised land — the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The possession of our inheritance in Christ is not obtained by adding anything to Christ in us, but by what God **removes from us** so that Christ can be fully revealed in His saints. This principle is so easy to see throughout the book. Someone has said that the book of Revelation is so easy to understand that we must have someone's help to misunderstand it. My, my, my, methinks we have had LOTS of help in misunderstanding it!

In the spirit of this precious truth I now share a word brother Carl Schwing has written, "John of the Cross wrote of the 'dark night of the soul.' I, like the rest of you, have experienced many such nights; they continue to come to us, and we often wonder why. There are times when our Beloved must come to us as a thief in the night. However, He does not come to rob us...He arrests us...making us prisoners of love and obedience. He takes from us the things we cannot give. He takes from us the stumbling blocks, the cravings of the flesh...and, in time, He will take all that would hinder us from being wholly His. If need be, our Beloved gently wounds us with love...for He alone can destroy our man of sin by the brightness of His appearing. It is through Him that we are made to overcome! That all the praise and glory might be given to the Lover of our soul. Knowing this, our 'dark night' becomes a time of rejoicing for our inner man, because he knows his hour of freedom draws near. And, if one dark night our Beloved would come and slay us...we will reign with Him forevermore. What a glorious inheritance is ours in Christ Jesus!" What a word that is!

"And the first went, and poured out his bowl *into the earth*; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore *upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image*" (Rev. 16:2).

When the first of the seven angels pours out his bowl upon the earth-realm, the soulical religious realm of man, he pours it specifically upon those who have turned their backs on the pure walk in the Spirit of God and have chosen to take the mark of the beast and worship his image. Ah, yes, to follow after the spirit of the world and the carnal church systems of man, and take **their mark** upon one's life, indeed leads into a treacherous territory!

The vast majority of Christians have been led to believe that the mark of the beast is some kind of literal mark, brand, tattoo, or chip placed upon or in the forehead or in the right hand. The only verse in the entire Bible that mentions the number (666) of the mark is Revelation 13:18, wherein we read, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is *Six hundred threescore and six.*" We do well to remember that the chapter divisions and verse numbers have been added by the translators and are not found in the original manuscripts. The ancient Greek texts do not contain chapters, verses, or punctuation marks; there are no spaces between the words, and all the letters are written in capitals. Punctuations, small letters, paragraphs, and chapters were added hundreds of years later.

You may wonder why this is of importance. The verse quoted above is the very last verse of chapter thirteen of the Revelation. Following the phrase, '*Six hundred threescore and six,*' the very next words are the first verse of chapter fourteen. Verse one begins a new chapter in our modern translations, which usually indicates to the reader *the end of one thought, and the beginning of a new*

thought. Therefore, the modern reader is prone to suppose that when you leave Revelation 13:18 and move to Revelation 14:1 John has somehow **changed the subject** or **shifted gears!** The truth is, of course, that John did not write a verse eighteen and a verse one. There was no chapter division and the context reveals a **continuity of thought.** Without the chapter break, you can more easily keep the train of thought in this passage, especially in relation to THE WRITINGS IN THE FOREHEADS OF PEOPLE.

So let us now do away with the chapter break and see what has always been there, but unnoticed by most! “*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. 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. 13:16-18; 14:1).

Can you not see the continuity of thought, the clear and unmistakable *connection* between the **mark in the foreheads** of all the natural men of the world, and the **father’s name in the foreheads** of God’s chosen and separated elect? Is the Father’s name — Yahweh — written, engraved, or in some way applied visibly and literally upon the foreheads of the elect? Do we suppose that in John’s vision of the Lamb on mount Zion he saw Jesus setting up a little tattoo parlor at the foot of the mount, and before those following Him can ascend the mount with Him, they are required to visit the tattoo parlor and receive the name YAHWEH indelibly printed in blazing characters of blue and red upon their foreheads? Even a child knows better than that! Even the babes in Christ understand that the Father’s name written in the forehead is a *spiritual reality* — bespeaking having the *mind of Christ*, the *spirit of Christ*, and the *nature of Christ*, as obedient sons transformed into His image and likeness. Could it be any different with the **mark of the beast?** Is it not the mark of the beast’s mind, the beast’s spirit, and the beast’s nature impressed upon the *thoughts* (forehead) and *actions* (right hand) of those men who walk after the bestial order of *this world system?*

The folly of the common interpretation of the Revelation is that it lacks consistency. It makes the first part of the verses quoted above to be speaking of outward, physical, literal things, while the latter part is speaking of inward, spiritual realities. But even common sense would lead one to the conclusion that if one is literal the other must be as well, and if one is spiritual the other must be also. If the mark of the beast is an inscription of some sort on the skin of sweaty foreheads, then so is the Father’s name a literal name written upon the foreheads of the followers of the Lamb. By the same token, **if the Father’s name is a spiritual state of being, then the mark or number of the name of the beast is also a revelation of character.** You simply can’t have it both ways!

The sons of God are marked — they have put on the blessed mind of Christ! The people of the world are also marked — they walk in the beastly mind of the flesh, they carry in all their thinking and actions, even when they are religious, every aspect of the carnal, worldly, beastly nature. The number **six** represents man, for man was lowered into this world of flesh and blood on the **sixth day** of creation. All through the scriptures six is the number of **MAN**. Even the passage we have quoted tells us this, plainly in the Greek text. The King James Bible says of this number (mark) of the beast, “*...it is the number of a man.*” The seemingly insignificant article, “**a**,” is not in the Greek manuscripts. And while it is generally assumed, it should not in every case be assumed, for the Greek text would not in any way be changed if you were to omit the “a” and say simply, “**it is the number OF MAN; and his number (man’s number) is Six hundred and sixty-six.**” Six is simply **MAN’S NUMBER** and to have it raised to six hundred and sixty six simply shouts aloud — **FLESH, FLESH, F-L-E-S-H!** It says of those men who bear the mark that every imagination of their hearts, all their actions and activities, and the methods they employ in their worship and service to God, are not of the spirit of Christ but of the natural understanding and carnal efforts of the flesh man. That is why all the religious works of carnal men are designated as *hay, wood, and stubble.* Their deeds are

not the fine gold and precious stones of Christ's incorruptible life, but those of worthless hay, wood, and stubble that burn. Therefore does God send forth His seven-angel ministry with the seven last plagues! For this very reason the first angel pours out his first plague upon the men who *have the mark of the beast, and upon them which pay homage to his image*. The plague strikes the carnal efforts and works of the flesh — and sweeps them all away! Can you not see the mystery?

At this point I am impressed to share the following words from the pen of Paul Mueller. "When the seven angels begin to pour out their vials upon the earth and the various areas of the beast, this signals the beginning of the Lord's judgments upon the flesh and the ways of old Adam, the man of carnality. When the first angel poured out his vial, *'there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.'* According to Strong's Concordance, a noisome and grievous sore is an injurious, hurtful, diseased, ulcer-like sore. In this case, it is not a literal disease or sore, but it describes a spiritual condition resulting from having the mark of the beast. The mark of the beast is not a literal mark, but it is a spiritual defect identifying the person who worships and obeys old Adam and his image rather than Christ and the Father. It is the identifying characteristic of those who have surrendered the headship and control of their spiritual lives to a man or men, and not to Christ alone. And may God grant that that old, Babylonish headship idea shall never be tolerated among God's called-out ones. The Lord set us free of that, and by his grace, we shall remain free indeed!"

"...and there came an evil and noxious sore," signifies interior evils and errors which break forth in external manifestations of corruption, like the boils that sometimes erupt on men's bodies. This is the *result* of apostasy, of disobedience to the Lord and departure from the growth of life in the Lord. The Old Testament type for this plague is found in the plagues the Lord sent upon Egypt by the hand of Moses. "And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a *boil breaking forth with blains upon man*, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it *became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man*, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he harkened not unto them; as the Lord had spoken unto Moses" (Ex. 9:8-12).

This plague affected both man and animal, typifying the whole bestial kingdom. Moses followed God's exact orders, and the magicians and all the Egyptians suffered from boils, or painful sores that caused inflammation of the skin, which covered their bodies and their animals. God had said that He would bring judgment "upon all the **gods** of the Egyptians" and this plague was an affront to several of the Egyptian gods. The plague of boils showed the Egyptians that their god of medicine, Imhotep, was helpless against the mighty hand of Yahweh. Likewise, Sekhmet, the lion-headed goddess with healing power, could not heal the Egyptians of their terrible sores. Other gods who could not help include Isis, a goddess of healing, and Sunu, a pestilence god.

That was Egypt — but now consider the curses and punishments that were to come upon GOD'S PEOPLE if **they** were disobedient to the heavenly vision! "It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all **these curses (plagues) shall come upon thee, and overtake thee...**the Lord will smite thee with the **boil of Egypt**, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed..." (Deut. 28:15,27).

The "boil" of Egypt is not an ordinary sore, but is abscessed, ulcerated, and malignant. Job's "boils" (Job 2:7) were probably ulcerated sores of an infectious nature. They not only itched and hurt, but had a terrible odor, darkened his skin, and so disfigured him that his friends hardly recognized him. The same word used of the sores caused by the outpouring of the first plague in the Revelation is used in the Septuagint translation of Exodus, of the plague of boils "breaking forth with blains

(blisters full of corrupt matter)” in the plagues of Egypt. Thus the literal plague of Egypt is the clear type of the spiritual plague, revealing the extreme depths of God’s dealing upon His people! The message is clear — the “noisome and grievous sore” represents an ***inward uncleanness*** which erupts in ***outward purulence***. It points to the inward uncleanness of carnal and impure thoughts, ideas, desires, plans, motives, and ways which erupt into the outward purulence of a life disgraced by unholy actions.

Departing from the life of the spirit and the inner reality of Christ weakens one’s spiritual immune system, breaks down the spiritual defenses, and leaves one vulnerable to the outbreak of fleshly corruption. How often we have seen this in the lives of believers, and most markedly in the lives of well-known ministries! So busy were they in their “works” for God, in their multiplied programs, promotions, and schemes to evangelize the world and accomplish great things for the kingdom of God, that their prayer life suffered, no time to wait in holy brokenness before God, no time to sit at the feet of Jesus in intimacy of fellowship, just a constant busi-ness with their man-centered endeavors, until one day in the leanness of their soul the flesh broke out in terrible corruption. As their inward corruption was openly revealed it was indeed a revolting scene to look upon — the angry, ulcerated, running, infectious sores of sin, pride, ego, power, manipulation, deceit, crookedness, lust, excess, shame, and disgrace, open for the whole world to gaze upon. This is the divine warning of this plague — taking the mark of the beast and paying homage to his image LEADS TO THIS!

Many well-known ministries have gone down the tubes during the last several decades, not to mention the sex scandals that have literally rocked the Catholic Church, because the ***righteousness of the kingdom*** was never established in their deepest hearts. They were great preachers, gifted orators, dynamic pulpiteers, talented musicians, polished television personalities, skilled organizers and promoters, with powerful gifts of God operating in their lives, and charisma dripping off their fingertips. Hundreds and thousands would come to hear them when they showed up, and millions of adoring followers watched their every move on the television screen, sending in untold millions of dollars to support their grandiose programs and projects. But their word wasn’t trustworthy; you couldn’t depend on their integrity. They would not live within their means, nor pay their honest debts. They glibly asked their followers for thousands of dollars in donations and willingly resorted to every sordid trick and sob-story to persuade people to give more and more money while they themselves lived the high life, flying their own personal jets around the world, eating in the most expensive restaurants, and living in fabulous homes costing millions of dollars. They bilked widows of their life-savings, and then left behind a disgraceful trail of unpaid bills and questionable dealings.

Some were caught in bed with another man’s wife, or ran off with the organist, deserting their own wife and children. Some divorced and remarried again and again. Others were discovered in hotel rooms consorting with prostitutes, while others were caught in homosexual acts. Some sank into the filth of free love, wife-swapping, and group sex — even committing such acts in the name of the Lord! One died in a hotel room of acute alcoholism. Another became obsessed with weird and strange doctrines and delusions of grandeur. He founded a cult and built a tabernacle with a golden throne surrounded by the twenty-four elders. And, of course, the whole world knew about Jimmy Jones and the Jonestown tragedy! Others had violent tempers, lying tongues, deceptive methods, kingdom-building spirit, and egos inflated with pride. Ah — “running and festering sores” — what an apt description of men whose hearts are filled with all filthiness and unrighteousness, “having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right ways, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (II Pet. 2:14-15). What shame and reproach these bring on the kingdom of God by their unholy actions!

There are men who profess to be sons of God who have this problem. They have a good knowledge of truth, eloquent delivery, and power to move audiences and influence people, but their lives are

oozing with festering pus that stinks to all who come near. Ah, the problem has been that throughout long ages men have sought the **power** of the kingdom of God apart from the **righteousness** of the kingdom. Men have asked for, and have graciously received, an anointing of kingdom power, and they have gone forth to do exploits in His name, but in the great majority of cases they neither asked nor sought for, nor did they receive, the corresponding righteousness of the kingdom. To possess power without righteousness is a blueprint for tragedy. It means that men will do the works of God, but cannot live the life of God. They possess authority without character. Such will honor God for a season with their mighty works, but just as surely as the pig will return to his wallowing, and the dog to his vomit, just that certain is it that these will ultimately bring shame and reproach upon the name of the Lord by their unrighteous conduct. THE WAY TO GET RID OF THE EXTERNAL PURULENCE IS TO CLEAN UP THE INTERNAL CORRUPTION. "A new heart also will I put within you."

The truth, however, runs deeper than this. It is not just the gross sins of the flesh that the Lord exposes through the first bowl and its plague. Oh, no! Today, as God moves in a spiritual way among His people, bringing the spiritual plagues into the midst of those who dwell in the spiritual Egypt, He is also stretching out His hand against all the "gods" of man's religion, the gods of personality, denominationalism, creeds, programs, methods, promotions, power, cathedrals and church buildings, and religious icons and kingdoms of all sorts. He will judge all those things that men trust in which usurp the pure life and power and moving of the Spirit of the Lord! Men are molded in character into the likeness of the god that they worship. IT MEANS DISCOVERING THE ROTTENNESS WITHIN THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS OF MAN BECAUSE THAT ROTTENNESS HAS COME TO THE SURFACE AND BEEN MANIFESTED FOR ALL TO DISCERN! Millions of the Lord's people are worshipping daily at the polluted altars of the false gods of man-made religious systems and their erroneous creeds and carnal disciplines. In this day the Lord will move to draw such eruptions of corruption out of the carnal religious systems of man, that it will evoke among all the Lord's people absolute consternation, disappointment, embarrassment, disconcertion, disillusionment, and **pain** beyond comprehension — and try as they may, there will be no answers, no solutions, no **remedy** to be found!

We know the corruption is there because men in their religious life bear upon their minds and actions the mark of the bestial system, a system in which men *think* like the world, *plan* like the world, and *act* like the world! Who can deny that in the religious realm the church system's whole vision, method, and attitude is in accordance with the world's system? Their whole planning and program is all in harmony with the "spirit of the age" as they constantly adapt themselves to WHATEVER THE WORLD IS DOING, be it rock music, hip-hop, concerts, talk shows, coffee houses, showmanship, fund-raising schemes, and the list can go on ad infinitum. Are they not "incorporated" like the corporations of the world? Are they not controlled by a "board" like the world's corporations? Are they not "chartered" under the ungodly authority of human government just like all worldly institutions? Thus the "mark of the beast" is clearly stamped upon all her works! And the masses of the world's inhabitants live out their daily lives bearing in mind and character the MARK of that bestial system!

As the first "messenger" pours out his "bowl" into this carnal religious "earth," all the uncleanness within that system will break out in a putridness that will become a revelation to every redeemed soul within her that something is terribly wrong! That is the first step toward the fall of Babylon! Most of those who now read these lines have already experienced this, for it happens *first* in God's *firstfruits company!* Oh, yes, my beloved, *you* above all people in the world understand exactly what I am talking about! One blessed day the horrible corruption of the religious systems came as a mighty, divine, shocking *revelation* to each member of God's elect! Our eyes were opened, and suddenly we saw Babylon for just what she is — we beheld her riding upon the scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, with a golden cup in her hand full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication, drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, and clearly we could read the inscription written upon her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. We saw! And with loathing we beheld the

festering, running sores of her uncleanness! And thus began the journey by which we *fled* from her and found refuge in the living, loving arms of Jesus!

Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

Chapter 181

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues

(continued)

“And the *second angel* poured out his bowl upon *the sea*; and it *became as the blood of a dead man*: and every living soul died in the sea” (Rev. 16:3).

Here we are given the picture of the second angel pouring out his bowl, not upon the earth, but into the sea, the lowest realm of man’s life, the body realm where lies the root and source of all evil. Something strange and astonishing happens to the sea! Before we consider that, let us reiterate that throughout the scriptures the *sea* is a type, individually, of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man; and corporately, of the raging, restless, surging masses of degenerate humanity, tossed to and fro by these inner storms and turbulent motions of the natural mind and the flesh. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The *wicked* are like THE TROUBLED SEA, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described so-called believers who walked as natural men when he said, “These are RAGING WAVES OF THE SEA, foaming out their own shame” (Jude 13). John, in the Revelation, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the “many waters,” saying, “The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, ARE PEOPLES, AND MULTITUDES, AND TONGUES” (Rev. 17:15).

No man can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging carnal heart of man that inspires every imaginable evil and devilish perversion, religious, economic, or political, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, immorality, faithlessness, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, wars and rumors of wars, bloodshed and oppression. Ah, the *sea* is the **lowest realm** on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly-minded humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be!

Here, however, God is not dealing with the outer world of wicked mankind, but with His own people. The book of Revelation is sent to *the church!* It reveals to *His servants* the things He intends to do and unfold in their lives and experience! It begins in the first three chapters with a carnal, imperfect church. Eventually there emerges a firstfruit company of overcomers, a people out of the church, a people qualified to be “caught up unto God and His throne” and to stand with the Lamb “upon mount Zion.” This is not the whole church, for these are a “manchild” birthed *out of* the church-woman and a company of 144,000 overcomers who have been “redeemed *from among* men.” Yet, in the closing chapters of the Revelation, we behold the entire community of God’s redeemed people purged, purified, and perfected — the *bride* has “made herself ready” to whom it is granted to be “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white” and she is joined in union at “the marriage of the Lamb.” All the various companies of God’s people are revealed in the glorious CITY OF GOD, THE NEW JERUSALEM! And that, my beloved, completes the journey from the CARNAL CHURCH to the GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT, OR WRINKLE, OR ANY SUCH THING, FOR IT IS HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH! That is the whole message of the Revelation — God’s dealings with *His people* to bring them to perfection and fullness in Himself!

This is without doubt the “sea” within the Lord’s people, the flesh nature, with all its agitating, surging emotions, powers, and propensities. One thing is certain — God has complete power and full authority over even that lowest realm within every saint of God! The word of the Lord declares,

“Thou *rulest* the RAGING OF THE SEA: when the waves thereof arise, *Thou stillest them*” (Ps. 89:9). Many centuries ago the Spirit of God inspired these beautiful words of promise, “The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NOISE OF MANY WATERS, yea, than the MIGHTY WAVES OF THE SEA” (Ps. 93:3-4). Praise God! He rules the **inner raging of the sea** and He stills **all its tempests!** The unstable nature within, so quickly moved by the storms created by the carnal mind, the torrents of passion, the streams of vain imaginations, the waves of frustration and fear, the winds of doubt and unbelief, the turbulent emotions of fleshly zeal, anxiety, and temptation — all are quieted by the Lord, the Spirit, who arises within in peace, joy, righteousness, confidence, understanding, faith and strength to **rule the raging of the sea!** And then follows the calm, the state described by Paul — “that we be no more tossed to and fro with every wind...but may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). The Spirit of God within is great peace, overflowing joy, unfailing love, unwavering righteousness, and omnipotent power. It is only necessary then to gain the *conscious awareness* of the presence and life of God as the true essence of our being, to know that this life is the law of our reality. As we come to know the spirit of our life in Christ all inner and outer tempests are stilled, the sea is calmed, and the dragon in the sea vanishes over the horizon. Oh, yes!

Yet, here under the second plague, something different is set before us. The “plague” falls into the sea of men’s lives and the sea becomes as the blood of a dead man. What word is this! The whole sea is turned to blood, and that, not pure, fresh, flowing, living blood, but blood like that of a dead person, putrid, foul, repulsive, and vile in the extreme, spreading its deadly odor, as it were, over the whole world. The outpouring of the first bowl produced virulent ulcers on the followers of the beast — outward eruptions of internal uncleanness — revealing to all the corruption of the human heart even in those who name the name of the Lord. It outwardly revealed even the uncleanness of the religious systems of man. Have you not seen it? Now, however, wonder of wonders! the dealing hand of God probes even deeper, He pours out the judgment upon that **inner corruption** to begin to deal with the inward condition which is the **cause** and **source** of the boils. Think of it! The pouring out of the second bowl reveals more than the outward manifestation of inward corruption — God so overwhelms His people with the death within, so enveloping them with the stench of rotting, coagulated blood so terrible that it can only be adequately described by the picture of the whole ocean reeking with rotten blood. As horrible and offensive as this seems, it is indeed wonderful!

At last the Lord’s people see that lower nature for exactly what it is — unmitigated DEATH! The whole realm of “this present evil world” is but a **dead man**, a world of **dead men** with no life at all in them. There is no life in anything of the world system! This comes as a great and wonderful revelation to anyone who bears the mark of the beast and pays homage to his image, for all who esteem the bestial system of this world with its politics, its military, its charities, its science, its education, its economic institutions, and its religious systems, views it all with pride and wonder. Such people join its lodges, support its military machine, engage themselves in its politics, congratulate themselves for being “committed” and “involved” in its various institutions, and pride themselves in being “patriotic” citizens. This is where millions of believers walk today in the church systems. How tragically have the Lord’s people walked as natural men in a natural world as they fill their lives with natural aspirations, neither knowing nor caring to know that they could walk as **sons of God** in heavenly realms far above the earth and the sea!

The natural man belongs completely to this earthly order of things. He is endowed in his human consciousness simply with a high quality of the natural animal type of life. He has flesh as the animals have flesh. He has blood as the animals have blood. He has a heart and circulatory system as the animals have hearts and circulatory systems. He has a digestive system as do the animals, feet for walking, hands for working, a brain, nervous systems, etc. The natural man lives and dies as do the animals. Paul pointed out the contrast between the natural man and the spiritual man in Romans chapters six through eight. In Romans 8:5 he exposed the yawning gulf between those who live after the body realm (which is the *flesh*) and those who live after the spirit (the offspring of God). He taught that “they that are *after the flesh* do *mind* the things of the flesh: but they that are

after the spirit the things of the *spirit*.” It all depends on **what we are AFTER!** When I was a young man I met a beautiful young lady by the name of Lorain Walker. I quickly decided that I wanted her to be my wife. For a year and a half I dated her, pursued her, spent every moment I could with her, proposed to her — and I got her! At that point in my life *she* was what I was AFTER! This is the idea Paul has in mind when he speaks of being “after” the flesh or “after” the spirit. He also refers to it as “minding” the things of the flesh, or “minding” the things of the spirit. I think that anyone can see that whatever a person is “minding” is what they are really AFTER! When you see Christians all caught up and expending their time, efforts, and energies in the programs of carnal church systems, in worldly human institutions, in political parties, and all the other natural pursuits of “this world,” you can know that they are worshippers of the beast. We manifest whether we are a natural man or a spiritual man by what we are after, what we are actively pursuing in our lives.

The man who is forever worrying about the *physical man* will always have in mind ways and means of catering to him — how he can provide a better old age pension, how he can get a better home, newer car, fancier clothes, how he can provide more to see and hear and taste and feel and smell. He expends all his energies to try to make sure the physical man will never be in need. He is always mindful of the physical flesh and all that he does is for the physical flesh. He does nothing more than the animals do. He lives his life out on the same plane as does the animal kingdom. He pursues the corruptible things of earth, the things that make for bodily comfort and pleasure, and does not mind the things of the spirit. A man or woman who *cares much* about the pleasures of the body, eating and drinking and sexual passion, holding in *high esteem* such corruptible things as houses and lands, fine clothes, bodily adornments, bank accounts, and luxuries of all kinds, will never, as long as their lives are wrapped up in the pursuing of those things, attain to the glory of sonship to God.

It is not that such things are wicked or abominable before God, for He has promised to “add all these things” unto us as we seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness. But I declare to you that to the natural man who is pursuing all these things **they are enemies of the spirit** because they never give you leave to seek God without distraction. Carnally minded men, whether they be people of the world or professing Christians, are filled with the delusion that those who hold in low esteem the corruptible things of earth, turning instead to the eternal values of the spirit, are living lives that are not worth living. But such persons do not know that just the opposite is true, for “she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (I Tim. 5:6).

The moment we grasp the meaning of the scripture, “They that are **after the flesh** do **mind** the things of the flesh,” at that moment we can understand what the carnal mind is. The carnal mind is the **fleshly mind** and the fleshly mind **minds fleshly things**. And the great revelation out of the sea turned into the blood of a dead man is that NONE OF THE FLESHLY THINGS OF EARTH HAVE ONE IOTA OF LIFE IN THEM! “To be carnally (fleshly) minded **is DEATH**” (Rom. 8:6). Not only in his relation to the spiritual man, but to the whole spiritual world, the natural man is regarded as **dead**. He is as a stone compared to an organism. The natural world is to the spiritual world as the inorganic to the organic. “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art **dead**” (Rev. 3:1). “To you hath He given life who **were dead** in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). It is not possible to know God or experience God through any of the physical senses of the body, or through any earthly thing, or any earthly institution, be it called a church, a sacrament, or something else. This reveals the folly of all “sacramental” religion! It is just as impossible for a man to **enter into Christ** by having his physical body dipped in a tank of water, as it is to have **Christ enter into him** by putting a wafer in his mouth and swallowing it. The natural is a sea full of death, and life is found **only in the spirit!**

In the world today there is a small minority who spend their lives **minding the things of the spirit**. The welfare of the inner spiritual man is foremost in their thoughts, for they seek to partake of THE MIND OF CHRIST. They esteem the realm of the flesh as less than nothing, as common dung, seeking always to be one mind with the Father. These, being **after the spirit, mind** the things of the spirit. The spiritual man has partaken of a life that transcends the physical — a new and distinct and supernatural endowment. He is no longer of this world. He is of the timeless state, Eternity. He is,

even now, a son of God and it doth not yet appear what he shall be. The difference then between the spiritual man and the natural man is not a difference of development, but of generation. It is a distinction of the quality of life. The life of the natural man is of so poor a quality that it is not even life at all, for it is filled with the corruptible mind of the flesh and the power of death. And it is only when you stand upon the shore of that sea that John saw, the sea that has become as the blood of a dead man, and view the men and the whole bestial system of the world that lives and thinks and functions at that level — it is there and then that you will truly comprehend the horribleness of that realm of death that the masses of God's people never see or understand until the second angel pours out his bowl, uncovering it to them, *revealing* it within them, causing them to see it as it really is, to be repulsed by it, and cry out mightily to God for a great deliverance!

We are living in an hour when God is moving powerfully in the hearts of the people He has called to live in the heavenlies of the spirit. While the rest of his people go on more or less happy and unconcerned, content with their empty carnal lives and worldly religious pursuits, sinking deeper and deeper into the world's morass of immorality, confusion, and corruption. But I have good news for you my friend — there is coming a mighty change! When the second angel pours out his bowl into the "sea," into the midst of the Lord's people, they will **awaken** and **smell** — not the coffee, not the roses — they will smell the putrid stench arising from the sea which has become to them as the blood of a dead man! This plague will fall suddenly into their natural life and phenomenally disturb their comfort zone! It is a quickening, a **revelation!** Once they are quickened by the Spirit of God there is a **revelation of corruption** — the knowledge of just what is in the natural man, the carnal mind, the flesh nature, and the whole spirit and system of **the world** — the clear and perfect understanding of what these are, how they work, their utter futility and worthlessness in light of the Truth and Reality that the Spirit brings. Christians in general will never let go of the valueless things of the world until once they see them for what they really are — an abhorrent cess-pool of the blood of **DEAD MEN!**

Oh, what a wonder this is! Do you suppose the millions of believers living out carnal lives in the political, economic, and religious systems of man, will ever come out of Babylon apart from the divine intervention of the Holy Ghost? Such a thing will not be. But God has promised — God has **revealed** — in John's wonderful vision on Patmos — He will send His plagues, His stripes, His woundings, His dealings, into the strongholds of Babylon and the slaves will not be comfortable with the things they were comfortable with before! In the old order of things believers have been *at home* with the worldly atmospheres, carnal understandings, and fleshly activities; but now the Lord will stir them, arouse them, awaken them, draw nigh and speak into them His living word and all the peace, pleasure, joy, and security of the earthly, natural, carnal life will flee away as dew before the rising sun. Once wooed by the Spirit, once awakened to the beauty and glory of life in the spirit, the *earthly state of being* will be perceived as a base and vile abomination compared to it. As the second plague falls, all contentment with the vast sea of natural life is taken away so that the carnal mind is bereft of all satisfaction in the worldly pursuits it formerly enjoyed and trusted in with unrestrained abandonment.

EVERY LIVING SOUL IN THE SEA DIES

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and *every living soul died in the sea*" (Rev. 16:3).

It is time to consider with prayer and meditation the great truth the Holy Spirit conveys in these marvelous symbols. Today when I read this phrase — "every living soul" — I heard something in the spirit that I had not heard before I took up my pen to write. These are beautiful *symbols of spiritual truth* — not literal events in the outer world. There will never be an ocean turned into a grave of death, nor will there ever be the horrible scene of billions and trillions of shoals of dead, bloated, and stinking sea creatures floating on the surface of bloody waters.

It came to me so powerfully — the precise terminology of the Holy Spirit of inspiration. He did not say, “every living creature,” nor did he say, “every sea creature,” nor did he make mention of “all the fish” in the sea. Rather, the Holy Spirit specifies “every *living soul*.” This is so very expressive and full of meaning! “Living” is in the Greek text *zao*. This word is used of various living things, but is most often used in reference to **divine life**. Jesus is called “the Son of the **living (zao) God**.” Our blessed Lord informed the sinful woman of Samaria of the “**living (zao) water**” that He would give to her. Jesus said that He Himself is the “**living (zao) bread**” that has come down from heaven, and that if a man eats of this bread he shall **live (zao)** for ever. “The just shall **live (zao)** by faith,” Paul wrote. Throughout the book of Revelation the word is used several times of the God who **liveth** for ever and ever; of Jesus who was dead, and now **liveth**; the seal of the **living God**; **living** fountains of waters; and of those who **live** and reign with Christ a thousand years.

There is clearly the quality of SPIRITUAL LIFE embedded in the word, yet in our text it is used in conjunction with the word “soul” — *psuche* — the soulical life of man. Can we not see by this that the phrase signifies a spiritual work of God which is joined with the soulical life of man — the deposit of divine life into the carnal state of nominal Christians! And who among us can deny that this is just what we see working in the lives of believers and in all the carnal church systems of earth! Walk into any church service on a Sunday morning. In spite of the liturgy, the vestments, the crucifixes, the ritual and ceremony, and all the rest, who can deny that *the Lord is present*. Can we deny that they have been truly saved by grace, have a love for the Lord, have experienced something of His goodness and power, and are possessed of a zeal to work for God, bless and help people, and bring men to Him? Yet — in spite of their experience, love, faith, and commitment, is it not also true that the religious world is walking after fleshly wisdom which seems so logical to the carnal mind as they seek to serve God and do His works? The whole program can be seen to be that of the *living soul* — God’s life joined with the soulical activities of men!

The entire religious world is today walking in fleshly wisdom which seems so logical to the carnal mind. Fleshly wisdom always seems to “make more sense” than does the wisdom of God! The adversary causes carnal wisdom to prosper because it is the denial of the life of the spirit, so that many times Christians and churches operate contrary to the Spirit with the argument, “It works!” Their method of evangelism is contrary to the ways of the Spirit, but since it “gets results” they continue on in it. The “program” of the church is contrary to true spirituality, and is built generally around flesh-appeal activities of ceremonies, rituals, concerts, social activities, contests, sports, puppet shows, movies, dramas, special speakers, sensationalism, and other carnal tactics and techniques, but the churches continue in it because it draws a crowd and causes the church to prosper in numbers and in finances, while their spirits remain dwarfed and hideously shriveled and stunted.

I would draw your attention to the wise admonition of the apostle Paul. “Are ye so foolish? Having begun in *the spirit*, are ye now made perfect by *the flesh*?” (Gal. 3:3). “We are the circumcision, who worship God in *the spirit*...and have no confidence in *the flesh*” (Phil. 3:3-4). The flesh is the name by which the Holy Spirit designates the natural man, human reasoning, the carnal mind. Well did William Law pen these words of keen insight: “In this antagonism of the flesh to the spirit the flesh has **two distinct strategies**. On the one hand the flesh wars against the spirit in its committing sin and transgressing God’s commands. This is the *evil* of the flesh. On the other hand, its hostility to the spirit is no less manifested in its seeking to serve God and to do His work! This is the *good* of the flesh. These two together are the tree of the knowledge of *good* and *evil*. In yielding to the flesh, the soul sought itself instead of the God into whom the spirit could have raised it. Self-effort and self-development prevailed over God’s life. And now, so subtle and mighty is this spirit of self, that the flesh, not only in sinning against God, but even when the soul learns to serve God, still asserts its power, refuses to let the **spirit alone lead**, and in its effort to be religious, wants to serve God independent of the spirit and is still the great enemy that ever hinders and quenches the spirit. It is because of this cunning deceitfulness of the flesh that there often takes place what Paul speaks of to the Galatians: ‘Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?’ Unless the soul is brought into absolute surrender to the spirit, the surrender to the spirit being very entire, and the holy

waiting on Him be kept up in great dependence and humility, what has begun in the spirit, very early and very speedily passes over into confidence in the flesh.”

It is right there where the flesh seeks to serve God, that the “living soul” is formed. The quickened spirit is alive in every child of God, but when the soul, *inspired* by the spirit, turns and usurps the work of the spirit, the hybrid is formed — a *mixture* of soul and spirit! Do we not know how the Pharisees, with their self-righteousness and carnal religion, fell into pride and selfishness, and became the servants of sin and the children of the Devil? Satan has no more crafty device for keeping men out of life than inciting them to a religion, even a serving of God, *in the flesh*. He knows that the power of the flesh can never conquer sin nor please God, that in the flesh and the serving of the flesh no one will ever become a **son of God**, for those who become sons not only defeat the Devil in the wilderness of temptation, but also deny their own souls — their own minds, wills, emotions, desires, plans, talents, abilities, hopes, dreams, and ambitions, to declare with the firstborn Son of God, “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me; for I do always those things that please Him. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things so ever He doeth, these also doeth the Son. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works” (Jn. 8:28-29; 5:19; 14:10).

If there is one lesson a son of God needs to learn it is this: If I am to *deny self* in my relationships with others, to conquer selfishness, anger, and lack of love, I MUST FIRST LEARN TO DENY SELF IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD! *There* the soul, the seat of Self, must learn to bow to the spirit, where God dwells. Listen, my brother, my sister, to the voice of the blessed Spirit of God: It is confidence in the flesh that motivates men to busily and craftily *work for God* rather than seeking the Lord until *He works!* It is self doing what the spirit alone can do; it is the soul taking the lead, in the hopes that the spirit will second its efforts, instead of trusting the spirit to lead and to do all, and then waiting on Him. Oh, brethren! How we need to watch this! All that is not of Life, of the Spirit, is merely the good of man — soulish. The deep mystery is that God *does* in some manner honor what the soul does, when it speaks His word or inspires men to seek after the Lord. God honors both His word and the faith evoked in men’s hearts! And it is this working of God through man’s efforts *in spite of* their soulful energy which shows us what the **living soul** truly is — the mixture of soul and spirit, the spirit working, honoring the spiritual content of the soul’s self-effort! Think of a man with a zeal to preach, not truly called of God, but out of soulish zeal he goes out proclaiming what he perceives to be the gospel. He mixes even his truth with error, preaching hell-fire and eternal damnation, warning men to turn to Jesus for salvation. Men do cry out to the Lord, and He honors their cry, and their faith, moving in their hearts, and they find forgiveness, peace, and deliverance from sin. This is the *living soul* — the life of God working through the soulful zeal of man! We all know it happens! If it *didn’t* happen, there would be no born-again people in any of the church systems of man! This is not the pathway of sonship to God, but it *is* the way of Babylon!

How much of our religious exercises have been soulish! I can tell you of a truth that most of the “power” in the modern “revival meeting” is nothing at all but soul power. Have you not noticed yourself that in many church services, revival meetings, and crusades a kind of atmosphere is first created psychologically to make the people feel warm and excited? A chorus is repeated again and again to warm up the audience. The people are feverishly urged to “get into the spirit” of the meeting. Some stirring stories are told. Special music is sung. The people are instructed to stand up, sit down, say “Amen!” and “Praise the Lord!” When the atmosphere is thoroughly heated up, the preacher will then stand up and preach. If he does his job skillfully he can anticipate a large “altar call.” These are methods and tactics, but they are not the energy of the Holy Spirit! Many preachers today think they have power (including some who call themselves sons of God), but they are merely employing psychological soul power to influence people and manipulate congregations. Many have become experts at manipulating people and audiences. One dead give-away: If the preacher has to have organ music playing softly in the background while he makes an appeal — he is working in soul power!

The Bible Schools of Babylon's religions offer a course for ministerial students called *homiletics*. Homiletics is the *art* of preparing, writing, and delivering sermons. The sad truth is that the vast majority of religious activities is just that — an *art*. You can go to school and **learn how to do it!** How to prepare sermons. How to speak persuasively. How to use gestures. How to tell jokes. How to preach. How to counsel. How to stir people with sentimental stories about death, repentance, hell, heaven, needs, miracles, etc. This all seems so desirable, so *good!* But I say to you that you can learn these very same psychological techniques, apply them in the business world, and go out and sell vacuum cleaners! The fact is, all really successful salesmen use these same *proven procedures* of presentation, sentimentalism, and pressure to sell insurance, security alarms, automobiles, real estate, and thousands of other items daily! They don't need any Holy Spirit to do that! All that is necessary is some good human personality coupled with some good proven techniques and one can persuade people to buy almost anything! These are means and methods, but they are not the power nor work of the Holy Spirit. They are no more spiritual when used religiously than they are when employed commercially. Yet God does *meet men in their lives right where they are* even when they turn to Him as a result of such soulish methods! That is the mystery of the "living soul."

How prone we are to consider a person possessing unusual talent, dynamic personality, and great natural ability, reasoning with the carnal mind that with such talent and qualities, why, if God could just get hold of him and USE ALL THIS ABILITY in the service of the Lord, what mighty things he could accomplish for the kingdom of God! Oh, yes, we can always locate some good flesh for God to anoint! And in our haste to pour God's Holy Anointing Oil upon man's flesh, we forget that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE" (I Cor. 1:26-28).

A brother shared the following experience which is so familiar to many who read these lines. "I remember visiting a church which allowed the visiting ministries to take up their own offerings. On this particular occasion a servant of God and his wife were conducting the special meetings. There was no denying that the hand of God was resting upon the brother. He was quiet, deep, and had a heavily anointed prophetic ministry. However, his wife's anointing was somewhat different. Very different. She was loud-voiced and boisterous. The worship, praise, singing, prayers, and prophecy seemed to be anointed, during her ministry. Then suddenly she announced, 'Now we are going to take up the offering.' Apparently she noticed the look on the faces of the people. Perhaps they resented this intrusion into the worship of the Lord. She then said, 'You say, Why are we doing this in the midst of the anointing? Well, we can turn that on any time we want to.' Need I say more? This is a favorite trick. Get the people 'high' on the Lord, or all worked up with the leader's self-anointing, and then while the tide is high make a plea for money. God in the past has allowed man to go on in his own way, and moved and blessed in spite of it. The days are coming, however, when He will no longer tolerate those who try to manipulate His Spirit for their own profit. Sooner for some, and later for others, but they will be judged severely" — end quote.

And may I add — when God withholds His blessing from all the soulical religious activities of man, when He no longer honors anything about it, when His presence and His working and His moving *flees* from the midst of all the administrations of religious Babylon — that is when EVERY LIVING SOUL DIES IN THE SEA! None of man's craftiness will work any more — there will be no more "life" active in anything that is soulical! That, above all else, will be the judgment!

There is no *life* in methods, techniques, or formulas. How much better it would be if the Lord's servants would expend their energies, like Mary of old, at HIS feet, learning to *know Him* and to *know His ways*. How much better it would be were the time spent on our knees, low and humbled before God, that He might place within a *deep distrust of the flesh*. How I pray that God would truly

reveal to all those apprehended to sonship that the one great hindrance to the life of sonship is the power of the flesh and the efforts of the self-life! Open our eyes, we pray Thee, to this snare of the adversary! May we all discern how secret and how subtle is the temptation to have confidence in the flesh, and how easily we are led to try and perfect in the flesh what has been begun in the spirit! May we learn to trust Thee, our Father, to work in us by Thy Holy Spirit both to will and to do *only those things* which THOU ART DOING!

In this day, after receiving the Father's call to sonship, after partaking of deep and vital dealings of the Spirit of God, I have had to totally *repudiate* all soulish wisdom of the carnal mind, all fleshly tactics of Babylon's kingdom, to bend low beneath the disciplines of the Father of sons, to travail mightily that God would bend me, break me, bind my soul power, bridle my Self, and block all that would proceed from my carnal mind. If I have learned anything of the ways of the Father I have learned this one thing: He who would be a son of God must be able to clearly distinguish what is done from his soul power and what is done from the indwelling spirit; further, he must confess and utterly forsake all that pertains to his own soul power, nailing it to the cross of Christ, that ultimately his own faith, as well as that of his hearers, may be found to stand solely in the power of God and not in the wisdom of the flesh. This is the only route, my dear brother, my precious sister, into the glorious and eternal *reality* of sonship to God! All the good works of the soulish realm can never, in a billion years, deliver creation from its bondage to the tyranny of corruption. Only the omnipotent working of THE LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD can accomplish this! "It is the *spirit* that quickeneth; the *flesh* profiteth nothing." *Think* on that!

It is a dangerous day to be involved in organized religion! I'm not trying to be rude, crude, or vindictive in any way, but there are a lot of things going on right now in the midst of God's people that are highly esteemed and getting the attention of the whole world, but it's just the drunken harlot riding her scarlet-colored beast through the wilderness of this world. It's almost a circus atmosphere in the Charismatic and Pentecostal scene, drawing the crowds, catering to soulish excitement, with all kinds of theatrics and showmanship, and men look at the lying signs and wonders going on about them, and pay no attention to the deep and eternal work of God to be wrought *within*. The subtleness and power of the individual *soul* is the root and source of the *wanton harlot* riding her beastly system — it is all the domain of the LIVING SOUL. The first man Adam was made a *living soul*. The last man Adam was made a *quickenning spirit*. If a man is not walking in his religious life in the power of the *quickenning spirit*, then without doubt he is walking in the energy of the *living soul*! That is the mystery.

Observe, then, how our text clearly states that "every *living soul* in the sea (of humanity) *died*." What can it mean? The "dying" of the living souls reveals the *cessation* of the spiritual work of God through the instrumentality of the systems of religious Babylon! While in former times God honored His word no matter what unclean vessel it passed through, HE WILL NO LONGER DO SO! Whereas God formerly permitted the *flesh* of man to be anointed, HE WILL NO LONGER ALLOW IT! God will no longer *bless, honor*, or in any measure *anoint* man's fleshly efforts to serve Him and build His kingdom! God will no longer *respond* to the prayers for the moving of His Spirit within and through the carnal methods and promotions of man. There will not in that day be any more "*living soul*," for God will withdraw the *zao* from the *psuche* — its end comes, and *every living soul in the sea of humanity dies*! In all the world there will not be any manifestation of divine life within the precincts of Babylon's works! The "plague" will be poured out into the sea of humanity and all religion and all religious systems will be full of death, emptiness, and corruption!

This is not a judgment to kill people, or literal flesh. These are word-pictures of spiritual realities! God is going to bring to death the hybrid manifestation of His Spirit accommodating man's folly and foolishness. He will withdraw His presence and forever write "ICHABAD" upon the systems of man — "the glory has departed!" Every union bears fruit, and the fruit of Babylon will be destroyed. It is of utmost importance that all of God's elect see this great truth, for once we grasp it, we understand the severity of the Father's dealings with the spirit and works of *religion* in the lives of His people, and

we will be neither surprised nor shocked when we see the anointing and moving of His Spirit depart once and for all and completely from the courts of Babylon! The power of Christ comes as a plague to kill each and every “living soul” in the sea until God is not seen moving from any realm anywhere except from the heights of mount Zion and from the high places of the heavens of His Spirit! The move, manifestation, and power of God will flow *only* from God’s firstfruits company! As it was in Cana of Galilee in that day when Jesus attended the wedding, when the *wine* made by the hand of *man* has run out and come to its end, then Jesus Himself will arise and bring to the scene the REAL WINE OF HEAVEN!

I now prophesy to you by the word of the Lord that this is precisely **why**, in that day, “Many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to *the mountain of the Lord*, and to *the house of the God of Jacob*; and He will teach us *His ways*, and we will walk in *His paths*: for the *law shall go forth out of Zion*, and the *word of the Lord out of Jerusalem*. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Mic. 4:2-3). The nations will come to the mountain (kingdom) of the house (the elect) of the Lord that has been established (elevated) in the tops of the mountains (kingdoms), exalted above all other kingdoms and above all churches and movements of man; they will come, I say, because there will be NO OTHER SOURCE of help or hope or life or light anywhere! The “living souls” will all be dead, there will be no more visitations of God, no more expressions of His life, no more exhibitions of His authority, no more movings of His Spirit, no more manifestations of His power, no more revivals, no more answers to prayer — no life in evidence anywhere in the lowlands of the religious world of man. What an awesome thought! No recourse, no blessing, no remedy from any source — the glory has departed.

“*Come up hither*” is the message now being heard from Zion’s holy hill! This message of truth and life is a proclamation of a new and greater manifestation of the rule and government of God in the earth. “Of the **increase** of His government and peace *there shall be no end*,” the inspired prophet assures us. That increase of the kingdom is from purpose to purpose, from dealing to dealing, from one stage of growth, development, and manifestation to another, and from one age to another. I declare to you today that we are now standing at the end of an age, and the Lord is introducing A GREATER MANIFESTATION OF HIS KINGDOM by separating His elect unto Himself. The old “church order” is fastly drawing to a close, and the day for the manifestation of the sons of God is rapidly approaching. The next step in the unfolding of God’s kingdom plan for the world is even now dawning.

We have progressed from the age when God has been meticulously forming His body of sons by establishing His rule in their minds and hearts, to the age when that body shall begin to fulfill the great and grand *purpose* for which God has prepared them. We have come to the time when the kingdom shall accelerate into a further and greater manifestation of the rule and dominion of the kingdom over all nations and over all mankind, answering the cry of the groaning creation to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The Lord is inaugurating a new age, and is setting forth a new order with a new understanding, new wisdom, new methods, new power, and new requirements for this new day of greater light and glory. As wonderful as the workings of the Spirit were in the past, they are not good enough for this new order of manifest sonship! Even though we have made some progress, with outpourings of His Spirit and glorious manifestations of the gifts, we must have something **more** from God to be able to rule the nations and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption!

Two thousand years ago the firstborn Son of God declared, “For all the prophets and the law prophesied *until John*” (Mat. 11:13). God spoke to an age through the law and the prophets who gave the word of God to Israel until John the Baptist came on the scene preaching repentance and the kingdom of God. This means that the prophets and the law revealed God’s will for that age and were in effect until John showed up in the wilderness and began his ministry. The Lord ended the

previous age by **removing His blessing, presence, and authority** from the previous order, and then spoke a new order into existence purely by His word. And by a similar unrecognized word of authority, Father shall conclude *this age* of the *formation* of His body of sons and inaugurate the new age of the *manifestation* of the sons of God on earth. When the Lord changed the order two thousand years ago, did He send a mighty cataclysmic upheaval and judgment to at once eliminate all the Old Covenant priesthood, laws, rituals, sacrifices, feast days, synagogues, and religious forms? Did He move to completely wipe them out and abolish it all from the face of the earth? No — not at all! Remnants of the old Jewish order remain in the earth to this day as an abiding and unimpeachable testimony to the blindness of unanointed, uninspired, unspiritual religion! God removed every vestige and particle of His presence, unction, power, and glory from that passing order and there is no spiritual or religious **death** more stark, barren, grim, empty, and desolate in any religious system of earth today than in Judaism!

When Father changes the order in this day, replacing the old church order with His manifest sons, kings and priests after the Order of Melchizedek, will He then eliminate and obliterate off the face of the earth the Catholic order, the Baptist order, the Methodist order, the Lutheran order, the Episcopalian order, the Presbyterian order, the Mennonite order, the Pentecostal order, the Charismatic order, the Word of Faith order, and all the other church orders of man? Not by any means! They will perish in due time, but first He will simply **remove what is left of His blessing, presence, and anointing from that order!** It will be just as the heavenly messenger announced to John: “Rejoice over her (Babylon), ye heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down...and the voice of harpers and musicians (spiritual praise and worship), and of pipers (prophets), and trumpeters (announcers of new things in God), SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE; and no craftsman (spiritual ministry), of whatever craft he be, SHALL BE FOUND ANY MORE IN THEE; and the sound of a millstone (grinding flour for bread — the word of God) SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE; and the light of a candle (the little light left in Babylon) SHALL SHINE NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE; and the voice of the Bridegroom (Christ the Head) and of the Bride (the true church) SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE...” (Rev. 18:20-23).

For a season they will continue on with their fellowships, activities, programs, ceremonies, rituals, crusades, and religious works. For a season, until the time appointed of the Father, all will continue to function without Father’s authority or the precious anointing and working of His Spirit. Thank God! There is a remnant, a chosen company, a firstfruit, a people with a purpose, called to be the **sons of God**, who have now been awakened to this new day and enter into its purposes by the Spirit of God. These have already received the call to come out of the Babylon system, because a new and greater manifestation of the kingdom of God is at hand. This call has come from the SPIRIT HIMSELF, confirmed by many thousands of saints in all parts of the earth, in practically every nation under heaven. It is not a matter of the interpretation of scripture, to prove from holy writ that **this is the time** for God’s sons to be manifested and for the kingdom of God to come in great power and glory. It is a matter of HEARING FROM GOD! Those who reject this vision reject the voice of the Lord from the heavens.

Now God has called us to “come out of her,” to depart from all our religious backgrounds, to repent of our doctrines, creeds, and beliefs; to repent of our denominationalism and our non-denominationalism; to repent of our carnal religious methods, our dead works, and all the baggage we have brought with us into this kingdom walk, from the systems of man. Only as we repent, and follow the Lamb up Zion’s mount, becoming invested with a *new mind*, a new vision, and a new reality, can we enter into this new and higher and more glorious dimension of the kingdom of God revealed through **sons**.

This should aid us greatly in understanding the fact that the next three chapters of the Revelation set forth in detail the *fall of Babylon*. The whole system of Babylon will collapse and go up in flames!

The work of the seven last plagues is designed to prepare God's people for that collapse. Do you think for one moment, dear one, that if God does not completely remove His blessing from Babylon, the people of God will ever leave her? No way! But every blessing and moving of God in her will **die**. In that blessed day God will have His man, His corporate man, His new creation man, His man in the image of God, His many-membered son, His man in the measure of the statue of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, full of incorruptible life, full of heavenly light, full of infinite love, and full of divine, omnipotent power — and upon HIM shall the glory be seen!

“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**” (Isa. 60:1-3).

Chapter 182

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“And the *third angel* poured out his bowl upon *the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood*. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast *given them blood to drink*; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments” (Rev. 16:4-7).

When the third angel pours out the third golden bowl of God’s passion, the third plague causes the rivers, streams, and springs to become blood also. No one drinks sea water, so the sea is turned to blood that men might understand that everything of the flesh realm is full of death and corruption. But here it is the *fresh water*, all the sources of water for *drinking* and for *washing* are turned to blood. And God gives it to religious people to drink!

This is reminiscent of the first plague that God miraculously brought upon the Egyptians through the hand of Moses — the turning of the Nile River to blood. One historian gives us the following background. God had expressly told Moses that he was to meet Pharaoh in the morning when Pharaoh went to the river. We don’t know the precise reason that motivated the Pharaoh to visit the Nile each morning, but based on other evidence it could have been to bathe, to offer his devotions to the Nile which he esteemed as a god, or to see if the river was beginning to rise to signal the beginning of the flood season. The Nile has been described as the “bloodstream of the god Osiris” and was certainly esteemed as the source of life for all Egypt. Therefore, for Yahweh to contaminate the very water which was so precious to all life in Egypt was certainly an embarrassment to the gods of the Nile and the gods of life in general. There can be no doubt that this plague gained the special, undivided attention of Pharaoh! Not only was the lifeblood of his people polluted, but also he and his servants were forced to see the contamination occur firsthand right while he was actually worshipping and giving devotion to the river!

The results of the plague were devastating, for all the water that was in the river was turned to blood. Because of this, the fish died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt (Ex. 7:31). Even the water that was in their stone and wood pots had turned to blood! The plague lasted for seven days. This plague was an affront to the Egyptian gods Osiris, Sothis, Isis, Khnum, and Hapi. Osiris was one of the most prominent and important gods in Egypt. He was not only the god of the dead (represented as a mummified king) but also the god of the Nile, whose death and resurrection explained the annual rise and fall of the river. We won’t take time to go into it here, but the various roles of the Nile gods clearly reveal that the Egyptians deified the Nile River and magnified its waters as the source of all life. Yet, with the simple extension of Aaron’s rod over the Nile, the life source of all Egypt was supernaturally contaminated! The Egyptian gods could do nothing to bring pure water to the people, and certainly Khnum, the guardian of the Nile, failed the people by allowing the water to become blood!

Here in the spiritual visions of John on Patmos it is not the literal springs and rivers that flow through earth’s mountains, plains, and valleys, of course, but the symbolical rivers of *man’s human life* and *man’s fallible word* rather than *God’s divine life* and *heaven’s living word*! How many times throughout the scriptures the life of God is spoken of as a flowing stream of water! “*How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men...shall be abundantly satisfied with the*

*fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the **river** of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the **fountain of life**"* (Ps. 36:7-9). The Lord Jesus tells us that the **water** that He gives will become within us a **fountain of living water, springing up** unto eternal life (Jn. 4:14). He says again that whosoever is thirsty may come to Him and drink, and whoever believes into Him will have **rivers of living water** flowing from within him (Jn. 7:37-38). All these words relate to one thing — that God Himself has **flowed out** and is still **flowing out** on this earth into humanity AS LIFE! Just as the Spirit of God and the Word of God make up the wonderful "River of Life" in the closing chapters of the Revelation, and flow out from the throne of God bringing life to all, so the "spirit of the world" and the "word of man" comprise the carnal "rivers" and "waters" of the earth-realm which flow out of the carnal minds and hearts of natural men. This plague falls upon the soulical rivers and the human well-springs of imaginations, carnal knowledge, and worldly wisdom that flow within our earthly, natural, human life and experience.

"Rivers," on the one hand, suggest the **flow** of these ideas and beliefs as they are taught, published, propagated, and assimilated into the minds, hearts, and behavior of mankind. The "fountains of waters," on the other hand, represent the **sources** of the ideas, concepts, philosophies, teachings, precepts, creeds, doctrines, traditions, ideologies, customs, laws — all the intellectual, moral, political, cultural, scientific, educational, and religious influences of *this world* which are the sources from which men draw their life, their natural joy and refreshment, their mind-sets, their image of themselves, their understanding of the world, their vocations, lifestyles, hopes, dreams, ambitions, and relationships. Collectively, these waters flow through school and college classrooms, seminars, television programs, books, court rooms, political propaganda, church pulpits, cultural traditions, and a hundred other places. Different belief systems moving in intellectual, moral, legal, business, and religious channels constitute the outflowing of these "waters" as "rivers." Individually, these rivers and springs are the very thought patterns that run through the minds of men that have become polluted through worldly and false teachings. If ever a dealing of God was needed, it is here!

The earthly-minded people of the bestial world system prefer to look to the "waters" that flow from worldly political, commercial, educational, and religious institutions. They look to these sources for life, contentment, and fulfillment, particularly to the religious systems with their impressive ceremonies, elegant pageantry, time-honored traditions, and static creeds and doctrines. They are like the apostate Israelites who preferred to drink from the Nile River along which Egypt flourished and the Euphrates River along which Babylon flourished. They "rejected the waters of Shiloah which flow gently," which waters correspond with the "river... the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the tabernacle of the Most High."

Where there are rivers there is a flow of life with vegetation, crops, food, birds, and animals of many kinds. Religion is a flow of life in the soulish dimension of man. There was a time in our life when it was a blessing to us to live in that realm, it was a lamp unto our feet, and important to us in our progress from the Egypt of the world to our promised land of the fullness of Christ. We received a certain level of life from that realm! We were encouraged, strengthened, and edified through the preaching, teaching, singing, clapping, worship, sacraments, activities, ceremonies, traditions, programs, etc. But as we follow on to know the Lord there comes a time when the Father shines a **greater light** upon our pathway and soon we find that all the streams and fountains which once gave us life, are turned to death for us! Once they were water to us, but now they are — **blood!**

Even a child can understand that the River of Life is not a literal river of natural water which, if a man steps into it, or drinks of it, will magically confer upon him physical immortality. Just as the river of God is *spiritual*, so in the Revelation the rivers of earth are *soulical*. The river of God is the *spirit* of the word, the rivers of earth are the *letter* of the word. The river of God is *essence*, the rivers of earth are *form*. The river of God is *living reality*, the rivers of earth are *lifeless shadows* and *deceptive illusions*. The river of God is *truth and life*, the rivers of earth are *cold, dead facts*, containing no *quickenning life* or *power!* And now may I exhort you to flee from those things which are true but not

Truth, as surely and swiftly as you would flee your home if you discovered it to be a den of rattlesnakes!

We have a whole crop of doom-casters in the land today who spend their time and energy in nothing else but informing the Lord's people of all the negative situations which are going to overtake our nation and the world! Many of the Lord's precious people are being fed a steady diet of messages, articles, books, and CDs about world conditions, politics, the situation in the Middle East, oil crisis, economic collapse, one world government, conspiracies of the Illuminati, Counsel on Foreign Relations, World Trade Organization, World Bank, European Union, Beast Government, the Antichrist, mark of the beast, cashless society, strikes, riots, war, terrorism, great tribulation, "safe areas," food storage, living off the land, planetary conjunctions, tsunamis, erratic weather conditions, global warming, wickedness, catastrophes, end of the world, and a whole catalog of other fearful and frightening events which they imagine fulfill the prophecies of the book of Revelation, some of which will undoubtedly happen, just as they have happened historically through the ages, but most of which I tell you now are nothing more than wild and sensational speculations conceived in the darkness of the carnal minds of men who masquerade as end-time teachers and prophets of God, bewitching the saints. The natural mind, my beloved, is certainly one of the well-springs and sources of the earthly "fountains of waters" from whence flow the "rivers" of carnal ideas, concepts, teachings, prognostications, and imaginations of which the "inhabitants of the earth" drink and find a certain level of excitement, exhilaration, refreshment, and fulfillment!

Let every child of God who has had birthed within his bosom the beautiful hope of sonship turn the searchlight of sincerity and truth upon his pure heart and answer these very important questions:

- Do any of the afore-mentioned things minister LIFE?
- Does the study of them cause you to be more FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?
- Do they enable you to put on the MIND OF CHRIST?
- Do they work DELIVERANCE and OVERCOMING POWER in your life?
- Do they inspire you with ever-increasing FAITH by which you shall conquer every enemy and lay hold upon life and immortality?
- Do they flood your life with PEACE and JOYFUL EXPECTATION in Christ?
- Do they TRANSFORM YOU INTO THE IMAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD?
- Do they imbue you with SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING, and with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?

Are they QUICKENING, LIFE-GIVING **TRUTH**, or are they, one and all, merely things that are *true*, or, perhaps, *may be true*, or *may not even be true at all!*

I have no hesitation in telling you that all these *streams* of teaching are naught but ***carnal rivers flowing through the earth-realm!*** Some will be dismayed by the statement I am about to make, but quite frankly, I care not one whit who anyone thinks the Antichrist is, or when the Great Tribulation will begin, or how long it will last, or what technological or economic development may bring the mark of the beast, or what the Illuminati or the New World Order conspire to do, or what significance the latest recession, assassination, governmental collapse, earthquake, tsunami, or terrorist attack has in the light of Bible prophecy, or any other event that men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after. That may all be interesting information, but it is for the "earth-dwellers" to concern themselves with. I have no time for such trivialities and even less interest. None of this is of any significance in the kingdom in which I now live, none of it flows in the waters from which I now drink, and holds nothing for me anymore. It all seems quite childish, speculative, and boring. I have higher matters to attend to and greater and more enduring things to pursue in the kingdom of my Father! I am no longer a citizen of this world, for I have been *translated* out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, and am seated with Him in the higher than all heavens, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, praise His wonderful name! I've been "raptured," and it had nothing to do with pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib, as man's river disseminates it.

And to one and all I say, “COME UP HITHER!” There is a river flowing here that ***makes glad the city of our God!***

Now, while it is abundantly clear that there is *no spiritual life* in any of the springs, streams, and rivers of man, they seem to be life to those who drink from them, for they are refreshed and strengthened in their carnal life by this “water.” By the symbolical changing of all this “water” into “blood,” men are brought face to face with the fact that there is no *true* life in it and that, in very fact, it is naught but death. It is *made death* unto them! It bespeaks the revelation of the complete corruption of all the sources of natural human wisdom, knowledge, and understanding from which men draw in all the various departments of life.

“And I heard the angel of the waters say, *Thou art righteous, O Lord...because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments*” (Rev. 16:5-7).

This is the only place in the Revelation where the *altar* is said to speak, though we have heard before of a voice from the horns of the altar (Rev. 9:13). In Revelation 8:5 we find the altar connected with the prayers of the saints, and as a result of their prayers fire is taken from off the altar and cast into the earth. The fire is a symbol of purging and purification, and the voice from the horns of the altar comes also as a result of the prayers of God’s elect and releases a mighty deliverance in the lives of God’s called and chosen remnant. Here in our text the altar is emphasizing that God’s judgments in the midst of His people are *true* and *righteous*, that is, they are just and purposeful. The message is just this — God is doing what He has to do in order to correct what is wrong in His people, and what He does is just and redemptive, bringing deliverance and restoration.

Another strange statement is that because they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, God is giving them blood to drink: *for they are worthy*. That last phrase simply means “***for they deserve it!***” We don’t like to think of God giving people what they deserve, but in this case that is exactly what He is doing. Shed blood signifies death. That is what they deserve to drink, death to themselves. The reference is to the fact that the church systems have slain, both figuratively and literally, the righteous men and prophets sent to speak the words of God to them through the ages. Thousands have been the martyrs slain by the church systems in ages past and even in recent times! They chose to drink from the human sources of this old world. Thus they wickedly ***rejected*** the living streams of water flowing out from God’s chosen vessels! So now He is causing them to drink a full dose of the death they have chosen! Let them drink blood! Oh, yes! They deserve it! It is not vindictiveness — it is ***correction!*** The Spirit is revealing to them the awful depths of the death that flows in the streams of man! And it is for their good, for their deliverance, and ultimate perfection!

Commenting on this passage Ray Prinzing wrote: “Truly we can bear witness, ‘*He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He*’ (Deut. 32:4). Moffat’s translation reads: ‘*Steadfast — He rules aright, HIS METHODS ARE IN DUE ORDER, a God trusty and wholly true, upright and honest.*’ While Ferrar Fenton adds the thought, ‘ALL HIS LINES ARE STRAIGHT.’

“What a declaration! His work is perfect, all His lines are straight. His methods are in due order, all that He does is RIGHT! Therefore it rightly follows, ‘*All His ways are judgment.*’ Everything He does is to bring about a restoration and setting right that which has been perverted, distorted, defiled, etc. HE IS OUR GOD OF SALVATION! Were He to draw a line in your life, it would be a straight line — and that means you would be brought into alignment with that uprightness. ‘*I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a Father to Israel*’ (Jer. 31:9). All of His methods, His workings, are in proper order, proper time, perfect sequence, as He steadily draws you to Himself.

“So long has Christendom programmed their doctrines with a negative view, that to read of the pouring out of the plagues brings a shudder, a fear, for all they see is calamity and distress, while actually God has promised the opposite. Full well He knows the propensity of humanity to do evil. He knows of the self-will and rebellion, that we have *‘turned every one to his own way.’* But He also has promised, *‘I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them’*” — end quote.

THE FOURTH BOWL

“And the *fourth angel* poured out his bowl upon the *sun*; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with the great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues...” (Rev. 16:8-9).

Under the fourth trumpet, one-third of the sun, moon, and stars were stricken with darkness, so that one-third part was dark. But here, under the fourth bowl, or plague, the thing John saw was an angel pouring the contents of his bowl on the sun, as a result of which the heat of the sun is increased to such an extent that men are actually scorched by it, burned, suffocated with solar heat, and in misery and torment are provoked to blaspheme. Yet in their cursing they are forced to acknowledge that the Almighty is in control! He has “power of these plagues.” Truly, this is all the work of God by His Spirit! They know in their hearts that it is God, but the flesh doesn’t like it and grows angry!

The plague is called “great heat.” Men fret and groan under heat from the sun when it is 90 to 115 degrees, but the picture painted here is of heat much more severe than anything we have experienced! In the symbols of the vision the words “sun,” “heat,” and “scorched,” are used literally; but in applying the symbols to the work of God they must be used figuratively and spiritually. The fourth plague compounds the severity of judgment upon the natural man. Sick with ulcers, the stench of death in their nostrils, parched with thirst, the “earth-dwellers” find to their dismay that they are not yet at the end of God’s dealings!

This is the fourth angel to pour out his bowl, and it is significant to note what happened on the **FOURTH CREATIVE DAY** as God arranged the cosmos in that long-ago beginning. *“And God said, Let there be **lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.** And let them be for **lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth:** and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to **rule the day**, and the lesser light to **rule the night:** He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give **light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and the night**”* (Gen. 1:14-18).

The truth of the great lights in the heavens includes many wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the spirit. The sun, moon, and stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, far above the sin, confusion, sorrow, strife, pain, and death of earth. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the sun, moon, and stars are used to represent **HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION**. The prophet said, “The heavens do **rule.**” That is the great truth revealed when at the moment of creation the almighty Creator proclaimed of the lights of the heavenly realm, *“Let them be for **light upon the earth...the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.**”* The primary thought is that of rulership and dominion!

The God of heaven rules over all, and can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God’s elect *sons* are destined, with their sovereign and glorious Father, to become the **CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD’S SKY!** As the glory of the Lord arises upon His chosen ones they pierce the gloom of earth’s dark night of sin and sorrow and bring deliverance, life, and order out of the chaos

of man's failure and despair. *"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"* (Dan. 12:3). Can we not see by this that those who rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom are indeed THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS IN THE HEAVENS OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD!

The sun in prophecy is the most exalted ruler in any order. We find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the scripture a "sun." *"For the Lord thy God is a sun and a shield"* (Ps. 84:11). Also, our elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, is called *"the sun of righteousness"* (Mal. 4:2). Furthermore, we find in reference to men, *"He that ruleth over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth"* (II Sam. 23:3-4). David the king was called *"the light of Israel"* (II Sam. 21:17). This same meaning is found in II Kings 8:19 where we read, *"Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake, as He promised him to give him always a light."* This is exactly the same promise we find in Jeremiah 33:17 where the Lord says, *"David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel."* Our Father has told us, *"heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool"* (Isa. 66:1). Heaven is His throne, or may we say, His throne is heaven! "Heaven" bespeaks rulership and dominion, the "lights" of the heavens are the individual rulers who occupy the heavenly thrones of authority and power! The "earth" is that which is "ruled" by the heavens — that which looks to the sun, moon, and stars for its direction.

The divine pattern in all these things becomes clear once we understand the great truth that there are revealed in the wonderful book of Revelation *two heavens* and *two earths!* The blessed Seer of Patmos beheld these in rapt vision and recorded what he saw in these inspired words, *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea"* (Rev. 21:1). There is an old heaven and there is a new heaven! There is an old earth and there is a new earth! The old heaven and earth pass away, but we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. 3:13). It should be clear to any thinking mind that the old heaven with its sun, moon, and stars, is not our natural solar system or the star-studded universe we behold in the night sky. That is not the old heaven John is writing about! Rather, it is the *old order* that men have lived under, the old world of human consciousness, worldly society, and man-made religion with all its luminaries — the "lights" or personalities and institutions that govern, control, dictate, constrain, inspire, and direct men's thinking, understanding, ways, will, desires, ambitions, and conduct in the world of humanity.

These two heavens — the old heavens of man's order, and the new heavens of God's rule by the Spirit, are both presented throughout the book of Revelation and we must be keen in discernment to understand which is in view in any scene. Let me put it this way. One way to recognize whether it is the old heaven or the new heaven is to observe the action taking place. The heavens that are being darkened, smitten, falling, rolled together as a scroll, and passing away with a great noise certainly are **not** the **new heavens**, for only the old heavens pass away and the new are established in righteousness and glory and power forevermore! It is the heavens of God's kingdom where sons reign upon the throne and from whence the seven spirits of God are sent forth into all the earth! It is the new heavens of the Spirit of the Lord from which the holy city, New Jerusalem, descends (Rev. 21:2). It only stands to reason the **new** Jerusalem would descend from the **new** heavens! So those who are looking up into the sky to see the New Jerusalem coming down are certainly wasting their time and energy! It is out of the new heavens of God that a great voice is heard saying, *"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God"* (Rev. 21:3). And these men are not the old men of the old earth, but the new creation men of the new earth! All through the book of Revelation grand and glorious things take place in, and out from, the heavens of God's Spirit! The seven angels that blow the seven trumpets sound forth their messages out of the heavens of God! And the seven angels having the seven last plagues likewise come out of the temple of God in the heavens of the Lord. Can we not see by this that the "sun" upon which is poured out the "plague" cannot be the sun of the heavens where we dwell — it can only be the sun of that old heaven that is destined to pass away!

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

Scientists are probing two unseen worlds. One is a world too vast and far away to be seen by the eye, and the other is a world too small to be observed by the eye. I want to give you three words in this connection, together with their meanings. First, we find the word MICROCOSM. This word means a little world; anything regarded as a world in miniature; man, viewed as an epitome of the universe. This word comes from two words in the Greek language. One is MIKROS which means little or miniature. The other is KOSMOS meaning world, in the sense of an orderly arrangement. Thus we have the meaning of LITTLE WORLD. The word MACROCOSM, on the other hand, means the great world, or the universe. It also comes from two words. One is MACROS meaning great, and the other is KOSMOS meaning world. We noted above that the word MIKROS carried the meaning of “man viewed as an epitome of the universe.” The word EPITOME means, among other things, *a condensed representation* of something. The word MICROCOSM, then, gives us the meaning that man is a CONDENSED REPRESENTATION OF THE UNIVERSE, or man is ALL THE UNIVERSE IN MINIATURE! What it really means is that the two heavens and the two earths in the book of Revelation are both *realities within man* — and the outward physical universe of sun, moon, and stars is just the picture or the type of how these function on the spiritual plane.

Now let us return to the fourth plague poured out upon the “sun.” There is an interesting connection between the plague poured out from the fourth bowl and the one that follows from the fifth bowl. The fourth bowl is poured out upon the sun — the source of *light* and *heat*. But then the fifth bowl brings absolute *darkness* — suggesting the *absence* of the sun! Let us understand! God has ordained that all spiritual truth and reality in the heavenly world be typified and pre-figured by the physical creation in the natural world. The apostle Paul made mention of this when he wrote, “Because that which can be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath *showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*, even His eternal power and Godhead...” (Rom. 1:19-20). Thus, natural things and events of the physical creation symbolically portray and typically point to *spiritual realities*. Natural law is both a reflection and a portrait of spiritual law in the spiritual world. And nowhere is this truth employed more effectually by the Holy Spirit than in the vision John is given of the fourth and fifth plagues!

The figures speak of the sun first becoming *hotter* and actually scorching men with fire. This is not the picture of an excessive heat drought as is now sometimes experienced. The sun itself is first smitten, then it emits rays that scorch and burn men. The next scene is one of such *total darkness* that men are gnawing their tongues in pain as a result of the darkness. How utterly graphic these scenes are! These two visions have embodied within them knowledge of modern science which was still unknown to men at the time of John’s vision! This is indeed one of the many “internal evidences” of the book’s DIVINE INSPIRATION!

Our solar system, just one of millions in the Milky Way galaxy, is approximately seven billion miles across. It consists of our sun (a medium-size star) with nine planets, the largest of which is Jupiter.

Our sun, by the process of atomic fusion, is an energy-producing instrument. It was made by the Creator for a specific job, which it has been performing since the fourth day of creation. When producers of energy can no longer export the same amount they generate, then “something must give.” In the case of stars, they either blow up (supernova) or they suffer an atomic collapse (nova). Novas and supernovas are occurring all the time, with approximately thirty observed each year in our galaxy alone.

These calamities are brought to pass by entropy, which is the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity. The law of entropy dictates that everything in the universe is running down. According to this law, stars like our sun were composed of solid hydrogen in the beginning. In the fusion process, which changes hydrogen to extreme heat and sunlight, hydrogen is converted into iron and other metals. When the inner core of the metal builds to the point where the energy produced cannot escape in an even flow, huge atomic explosions covering millions of square miles occur, hurling atomic matter and gases millions of miles outward. *Such activity precedes the death of a star.* It is thought by some scientists that the critical stage is reached when 50% of a star’s hydrogen is consumed.

The question immediately arises as to where our sun stands in relation to these events. The “burning” questions are: “How much longer will the sun remain stable?” “When will it start on its way towards a higher surface temperature and more brilliance?” Scientists believe that approximately one-half of our sun’s supply has now been consumed, and increasing sunspot activity is taken by some scientists as a sign that our sun could nova at any time. Should our sun nova at some future date earth would experience a period of increased brightness and heat, followed by incredible darkness. However such literal events are merely of academic interest, since no one on earth would be around to worry about them. About our only physical hope of escaping such a calamity would be to move to another planetary system!

A nova stage is reached when the heat factor builds to a point where atoms are stripped of their shells. Like a runaway atomic generator, the remaining heavy hydrogen is consumed within a period of seven to fourteen days. Subsequently, the entire mass, originally 900,000 miles across, would be compressed into a ball no more than fifteen miles in diameter. The gravity would be so intense that no light could escape. Whether my reader can understand all the science of this does not really matter. The point of importance here, as it relates to the fourth and fifth plagues, is just this. The literal picture in the two plagues is that of ***the “nova” of our sun! DURING THE RUNAWAY PERIOD (SEVEN TO FIFTEEN DAYS) JUST DESCRIBED, OUR SUN COULD BECOME UP TO SEVEN TIMES HOTTER THAN NORMAL. THIS WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY TOTAL DARKNESS!***

John’s vision, however, doesn’t indicate that our literal, physical sun up in the heavens, ninety-three million miles from earth, is going to nova — getting brighter and hotter, scorching men with fire until they blaspheme the name of God, who has power over these plagues; and then dying, collapsing into a black hole, throwing our planet into such total darkness that men would literally gnaw their tongues for pain, and further blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains. Oh, no! The vision is a *symbol*, a *type*, a *picture*, a *parable* of great spiritual dealings and workings of God!

In our next Study we will consider the great darkness to fall upon the seat of the beast’s kingdom. In closing, let us look for a moment at the scorching of the sun. We have seen that throughout the scriptures the sun is used as a symbol for rulers, authorities, and lordships. What the sun is to this world, such are the ruling powers to a kingdom. In our text the kingdom is the beast’s kingdom — the kingdoms of this world! Governments, church systems, institutions of various kinds, that exercise authority over men’s lives. Power being given to them to “scorch with fire” denotes a cruel and tyrannical oppression over the lives of the people. As religious Babylon comes under the judging hand of God, its corruption exposed, the blessing and presence of God fleeing, so that every living soul, every moving of God within the system is *dead*, its streams and fountains of waters, that

is, its message and ministry, turned to blood — full of *death* — the religious leaders of Mystery Babylon will strike out at the people in an effort to keep them in line and prevent their escape! This type also is drawn from the captivity of Israel in Egypt, for the “scorching sun” answers to the taskmasters of Egypt with the whips in their hands, who mercilessly beat the Israelite slaves to make them work harder and to keep them from escaping!

Ah, do not preachers do this today when they fear the people are going to leave them? I’m sure that many who now read these lines, when the Lord was calling you out of Babylon, before you actually left, did you not feel the whips on your back and scorching sun burning your flesh! The leaders in Babylon magnify their authority over the people, crack their whips, reminding them not to “touch God’s anointed,” threaten them, prophesy judgment upon them if they dare to question the anointing and authority of the leaders, lay more laws and commandments upon them, preaching at them and abusing them from the pulpit, scorching them with heat from the sun-ministry over them! As the Lord moves mightily to deliver ALL His people out of religious Babylon, you can believe me now or believe me later, but the taskmasters will become much more harsh, the tyranny more severe, the burdens heavier, the restraints more binding, the church rules more demanding — until the flesh cries out in pain! Oh, even then the people won’t be ready to leave yet, for there are three plagues yet to come to finish the work, but the judgment of God to release them will be right on target!

Chapter 183

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues (continued)

“And the *fifth angel* poured out his bowl *upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds*” (Rev. 16:10-11).

The word “seat” here signifies *authority*, or the *rule* of one in authority. It might be translated “throne,” and has been so translated in other places. A throne in the book of Revelation occurs frequently as a symbol of dominion, as the center whence the authority of the king or ruler emanates throughout the entire kingdom or nation. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, “Ye sit in Moses’ *seat*.” They administered the law of Moses as *rulers* of the Jews. Jesus said to the church at Pergamos, “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s *seat* is.” The typical and symbolic church at Pergamos was dwelling where Satan’s throne was located. The Greek word here is clearly “throne,” but the translators of the King James Bible softened it down to “seat.” Let us not be afraid of the phrase. In the place where the church at Pergamos dwelt was Satan’s **throne!** Let us understand the mystery! First, let me give you the location of Pergamos. The modern city of Izmir, in Turkey, which was ancient Smyrna, is the great city where tourists go because the airport and the hotels are there. It is a fascinatingly beautiful city. You go about sixty-five miles south to reach Ephesus and about seventy miles north to reach Pergamos. These three were, in New Testament times, the *royal cities*, and they vied with one another. Smyrna (Izmir) was the great *commercial* center, Ephesus was the great *political* center, and Pergamos was the great *religious* center.

Satan’s throne, Jesus said, was established in Pergamos, that is, the center of cultic worship. This religious system had started in Babylon, but eventually its priesthood moved out of Babylon, making their way to Pergamos, and the Babylonian religion found a new home in Pergamos. Can we not see by this that in the book of Revelation Pergamos *equals* Babylon! Babylon and Pergamos are both symbols of the same thing — RELIGION! In the New Testament times Pergamos became the *center* or the *headquarters* of all pagan religion. Satan was the authority and power behind this religion, and he set up his operation in the center of learning and the healing arts, along with idolatry, controlling peoples’ souls, bodies, and spirits. This was Satan’s **throne** in the *typical* city of Pergamos, which is also Mystery Babylon the Great! Religion in Pergamos was big business, it was a false system, it deceived the people and dominated their lives, and it was idolatrous. It was there, in *false religious systems*, that Satan’s headquarters were located! Not that Satan’s headquarters were actually in Pergamos, *per se*; there was no building into which you could walk and find Satan’s office with him sitting behind the desk running things. Oh, no! These are pictures of *spiritual realities* and they signify that **THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF SATAN LIES IN RELIGION!**

This ought to settle the question for those who think that Satan is in hell at the present time! He has never yet been in the hell that men talk about. But he *does* have headquarters, and we may think his headquarters are in the drug world, in the sex and pornography industry, in the military establishment, in the harlot’s house, in terrorist organizations, in the bar-room, in Hollywood, in the abortion clinics, in gangs, murderers, child molesters, or even in political machines. Not so! These all represent the **works of the flesh**, not the **power of Satan!** In John’s day the Holy Spirit used the symbol of Pergamos, the center of **religion**, to identify the location of Satan’s activity and throne! The great fact is just this: wherever the centers of carnal, man-made **religious systems** are, there you will find Satan’s throne!

Earlier in his visions John described this scene: “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea...and the dragon gave him his power, and his *seat*, and great authority.” Thus we learn where this beast obtained his “seat,” or his “throne,” that is, his rulership, dominion, and authority. He received it from the dragon, that is, from Satan. Another beast came up out of the earth, and the first beast gave his authority to this second beast, so that the authority of the second beast is also the authority of the throne of the dragon. This second beast out of the earth, or out of the soulical religious powers of man, signifies the apostate church systems of man, and for long centuries this religious beast, known as Christendom, exercised her *assumed* authority over the peoples, nations, and kings of the earth. She became extremely idolatrous, her doctrines were corrupted with hideous errors, her rituals empty, her sacraments powerless, her power carnal, her spiritual life stagnated and dead. Thousands were tried for so-called heresy, pronounced guilty by the beast or false church, and executed by the civil governments which were subject to the authority of the bestial religious system.

The “seat” of the beast — where is that? Let us understand! Satan’s throne, ever since the serpent started his religion with Eve when he hissed, “Hath God said? God doth know!” is still in all the false forms of carnal, man-made religion, even so-called Christian religion! Adam and Eve died because the religious realm to which they subscribed through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *sounds like a deeper revelation* but in reality HAS NO LIFE! It is mere “knowledge,” the “letter” of the word, the commandments of men and traditions of the elders substituting for the living word of God, form without essence, law without life, ritual without reality, words without power.

The firstborn Son of God understood this very clearly by the mind of the Father! He never condemned the prostitute, the fornicator, the tax-gatherer, the thieves or murderers. He never demonstrated holy anger against the Romans, nor even against the Roman gods, the world, or the wicked. It was the **religious leaders** that He denounced with scathing invective! His anger was focused on the hypocrisy of the so-called carriers of His Father’s word! He condemned those who appeared clean on the outside, but inside were full of greed and spiritual wickedness! Those who gave tithes and fasted and prayed and loved the best seats in the synagogue to be seen and esteemed of men, He rebuked! Those who distorted the word of God, who turned the truth of God into a lie, who misrepresented and maligned the nature of His Father, and loaded people down with religious burdens and obligations, creating a façade of self-righteousness, He called a generation of *vipers* — a brood of *snakes*!

Ah, we blame war, drunkenness, greed, crime, immorality, drugs, and a thousand other evils on Satan — yet the clear testimony of scripture is that these are all the “lusts of the flesh” and the “works of the flesh.” They are — **flesh**! On the other hand, Satan’s activity throughout the whole of scripture is in a **religious realm**, in a **spiritual dimension**! What a cunning deception has been foisted upon mankind as Satan has concealed his true identity in the dark shroud of **religion**! Oh, yes, Satan is religious! In the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible, there was a day when the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord, and the record states that “Satan came also among them.” If we can lay aside the tradition of the preachers, theologians, and church creeds and listen instead to the word of God, we will clearly see that Satan didn’t come before God in company with drug lords, pornography peddlers, cruel dictators, psychopaths, atheists, prostitutes, or mafia leaders — instead he came with **the sons of God**! And he was *very religious*!

The ultimate test for God’s sons will be right there! There is a realm, a realm high in the spirit, a realm reserved for the sons of God — and before any of us step from our wilderness of testing to appear as a manifest son of God in the earth, we will meet Satan there **in that high realm of the spirit**. It is in the heavens of God’s Spirit that the manchild encounters the great red dragon! That is what the temptation of Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, was all about in His wilderness experience. He wasn’t being tempted to lie, cheat, steal, cuss, or commit adultery. Oh, no! “*If Thou be the Son of God*” do thus and thus. The temptations involved mis-using His sonship authority or taking a short-cut to power. To Mother Eve Satan said, “*Hath God said? Why, God doth know...your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God!*” A **high revelation in a high realm of the spirit**. That is what Adam’s fall was all about! Adam did not fall from grace, nor did he fall into some gross sin of

the flesh — he fell from SONSHIP! And it was a **supposed** HIGHER REVELATION IN A HIGH REALM OF THE SPIRIT that caused the fall. It wasn't another woman or pornographic pictures that Satan was showing Adam; Satan was **preaching!** He was explaining "higher" ways of God that Adam did not understand! He was peddling **religion!** And Eve was **deceived!** Deception has to do with truth versus error — religion. There is a very *fine line* between the highest truth and the darkest error, between divine sonship to God and our own self-godhood as taught by all the streams of what is today called "New Age," and between the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the "God" who is preached from almost all the pulpits of the world today!

In the *typical* and *symbolic* church of Pergamos, Satan's "throne" was situated in the city of Pergamos which means "strongly united, elevated, height, citadel." Spiritually, Satan's throne, which is also the seat or throne of the beast, is in the **high places of the carnal mind** — even the **religious mind!** "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." I know where you dwell, where you are comfortable in your religious system, where you are satisfied to settle down and comfortably remain. I know that you love the pageantry, the beauty, the forms, the sacraments, the rituals, the programs, the history, the traditions, the excitement, the entertainment, the activities. But that place where you dwell is **the throne of the beast!**

This *authority* or *seat* or *throne* of the beast is to suffer the wrath of God! This wrath is called a "bowl of passion," or plague, and is poured out upon the *assumed authority* of the apostate church, for, by the assumption of carnal "church authority" the beast has usurped the authority of the Spirit of God and the dominion of the Son of God in the lives of God's people! When the true gospel, in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost, is poured out through the ministry of the manifest sons of God, it will indeed be as a "plague" upon the carnal church systems and in contrast to the glorious light revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, the little light in the systems of man, which is actually darkness, will be perceived as "great darkness," for "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how *great is that darkness!*" The beast will feel the sting of the plague, and men, that is, the carnal-minded rulers of the church systems, will "gnaw their tongues" in pain, or find it exceedingly painful to even speak the old carnal creeds, rituals, and commandments of the old church order now being judged. Accordingly, the judgment which they are made to suffer is advisedly to "eat their own words" — or, to use the seer's expressive phrase, to *gnaw their tongues in distress!*

Under the fourth and fifth bowls we find two very contrasting realms, and God uses them both in His processings. Under the fourth bowl, men are "scorched with great heat," as the desperate leaders of Babylon "turn up the heat," and then under the fifth bowl the meteoric blaze is passed. Poured on the throne of the beast, darkness spreads over his kingdom, and men suffer the pain of "absolute darkness." It is that "outer darkness" of which Jesus spoke, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." It is not a place on some far-away planet somewhere, but the inner condition of awakening to discover that the realm you dwell in, which you thought was the very tabernacle of God and the light of truth, is in fact Satan's vast domain and is far, far away *outside* the kingdom of God!

The Old Testament type for this plague is found in Exodus 10:21`-23. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be *darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.* And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a *thick darkness* in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Someone has called this plague of darkness the most serious of all the plagues that came upon Egypt, since *Ra*, the Egyptian sun god, was the chief of all the gods. When the sun was blotted out for three days, it meant that Yahweh had conquered Ra! Certainly the darkening of the land for three days proved that Yahweh was more powerful than Ra. The Egyptians described Ra as the supreme judge and father of the gods, for it was from him that all the gods and goddesses were created. The Egyptians also worshipped many other sun gods and goddesses that were proven to be ineffective. The great emphasis that the Egyptians placed on the sun and on light in general reveals that this one plague of darkness must have devastated the entire Egyptian population since a major portion of their gods

were out of commission and unable to provide the light they needed. Surely the mighty power and omnipotence of Yahweh became a reality to all the Egyptians who had trusted in their gods!

Darkness is the absence of light, and this fifth plague reveals to all the inhabitants of spiritual Pergamos, spiritual Egypt, spiritual Babylon — the *beast's kingdom* — that there is no true "light" in any of their carnal doctrines and man-made observances. It is my deep conviction that through the ministry of God's called and qualified elect there will shed forth such a mighty revelation of truth and reality until the power that the doctrines of men and traditions of the elders hold over the people will be drawn off, plunging the whole system into thick darkness. The beast's kingdom is worldwide, and the darkness brought in by this bowl of God's passion is co-extensive with his empire. From the throne to the uttermost limits of religious Babylon everything is shrouded in the mantle of deep, dark, starless night. Isaiah prophesied of this when he said, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2). Joel prophesied of it when he said, "The day of the Lord cometh, a day of darkness, of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. The sun shall be turned into darkness..." (Joel 2:31). In this great day of the Lord a dreadful pall of doom is destined to settle over the entire kingdom of the beast, which has been built up by his throne in the heights of man's carnal mind. This kingdom includes all the "earth-dwellers," the carnal-minded, soulical-centered Christians — followers and worshippers of the beastly religious orders. The effect of the outpouring of this bowl of God's dealing is the producing of such torment and anguish as can only be adequately described as the "gnawing of their tongues from pain."

Ah, God knows exactly what DARK CAVERN to place men in, with no outside energy which they can draw from to help maintain their state and standing. It is the "outer darkness" of which Jesus spoke, outer darkness being the region of spiritual darkness that leads away from the true spiritual light *which Christ is*. Ray Prinzing pointed out, "It is significant that wherever you find reference to 'outer darkness' you also read of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth,' as if to indicate the shivering in the cold until the teeth chatter. All this brings more meaning to the word, 'If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, **how great is that darkness.**' We weep for them, yet we thank God for this understanding of how He uses the COLD, THE DARKNESS to draw out this thermo energy of self-resistance, and the hour of final victory will come, with a full restoration into God. While the wrath of God is love's severity, yet it remains purest love, seeking the ultimate good for creation, and so it continues to apply the strokes of chastisement. Repentance will come in due time, but how great is the need for the inworking of His judgments, until that submission comes."

For long centuries men have loved the shades and shadows of the darkness of religion rather than the *light of Life*, supposing that the little light they possessed was all the light there is, and the true light. But when God leaves men in darkness long enough, they come to hate the darkness, for it draws out of them all the beauty, warmth, strength, and life of light, and they are brought to the end of themselves. Without light we all operate in the dark. In the dark there is no *sight*, no *vision*, no *comprehension* of the realities about us. It was fitting, therefore, that the first thing God created was light. Darkness is not sin, although sin does darken the world by obscuring the light like a cloud. Can we not see by this that darkness is *ignorance, error, and unbelief*. The light of God is the *light of Life*. Ignorance — the lack of understanding — error, and unbelief are anti-light and anti-life.

It should be obvious to every believing heart that the darkness that fills the beast's kingdom is not a literal darkness like that in Egypt in the day of Moses, but truly **spiritual darkness**. Hear it! "**Understanding is a WELLSPRING OF LIFE** unto him that hath it." Certainly one reason so many millions of Christians are living in carnality and immaturity, far beneath their privileges in Christ today, is because they neither know who, where, or why they are. Truly a great and dreadful darkness is upon the kingdom of Babylon! This condition is explained by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the *vanity of their mind*, having the *understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance* that is in them, because of the *blindness of their heart*" (Eph. 4:17-18). In this passage we learn, among other things, this one simple truth: **DARKNESS IS IGNORANCE**. In its spiritual

meaning, to be in darkness is to be in ignorance! Ignorance is a condition of the *mind*, in which the mind **lacks understanding**. The inspired apostle tells us that men have their “understanding darkened” because of the “ignorance” that is in them! It means that either they don’t know much, or the information they have been given is incorrect! And it is this condition of **spiritual ignorance** that causes the whole world of men, and vast numbers of the Lord’s precious people, to walk in darkness, alienated from the abundant life that is in Christ! Oh! How many of the Lord’s people walk in spiritual darkness, or spiritual ignorance, because the teaching they have been fed by those who are supposedly the messengers of God is not the truth at all! Men are in darkness because the blindness of their hearts has kept them from the glorious Light of Christ penetrating into their lives!

It is that which comes forth from the heart, the **understanding of the carnal mind**, which interprets the things of God on a carnal level and misses the deep **spiritual truth and reality** altogether! Oh! How the churches today are groping about in the darkness that covers the kingdom of the beast! All the dead, carnal church systems were built up by men who were saved by receiving just enough Light to know Jesus as Saviour and Blessor, and then, out of the overshadowing gloom yet untouched in the vanity of their minds and the darkness of their carnal hearts they proceeded to build upon the foundation of Christ every kind of grotesque structure of tradition, doctrinal error, man-made organizations, ritual, form, legalism, license, fleshiness, and worldliness: great towering edifices of hay, wood, and stubble! The carnal and childish interpretations of men put upon the word of God, out of the blindness (lack of *spiritual understanding*) of their hearts, has created a great ignorance among God’s people, and they are alienated from the glorious flow of divine, heavenly, spiritual, and incorruptible Life by the blindness that causes them spiritually to see men as trees, walking!

It has always, from the very beginning when the serpent whispered to Eve, been the adversary’s policy to misinterpret truth, to distort and carnalize the word of God, in order to hinder mankind from seeing the great beauty and majesty of the purposes of God for His creation. The more absurdities the adversary can get interwoven into man’s doctrines and concepts respecting God, the church, eternity, the final destiny of man, judgment, hell, heaven, the “end-time,” and a hundred more, the better he will succeed in separating men in their consciousness from reality. Thus for centuries the great adversary has been working most successfully and has covered and hidden some of the most precious and glorious truths under the most specious and repulsive errors, and the progress of the Lord’s people has been correspondingly stunted. But, thank God! we are now living in the time when the veil of ignorance is being dissolved, when the darkness of the beast’s kingdom shall be penetrated by the *holy city* descending out of heaven from God, having the *glory of God: whose light is like unto a stone most precious, and the Lamb is the light thereof*; and the nations of them that are saved shall *walk in the light of it, and there shall be no night there*. Isn’t it wonderful! It’s all in the book, my friend — in the book of Revelation! The people of God are being drawn by the Spirit to look away from the creeds and systems formed for their enslavement during ages past, and to open their hearts directly to the spirit of truth that leads to the living God! Therefore lean no longer upon thine own understanding! Judge neither after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears, but seek that Living Spirit of UNDERSTANDING that comes from God alone!

Have you ever prayed that God would **open the eyes of your understanding** that you might truly and correctly and fully know what is the *hope of His calling*, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance *in the saints*? Ah, how much better this would be than to pray for temporal blessings for the outer man, for the heart of the Father is truly pained when He beholds His called and chosen ones neglecting their devotion to His highest purpose while they diligently pray and seek for earthly blessings. If we but seek, God will bless us with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS! Walk no longer in the *vanity* of your mind, having the *understanding darkened*, thereby alienating yourself from the *life of God* through ignorance! Never spend your days seeking the things of this carnal life, or a golden mansion in some far-off heaven somewhere, for they make themselves wings and fly away and have no power to reveal Christ in you or to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption! Every son of God who is pressing forward to lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ is COMING OUT OF THE DARKNESS HANGING LIKE

A PALL OVER THE KINGDOM OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON, OUT TO WHERE THE SUN OF DIVINE LIGHT SHINES IN ALL ITS BRILLIANCE AND THE AIR IS PURE AND RAREFIED WITH THE LIFE OF GOD! It is indeed wonderful!

The prophet Isaiah penned these words for God's elect, "Arise, shine; for *thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*. For, behold, *darkness shall cover the earth* (Heb. "land," God's people, the earth-realm), and *gross darkness the people* (of God): but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and *His glory shall be seen upon thee!*" (Isa. 60:1-2). The darkness that has covered the minds of God's children is truly **gross darkness**, and there will be sorrow, tears, and gnawing of the tongues when they do see — thank God! The reason there is darkness today is because of the false doctrines and dark traditions of the church systems. No wonder God's people are full of unbelief, filled with doubts, and overwhelmed with fears. No wonder they magnify the works of the devil and declare him more than they declare God! No wonder they think the devil is winning the battle and is soon to take over the earth with his antichrist! No wonder they shudder with fear in the face of all the events happening in the outer world and all the dark conspiracy theories propagated by the doom-casters who call themselves "end-time" teachers! No wonder they are waiting for the Lord to come and evacuate them off of planet earth! They know not the DAY in which we are living, because of the incredible darkness that has covered the kingdom of the beast! They are held there in the thick darkness, receiving death and feeding on darkness all about them.

Without doubt, it is going to get even worse! If we would grasp the full warning of John's vision, we must bear in mind that the Darkened Kingdom exists now, in our very midst; that it is a Kingdom of Darkness already, though not as yet has fallen upon it the *consummating end*. Since, then, it is possible for any one of us to be drawn into that Darkened Kingdom, to share its blindness even now — though most of those who read these lines have already been there and have escaped — let us thank God for His merciful revelation of its real nature and its awful end! Let us heed more earnestly than ever the inspired warnings to "cast off the works of darkness" and to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," but rather to "walk in the light as HE is in the light," so that thus "we have fellowship one with another." Truly this bespeaks the fellowship of **sons!**

Isaiah prophesied of such a condition of darkness upon the Lord's people, saying, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye (the word of the Lord) indeed, but **understand not**; and see ye indeed, but **perceive not**" (Isa. 6:9). Following this the prophet speaks of the "plague" that is sent by the Lord to bring an even **greater darkness** upon His people, saying, "**Make** the heart of this people fat, and **make** their ears heavy, and **shut** their eyes; **lest** they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isa. 6:10). Then Isaiah asked the Lord, "How long must it be this way? How long must they be held in this thick darkness?" And the Lord's answer was: "**Until** the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be **utterly desolate...and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land**" (Isa. 6:11-12). Ah, this is how God brings Babylon down! If He were to allow them to hear and see while they remain comfortable in their habitations, it would only cause them to feel that God was BLESSING THEIR ORGANIZATION AND HONORING THEIR DOCTRINES AND THEIR SYSTEM and the thing that God wants to kill (the witch Babylon) would be healed. No, the darkness must continue until they cry out in desperation, until they gnaw their tongues for pain, until the **whole land** is forsaken, until the **whole kingdom** is utterly desolate — until no one can even STAND to dwell in it any longer! I once heard a brother put it this way: You will stay the same until the **pain** of staying the same is greater than the pain of the change! When this work is finished in God's people, then will they hasten to run to the light!

Oh, wonder of wonders! The great truth that the Lord is now revealing within the hearts of His elect is the truth that the "sun" which is "darkened" in our text is the sun of the *old religious heavens* we have lived under, the light (rulership, authority, dominion) of that old world of man, of man's thinking, man's interpretation, man's philosophies, man's orders, man's programs, man's ways, and all the rest, is smitten and darkened in the lives of God's people until they can no longer see even the little light that had illuminated their pathway. It is not just the people's desire to imbibe of those things that is taken away, but the rule of the hierarchy — their authority — their power is **broken!** What we see

here is the doing away of the old creation and the bringing forth of the new. It is the dominion of God's government coming and being established in the midst of all His people which evokes the darkening of the old heavens! As Isaiah prophesied, at the same time that the glory of God is arising upon His chosen and separated elect, the old light goes out and the kingdom of the beast is cast into gross darkness! The type for this was first seen in the land of Egypt when God sent the plagues for the deliverance of His people. "...and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt...but **all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.**" Is it not remarkable that while there was dense darkness over the whole land of Egypt, yet there was light in all the land of Goshen where the children of Israel lived! The light of truth and reality is arising upon the elect of the Lord in this hour, while incredible darkness is settling down upon the religious systems of man! That is the mystery.

Do not fear the darkening of the old heavens you have lived under, my beloved, for while thick darkness covers the old past orders of our lives, so that nothing of that realm can function or exert authority over us anymore, yet our gracious and wise heavenly Father has provided wonderful light — a new mind, a new consciousness, a new understanding, a new heart, a new spirit, a new identity, a new nature, a new calling, a new purpose — the scintillating light of truth, life, reality, and power **in the spirit!** Oh, yes! There is light in all the dwellings of the new creation that we are! There is the pure white light of the glorified Christ in our spirit! Just as the darkness over the land of Egypt was designed by God as an instrument to deliver His people out of the bondage of Egypt, so the darkening of the old heavens of our natural lives, all those things, people, systems, and realms which exerted authority and dominion over us, and guided us on our journey, is the hand of God moving to deliver us from the Egypt of this present world system. This is God's work in His elect in this hour — but it is yet to come upon ALL HIS PEOPLE WHO DWELL IN SPIRITUAL EGYPT! Oh, yes, He will lead all of them out by a mighty hand!

God is today doing a marvelous work among the apprehended sons of God who are learning to live and walk in the heavenlies. At the same time darkness has descended upon the earth-dwellers, and gross darkness upon the peoples. We are indeed living in momentous hours! The great Babylonish image seen by Nebuchadnezzar is old and is now standing but shakily upon its unsubstantial feet of iron and clay. A spirit of stupidity has fallen upon the leaders of the world, and upon the ecclesiastics of the religious orders, and a spirit of deception upon its peoples, and the devil has come down with great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time. Oh, yes, he knows! Men, nations, and churches have become "lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof;* from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:2-5).

God has called you, and raised you up, my brother, my sister, as a light this very day, that you might dispel the darkness and remove these heavens that men have been dwelling under, establishing something completely new in the earth, a new heavens in which the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His rays. Oh, yes! Bring forth in your life a new likeness, the image of God; and a new light, the glory of God, that you may declare HIM who is supreme throughout all the earth and that He may reign in every heart. Behold the dawn! But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not yet awakened. They know not of the dawn! But we who are of the day, and who are not lovers of the drunkenness of false doctrine nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. "We are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others" (I Thes. 5:5-6). We who have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business! There has been a parting of the ways. God has called upon us to forsake the shame and error of the harlot systems of man, to look up, to arise and shine. Our light has come! The glory of the Lord is rising upon us! The day is at hand! The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow!

THEY REPENTED NOT

“...and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repented not of their deeds*” (Rev. 16:11).

Our text says that men “repented not.” Now what does this mean? Does it mean that God is going to pour out His fury upon the world of sinful mankind, and instead of realizing that God is punishing them for their wickedness, and repenting, they continue on in their sins? Does it mean that all the humanists, communists, thieves, murderers, and prostitutes will stand up in defiance of God and curse Him to His face for tormenting them? This term appears only five times in the book of Revelation. Once it is used in relation to the symbolic woman Jezebel in the church in Thyatira, of whom the Lord said, “And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she *repented not*” (Rev. 2:21). Twice the term is used under the sixth trumpet, and twice when the bowls are poured out in chapter sixteen. All of this is very significant! You see, we are prone to apply this to that wicked old world out there, outside of ourselves, but the book of Revelation is addressed to *the church* — it is not addressed to Russia, China, Africa, Hindus, Buddhists, witches, serial killers, prostitutes, drug lords, or terrorists! Jezebel was a condition and a people in the church, she was told to repent, and repented not; then the Lord told her exactly what He planned to do about it!

Just as the seven last plagues are drawn from the imagery of the plagues poured out upon the Egyptians by the hand of Moses, so also this expression, “they repented not,” is rooted in the Old Testament account of the Egyptian plagues. In that case it was the Pharaoh, standing for the whole nation, who repented not. Now it doesn’t state it in those exact words, instead the writer uses the term “hardened his heart.” Again and again Pharaoh hardened his heart until all the plagues had run their course, and at last he *did* permit the Israelites to depart out of Egypt! This term does not signify a permanent condition, but reveals that at this point in God’s dealings the plagues have not all been poured out nor have they finished their work. But all the judgment is designed to bring about the determined end — the deliverance of ALL God’s people from the kingdom of the beast! Each plague adds something, contributing its part toward that final goal — yet in the process there are multitudes not yet ready to flee out of Babylon, so they “repent not.”

In ancient Egypt the physical act of repentance was not too clear, but a complex procedure was devised. While the Egyptians do not seem to have had an actual word for repentance, they quite literally considered it to be a “swallowing of the heart,” which we would call a change of heart or mind, which of course it is. So much is clear from the famous *Book of the Dead*, consisting of 189 spells, which every wealthy Egyptian of the New Kingdom placed beside him or herself in the coffin. To the Egyptians of the 14th century B.C., the heart was the seat of good and evil; a light heart was good, and a heavy heart was evil. Moses, of course, was familiar with that concept, and when the scripture says that Pharaoh “hardened” his heart, as he does after most of the plagues, the Hebrew reads, literally, “he made his heart heavy (*kaved*),” meaning he made it evil.

As an Egyptian approached death, his or her greatest wish was to live on into the next world, and for that he or she had to pass a number of crucial tests. The first one was to have one’s heart weighed against a feather. If the heart was not heavier than the feather, one could pass on to the next test, to be introduced to Osiris, the Pharaoh of the Underworld. During the weighing procedure, the supplicant made a lengthy confession, recorded in spell No. 125. He or she had to declare that they had not committed any of the 42 basic transgressions against the gods, against Pharaoh, or against their fellow men. The whole procedure was carried out by the jackal-headed god Anubis, representing the dead, and the result was recorded by the ibis-headed god Thoth, the scribe. If the heart was too heavy, and there was a suspicion of untruth in the declaration, the supplicant was likely to be swallowed by the Ammut monster and never to see life again. But there was an alternative. It was the opportunity to have a “swallow of the heart,” to change one’s heart, that is, to make repentance! Ah, is that not what all men need — A CHANGE OF HEART! And God’s dealings with Pharaoh through the plagues upon the land of Egypt were designed to ultimately bring about that very change of heart, which is also what the plagues in the book of Revelation are all about! Can you not see the mystery?

When Moses told the Pharaoh that Yahweh required that the people of Israel go into the wilderness to worship Him, and requested that they be permitted to journey three days into the wilderness to pay their homage to God, Pharaoh was not of the frame of heart to comply with such a request, and he said, “Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Yahweh” (Ex. 5:2). But Yahweh had a far different view of this, and He said, “In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Ex. 9:16). Therefore every time Pharaoh’s heart softened a little, and he was about to consider letting Israel go, GOD would harden his heart some more, BECAUSE GOD HAD A PLAN and was using Pharaoh in that plan — to reveal His power and to cause His name to be declared in all the earth! And the fact that God’s name is being glorified even in this writing today, 3500 years later, is living proof of the omnipotent hand of God in that day so long ago! He who had no desire to honor God at all, became an instrument whereby all nations around were caused to give God the glory as they heard of the happenings in Egypt. The more the wrath was built up, the greater the victory God wrought through it all, and it became a praise unto Yahweh. God will be the Victor in all His judgments, and even though Pharaoh let the people go he still didn’t repent for he pursued them and drowned in the sea. The message is just this — the old Adamic mind *cannot repent* — but it will be *destroyed!* A change of mind, a change of heart — a *new mind* and a *new heart* will I give you, saith the Lord!

Many deep spiritual truths of scripture remain locked up to man and cannot be understood with the natural mind. In the Revelation we see *three series* of dealings by which Christ is revealed and God’s people are brought to perfection — the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. It is significant to note that in connection with the first series, the seven seals, no statement is made concerning men “repenting not.” The reason for this is abundantly clear! The loosing of the seals represents the *unveiling of Jesus Christ*, the firstborn Son of God, as the pattern for all His many brethren. As we behold the mighty work of the Father in Jesus, bringing Him to His full sonship, we see the pattern and process of His unveiling within each of us. There is no repentance required in the unveiling of Jesus Christ! The mighty raising up and manifestation of His life within will indeed evoke repentance in soul and body, but the *spirit of sonship* needs no repentance! Therefore, the only repentance in the book of Revelation is on the part of the church, in its immaturity, imperfection, and carnality, as revealed in chapters two and three. This repentance is shown on the part of God’s firstfruit company who are brought to perfection and the full stature of Christ under the sounding of the seven trumpets, and later on the part of the rest of the Lord’s people who are purged, purified, and perfected through the pouring out of the seven bowls.

While it is true that every son of God must repent, it is also true that there is a part of each of us that *cannot repent* and *will not repent!* Truth has been revealed, and the truth is that “human beings” never become spiritual. The spiritual progress we make is to “die” to our human identity, our ego, our natural life, our Adamic consciousness, and be *made alive* to the new creation life of Christ within. No human being has ever been spiritual or ever will become spiritual, because the Adamic man is flesh and blood, and flesh and blood *cannot inherit* the kingdom of God! We are not trying to save our humanhood, nor can we put it under the laws of God and make it righteous, for the word of the apostle Paul is incontrovertible: “*The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7).

Perhaps Aesop said it best in the fable. A scorpion and a frog meet on the bank of a stream and the scorpion asks the frog to carry him across on its back. The frog asks, “How do I know you won’t sting me?” The scorpion says, “Because if I do, I will die, too.” The frog is satisfied, and they set out, but in mid-stream, the scorpion stings the frog. The frog feels the onset of paralysis and starts to sink, knowing they both will drown. But the frog has just enough time to gasp, “Why? Why did you do that!” Replies the scorpion: “It’s my *nature...*” The old earthly, human, natural, carnal, Adamic mind and nature must be *put off*, for it cannot repent nor can it be redeemed. Adam can only go to the cross! And when we read that *men* “repented not” it signifies the resistance and rebellion of that old mind, that old nature, that old man that must be put off. The plagues are sent to effect this *separation* in the lives of God’s people! Think of it!

Our repentance means that we no longer identify with the first man, the earthy, but we consciously identify with the second man, the spiritual, which is the Lord from heaven! We are putting off the old man, including that old religious soulical power, and are putting on the new man of the spirit. The old man that we are putting off *cannot repent, will not repent*, therefore we die to that man and are raised up into the new man, even Christ. That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*, and that which is born of the spirit *is spirit*. To try to change, or improve, or save the old earthy man is an effort in futility. It cannot be done! And that is the great truth and the deep mystery the Lord is revealing to us when He tells us that men “*gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds*” (Rev. 16:10-11). That is old Adam talking! That is the soulical religious nature reacting! It simply means that ADAM CAN'T REPENT! One fact only dominates the life of man upon this earth, and Paul articulates it when he says, “*in Adam all die.*” By the word “Adam” Paul means everything “human,” everything natural, everything earthy; he means himself, his natural identity, his history, his language, his institutions, his works, his innate religiosity, his hopes and dreams, his abilities, his world, and over “Adam” hangs the inevitable sentence of death. Adam comes to an end, he passes out of existence, he dies, he ceases to be. And Adam gnaws his tongue for pain, and blasphemes the God of heaven, and repents not — all the way to the cross! He is typified by the thief who was crucified with Jesus, who complained, accused, and repented not right to his death!

God is in the process of raising up in us the *new creature*, not a revamped, remodeled, renovated old creature, but an entirely *new creation*. It is not really a new creation, for it has existed all the while within our spirit, but it is new *to us*, and new to mankind, because it has been hidden deep within us and we have all walked only in the consciousness of the outward Adamic mind and life. The old has to go until there is nothing left of it at all, and has been replaced with that which to us is entirely new. The new creation is not a remodeled version of the old one, for the new is *spirit and life* whereas the old is *flesh and corruption*. “Behold, I *make all things new*,” saith the Lord! When God is finished everything in the heavens and in the earth will be absolutely new, there will be no place for the old. “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away*” (Rev. 21:1). “*For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind*” (Isa. 65:17). God has no notion of salvaging the old nature (earth), or the old religious realms (heavens), it is necessary to have a new nature and a new spiritual life that comes from God! He has no program by which the old can be remodeled for use by Him. He has no program for it at all! It is condemned, my friend, destined to *pass away, not even to be remembered anymore!* Drunkenness, hatred, murder, strife, war, drugs, thievery, rape, adultery, homosexuality, gangs, tyranny, gossip, slander, godlessness — *passed away, and remembered no more!* Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal, Judaism, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, New Age — *passed away, and remembered no more!* What a word that is!

In our understanding of redemption, it is important that we recognize that there is no redemption for the Adamic man, that is, the earthy, soulical nature and life. God has not asked the Adam man (the natural man) to consecrate himself to God, because that is the worst thing that could happen! The Adam man tried to make his nature pleasing to God when he sowed fig leaves together to cover his nakedness in the ancient mists of Eden. But that does not please God, because that Adam man was sentenced to death, and die he must! His offspring, Cain, personifying the innate soulical religious nature, tried to worship God by the offering of that which grew out of the earth — man's own good works, efforts, programs, methods, etc. — but that did not please God either and was entirely rejected by the Lord. That is why God sent the “second man” and the “last Adam” — to *replace* the “first man” and the “first Adam.”

Therefore, if any man be *in Christ* he is an entirely NEW CREATION; old things are passed away, and behold, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW! Can you not see the mystery? God did not save the old Adam, He *replaced him*. We are redeemed and saved by having the old Adam brought to death within us, and being raised up in consciousness and experience into the new Adam. So when Christ sends His Spirit, He does not come to the natural man, for the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit! He comes to the inner man of spirit! “*He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.*”

It is *His Spirit* joined with *our spirit* that raises up the new creation man within us! Therefore, he is a spiritual man! And yet, most of Christianity deals with the natural man, because they want him to live before God. In order to get him restored they lay the laws on him, try to get him to conform, to change his behavior, force him to go through the motions, to act righteously, and train him to serve God! It reminds me of what Flannery O'Connor said about one of her characters in the novel *A Good Man Is Hard To Find*: "The old woman would have been a good woman if only someone had held a gun to her head every day of her life." And, my, how religion does that as they lay the threat of eternal hell and damnation upon every soul who fails to "walk the walk"!

But the problem with dressing up and training old Adam is illustrated by the story I read once in a tract. A young boy, on a certain occasion, was walking with his father through the streets of Manchester, England. His attention was suddenly drawn to a man standing before the door of a building, announcing loudly, "**Come in, ladies and gentlemen, and see the great American pig!**" Having his curiosity aroused, he paid his entrance fee and entered the building. There, sure enough, was an amazing pig performing feats and giving evidence of an intelligence no pig had ever before exhibited. At the command of his trainer, he would pick out, from the alphabet lying on the floor, the letters "G-O-O-D P-I-G." He would also walk about on his hind legs and shake hands with those who stepped up to greet him. This pig had been washed and scrubbed until he was perfectly clean and he was dressed in a beautiful garment. Of course, he commanded the highest admiration and no one could deny that he was well-educated and well-behaved in every respect. But in spite of his remarkable culture and his attractive appearance, HE WAS STILL A PIG — better off, perhaps, than most other pigs — but yet, after all, only a pig and a pig to remain, however advanced his learning! And there is no doubt whatever that given the opportunity, he would head, fine clothes and all, right straight for the first available mud hole! Ray Prinzing expressed this same precious truth when he wrote, "A NEW CREATION SPECIES IS NOW IN FORMATION! The new life is HIS, for He is the Source of all the new! *It is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved — He has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with Him in Christ Jesus in the heavens*' (Eph. 2:5-6, Phillips).

A brother once related the following experience: "I asked a man who came to me if he wanted to receive Christ into his life. He said, 'Well, I — I'll talk to you later about that. You know, I'm going to try to do better.' I think I shocked him by saying what the Spirit inspired me to say, 'You are a liar. You are not going to try to do better because if you are honest you know you have tried before, haven't you?' 'Yes,' he admitted. 'How did you come out?' 'Well, I didn't do it.' 'Neither will you this time. And I have news for you — God is not asking you to do better! However God is calling those whom He has redeemed to allow HIM TO LIVE IN THEM.'"

Leo Tolstoy once said, "Everyone thinks of changing humanity, but nobody thinks of changing himself." He was right. But maybe the reason we think so little of changing ourselves for good is not because the task is difficult but because it's *impossible*. Perhaps you know from experience that trying to change yourself doesn't work. You've read the self-help books to no avail. To conform yourself to the image of Christ is an impossible goal! Trying hard to act like a son of God by gritting our moral teeth and upping our soulish willpower — all this sounds sensible. But all it really amounts to is an exercise in "will worship." When we think we can make a spiritual breakthrough in our own strength, we have begun to worship our own will. And as the apostle Paul points out, our human will too is under the grip of sin! Anyone who has struggled with the power of an addiction can testify how weak our will truly is. Spiritual progress is possible only through the **power of the indwelling spirit as Christ is raised up in our life**. Are you relying on your own resources to be conformed into the image of God's Son? It's time to face the facts. This is a battle you can't win! But Christ has already won it for you — He overcame within Himself all things, even death itself — and now His life is being raised up in you from victory to victory! This is what the church world doesn't know, and this is the purpose of the seven last plagues — to bring all God's carnal children *to the end of themselves* — to find, at last, the **reality beyond religion!**

There is a song we sang in the Pentecostal church when I was a child. One line of it says, “O Lord, send the *power* just now, and *baptize* everyone...”

In bringing this message to a close I would like to change the words of that song to express the great truth revealed through the vision of John on Patmos. “O Lord, send the ***plagues*** just now, and ***purify*** everyone!”

Amen, and Amen!

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).