

# ***KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES***

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

## ***LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING***

**Book Two**

**By J. Preston Eby**

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# *Chapter 24*

## *The Coming Of The King*

"Behold, thy King cometh," the Old Testament declares (Zech. 9:9). Time and again in the Word of God we find prophecies of a glorious and universal Kingdom ruled by a great and eternal King. So well was this understood in the time of Christ that even John the Baptist, after introducing our Lord to His public ministry, asked, "Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?" (Lk. 7:19). The promised King did appear, but His own people wouldn't receive Him. One of the most profound and awe-inspiring statements of all scripture was penned by the apostle John in Jn. 1:11-12, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."

TO Him, hidden in the bosom of past ages, all the scattered rays of prophecy pointed. IN Him, manifested in the fullness of time, man received a revelation of the program of God, and saw converging rays of prophecy meet and find fulfillment. It was the quickening, illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit in men of pure minds and sincere hearts that made those men see that Jesus was indeed God's Christ and that He was the promised King. Those touched by the Spirit of God gladly received Him and believed that He came forth from the Father. What revealing light of revelation it was that made Philip say to his brother Nathanael, "WE HAVE FOUND HIM of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (Jn. 1:45). Andrew went seeking his brother Peter and upon finding him said with confident assurance, "WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH" (Jn. 1:41). Nathanael, upon hearing the simplest statement from the lips of Jesus, declared with evident amazement, "Thou art the Son of God; THOU ART THE KING OF ISRAEL" (Jn. 1:49). Surely it was no persuasive arguments from Jesus that evoked this remarkable response, for He had simply inferred that He knew who Nathanael was. No, it was something far more convincing than that. It was the inner quickening of God's presence and glory that revealed Him as Lord and King.

The kings have had their day, it is said, but there is one King whose day is shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Following World War I most of the vaunted thrones of Europe were toppled, and today there is only a meager handful of kings left ruling in the world. Most of the world has concluded that government by kings is a failure. But now that most of the kings are gone, the people are no better satisfied with the governments which have succeeded them, while the world lies torn and bleeding as a result of a cruel struggle which continues between opposing ideologies. Is such a world willing to try another King? There is no doubt about it - the kings of this world have failed, and we freely acknowledge that the governments which have taken their places are quite unsatisfactory, for the hearts of the people are filled with fear as they consider the possibilities of what may yet befall them. It is just such conditions as these which call for a new ruler.

Frequently one hears the opinion voiced that the only thing which now will save the world from utter ruin, and the race itself from destruction, is a beneficent SUPERMAN, an authoritative one who would be wise-enough to map out a new and better course for the people, order his plans put into effect, and have power to enforce his edicts. Convince

the world that such a ruler is on hand and he would probably be universally proclaimed! Not a single one of all the kings - the kings who have had their day - ever possessed these qualities.

A king qualified to take over in this chaotic world of today would need to fulfill the prophetic picture given to us by king David, "Give the king Thy judgment, O God, and Thy righteousness ... He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with justice. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, Thy righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor ... in His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:1-8).

Nearly two thousand years ago a man journeyed up and down in the land of Israel whom His followers believed was destined to be the world ruler which the prophecies had foretold. He didn't have an army. He never tried to exalt Himself at the expense of others. He held no position of power or influence in the government or any human institution. He was noted for His kindness and compassion. He loved all, and was sympathetic and merciful even toward the erring. One of the most revealing observations made concerning Him states, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

But the world was too evil to appreciate so noble a character. He was hated by the rulers of His day, and charges were brought against Him aimed at His life. One of the charges was that HE CLAIMED TO BE A KING. He was brought before a Roman governor for trial, and was asked, "Art Thou a King?" to which He replied, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (Jn. 18:37). In stating this, He knew that He was sentencing Himself to death, because such a claim would be considered treason against Caesar. This kindly, sympathetic, understanding, merciful, healing, delivering, and wise minister to the people was an Israelite, and when the governor realized he could do nothing more to save His life, he permitted his soldiers to place a crown of thorns upon the prisoner's head, and showing Him to the people, he cried, "BEHOLD YOUR KING!" But they shouted back, "Crucify him, crucify him!" (Jn. 19:15).

While this King of earth voluntarily surrendered Himself to His enemies, His manner of life and death and the power of His resurrection none the less changed the course of the world. Him who, being the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges, and turned the stream of history out of its channel, and still governs the ages. They crucified Jesus, but He told His disciples that He would come again, and taught them to pray for the Kingdom which He would establish when He came. Today, while the world is perishing because of its own misguided and selfishly inspired judgment, its one hope lies in the fulfillment of the promise made by King Jesus that He would come, and in coming, would do for the world what it cannot do for itself. The brightness of that hope springs perennial within the breast of every elect saint of God and radiates forth as a beacon in the dread darkness of the night for all mankind.

## **CROWNING THE KING**

In lands in which royalty is still recognized, where it is not just acknowledged but has also really gripped the hearts of the people and sways the emotions, the days on which the royal ruler visits this or that place are always great days and festive occasions for its citizenry. And of all these days, that of the coronation of a new king has ever been one of the most outstanding. Long before the arrival of the king or queen in the capital of the land where the sovereign will be crowned, the city presents a scene of feverish activity, of hustle and bustle, to give all its thoroughfares a truly festive appearance. The hearts of the people are filled with a genuine desire to render due honor to the new monarch, and they vie with each other to make the most of the opportunity. When the day arrives the national flag is everywhere in evidence, and many streamers along the way give the city a gala appearance.

And when at last the hour comes for the king to enter the city and to parade through the main avenues, thousands upon thousands of his faithful subjects crowd the thoroughfares to greet him and to give expression to their joy and fealty. With His coming the glory of the scene is greatly heightened. He comes clothed in royal apparel, decked with all the regalia of his high office, and riding in a vehicle worthy of such an exalted personage. In the eyes of the admiring multitude he is every inch a king, and therefore truly worthy of their obedience and honor. A bodyguard of stalwarts accompanies the royal conveyance; bands play the national airs, which strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the multitudes that line the streets; and following contingents of military forces represent and symbolize the strength of the nation. All this serves to enhance the glory of the king. That day is in a very special sense HIS DAY and, just because he is the king, it is also a day of national rejoicing. And the people feel that they have a share in its glory and in the happiness which it engenders.

The history of civil royalty and rulership in this world shows that men do not regard a candidate for the throne as fully qualified unless he has received the endorsement of heaven. In the ancient monarchies, rites were performed, the oracles' approval was secured, and signs appeared, which were regarded as the evidences that the gods favored the candidate. Among the barbarous nations, strange and mysterious apparitions and observances imposed on the superstitious the impression that the one who stood forth as their chief was the chosen one of the Great Spirit, who invisibly controlled the destinies of men. However it has been abused and deceived, it is the inbred instinct of humanity to look for heaven's endorsement upon the person whom it would crown king.

Jesus Christ has been chosen by heaven to this high office. The collected wisdom of the universe has cast its vote, and elected Jesus Christ to be King over this earth. "A crown was given unto Him" (Rev. 6:2). "We see Jesus ... crowned" (Heb. 2:9). "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns..." (Rev. 19:11-12). God says to the earth, "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the nations" (Isa. 42:1). Addressing His chosen, the Almighty says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). Heaven has declared, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7). The voice of omnipotence proclaims, "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt

break them with a rod of iron ... be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth" (Ps. 1:6-10).

The choice of heaven, praise God! is ultimately to be the choice of the whole earth. He whom the Almighty Father has selected to be King over this earth, is enthroned and crowned, and every knee in the whole earth, yea, in the entire universe is going to bow in ratification of heaven's choice. This glorious One, who is the well-beloved of heaven, in whom the great Godhood is well-pleased, about whose feet the swelling feelings of the innumerable angelic throngs roll in great billows of delight, this Person we are to crown in this earth as its supreme Sovereign. Blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen.

## **DISCOVERING THE KING**

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

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

Thus we begin to long for His reign within; earnestly to desire that every lofty imagination may be cast down and every fleshly desire subdued, so that He may have His will, and ours be lost in His. And then we begin to find out that there is a vast difference between the conditions of the discovery of the Saviour and the conditions of the quest of the King, and oftentimes great searchings of heart will follow ere we can make up our minds at all costs and hazards to start upon this quest and to accept this allegiance.

What then are the conditions of this quest? What is required of those who would find the King? I answer you by referring you to the most significant narrative of the visit of the shepherds and the wise men to find Him who was born King of the Jews. While each of these momentous occurrences deserve far more attention than we can give them at this time, it will be our purpose now to consider in passing a few of the wonders of these truly awe-inspiring events. God grant that, as we explore for this moment its available depths, our spirits may be edified and our desire increased for the glory and power of His coming to us both as Saviour and King.

We may learn not a little by considering the points of contrast between these two beautiful stories, each of which contains the account of a great discovery. In each case the Christ was the object discovered, and in each a great joy of discovery crowned the efforts of the discoverers, and in each case a supernatural sign led to the discovery; but

in almost all other respects the two cases were diverse, and we may learn significant and eternal things from this discrepancy.

To the shepherds, plain and simple men, the revelation was explicit and clear: "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David A SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Lk. 2:9-12). These simple shepherds were left to no finely-drawn inferences, no dubious enquiries, no prolonged perplexities. They had but to believe a testimony they could not doubt, and to obey in faith a very intelligible instruction, and the Saviour was found. They had no difficulties to face, no long investigation to make, no arduous and weary search; they were exposed to no sort of hardships, or toils, or dangers, to no risks, or even inconveniences. It was but a short journey they had to take, and there was nothing to prevent them from taking it immediately, and none to dissuade them from going straight to the place where Jesus lay. All that was required on their part was decision and haste, full determination of heart and will to see at once the wonderful thing which had come to pass, which the angels had made known unto them.

What does all this teach us? Surely the lesson lies on the surface. We cannot fail to learn from all this, that when once the awakened soul begins in earnest to seek a Saviour, the way that leads into His presence need be neither difficult nor long. No weary quest, extending over months or years; no very heroic effort, no astonishing self sacrifice, is necessary when we seek the Saviour. Only let the enlightened mind act with decision and quickness, and the blessed discovery will soon be made, and we shall return praising and glorifying God for the wonders of redeeming love!

There is yet another point of contrast between the conduct of the shepherds on this occasion and that of the wise men when they found the new-born King. When they came to Jesus we do not read that they brought any kind of offering whatever. Does it not seem almost strange that they didn't? It would have been such a natural thing, we may suppose, that in going to meet the Saviour of the world these men, if they had no silver or gold, should at least have brought an offering from the best of their flocks. But it never seems to have occurred to them to do so. And why not? Surely they were not stingy! For our sakes no doubt, my brethren, was this written, that for all time it might be clearly known that the Saviour is God's free gift to man, and that He receives no gift in exchange for this; that when a man or woman seeks the Saviour he or she must come with empty hands, not to purchase, but to gladly receive God's unspeakable gift in His Son Jesus Christ. Those who seek the Saviour with a gift, be it money, or good works, or self righteousness, or even tears - nay, or even religiousness, must of necessity seek Him in vain until they learn to leave the gift behind, and simply accept God's free gift of salvation without money and without price.

But when we turn to the other story of the visit of the wise men, all is changed. These did not make their long and tiresome journey in search of a Saviour - for after Jesus had been born the wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He that is born KING of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to WORSHIP HIM ... And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and WORSHIPPED HIM: and when they had opened their treasures, they PRESENTED UNTO HIM GIFTS; gold, and frankincense,

and myrrh" (Mat. 2:1-2,11). Ah, the wise men brought their best and most precious gifts, and laid them at the new-born Monarch's feet; for nothing is too rich or costly to offer to a King. And they who seek the King come not so much to receive as to give. True, they do receive; for to gain HIS SOVEREIGNTY WITHIN is no small acquisition; but still we may say that this benefit to themselves is not their first object. "We are come to worship Him," was the cry of the wise men, and even such is the consuming desire of every elect saint who seeks to find the King.

Just consider what this revelation meant to them, situated as they were, if they responded to it. No doubt those distant lands of theirs had an established religion, to which they would be expected to adhere, but this they forsook, when they recognized the superior claims of another God and King. No man, not even today, can break away from cherished traditions and the religious bias of his family and peers without exposing himself to much hostile criticism and loss. He who chooses such a course must be prepared to sacrifice reputation, popularity, friendship, yes, even, in some cases, life itself.

And then there were all the toils and dangers of the way - dangers by mountain pass and swollen rivers, by sultry desert waste or pathless jungle; dangers by roving gangs of thieves, through whose territory they may have had to pass who swarmed in all those half-civilized regions, and by whom they had to pass carrying with them considerable treasure. And then the weary toil, a journey of some two years. See them struggling on, the sun blazing over them by day, while the cold wind chilled them to their very marrow by night; as day by day and week by week they crept on by slow stages, ever wandering further and further from home and fatherland, and ever drawing nearer and nearer to that great unknown, the thought of which was the one motive power that still urged them on.

Fear not, oh, my Christian brother; only let us not pause to calculate consequences. What are all these outward trials, the strippings, purgings and processings, as compared with the inward glory which the discovery of the King induces in our consecrated hearts? Surely we cannot lose by His sovereignty! If He asks us to give up all that we have, it is only that He may enrich us with His VASTER ALL.

Stay for a moment, dear reader, and reflect. Let us trace the analogy. To the superficial observer the discovery of the King does not seem as clearly a necessity as the discovery of the Saviour. You know the old story: "Jesus is my Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, Sanctifier, and thank God - I rejoice over this more than anything else - He is my COMING KING." Is it not because we have not been sure whether we wanted this Man to RULE over us? We do not mind Him ruling over Castro and the devil and the millennium, but we have not wanted to be totally conquered and ruled by Him. That is why we have kept Him coming. The Lord wants to be King NOW. We only begin to know Him when we find Him as Saviour; but this first revelation, while it sets at rest our personal anxiety about our own salvation, and unleashes a flood of blessings and benefits from His gracious hand, and bids us "fear not," and is designed to awaken our desire to know HIM more and more, but only as we respond to this desire and follow on to know Him in deeper measures can we grow up into the fullness of God.

Wonderful as it is to be forgiven, justified, born again, healed, delivered, prospered and blessed, as we follow on to know the Lord there follows a very definite crisis in our spiritual experience. We are brought face to face with the questions: Who is to be master - Christ or self? What am I going to live for - to enjoy His blessings and please myself, or

to fulfill His will? Do I want to be blessed and prospered and get to heaven at last - or do I want to be conformed into His image and suffer with Him that I may reign with Him? Do I want God to bless me with good things, or do I want Him to rule over me, break me, subdue me, subject me, and process me until it is none of me and all of Him? Is it His benefits I want, or is it His nature?

We have made poor work of our attempts at self-government. Why not give Him the scepter and the throne, and let Him rule supreme? The more the mind dwells upon this possibility, the more desirable does it seem, until at last there rises from the heart, kindled into passionate desire, the cry of a great need - "Where is He that is born KING?" that from this day forth our lives may be one long offering, and all we have and are be laid gladly and willingly at His feet. He Himself is as willing to reign over us as He was willing to save us; and when once the "other lords" have been renounced, and all is cheerfully laid on the altar, we see that faith has as good a right to claim Him as King as ever she had a right to trust Him as Saviour. And in both cases alike, AS WE BELIEVE SO IS IT DONE UNTO US.

He becomes King to us. But He wants to be more than that. You first have to know Him as King. We have sung through the years a little chorus that goes like this: "Oh King of glory, We bow before Thee - Take Thy throne and reign within our hearts." We first have to know Him in His Kingship, in His authority, in His government. We have to first know Him as King. But why does He desire us to know Him as King? Why does He desire to set up the throne of His Kingdom in our hearts? So that He can make US to become kings!

### **THE KING IS REIGNING**

With these thoughts in mind, let us look at the KINGDOM OF GOD as it is described and emphasized in the New Testament. It is natural, then, first of all, for us to take a look at the King of this Kingdom, Jesus the Christ. Unfortunately, the average church member does not think of Jesus as becoming a King. In thinking so loosely, we rob Jesus of one of the main phases of His ministry, that of being a King on this earth - the King of the Kingdom of God. Mind you, He is not GOING to be King; He is King now, for He has already ascended to the throne of the majesty on high and been given ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. This is why He can say to His footstep followers, "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).

With overwhelming awe the prophet Isaiah wrote, "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. 52:7 ). It is the purpose of all who are chosen of the Lord to minister to His elect of Israel, that they BRING GOOD TIDINGS, PUBLISH PEACE, and that they say unto Zion, THY GOD REIGNETH. Therefore, we publish the glad message to all the inhabitants of Zion: THY GOD REIGNETH! He does not hope to reign someday but HE IS REIGNING PRESENTLY. God is not trying to do something, He is doing it with the power and authority of His Kingdom reign. There remain some things which are not yet "put under Him" (Heb. 2:8), but He must reign until every enemy is subdued. The purpose of the reign of Christ is to subdue and put down all other rule, power, and authority. Christ is not waiting until all the enemies are destroyed before He begins His reign. Rather, HE IS REIGNING NOW and the purpose of His reign is to destroy all enemies. This is the

positive declaration of God's infallible Word: "FOR HE MUST REIGN TILL HE HATH PUT ALL ENEMIES UNDER HIS FEET" (I Cor. 15:25). Christ is reigning presently and His reign shall continue until all enemies are destroyed and God is All-in-all. Let it be known and understood by all: "THY GOD REIGNETH."

He is the great King of kings and Lord of lords. There are some whom I have heard from time to time speak of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and soon-coming King - as if to deny by this that Christ has any Kingdom at all at the present time. Such ignorant statements always leave me cold. What could be farther from the teachings of God's Word, which teaches that Christ already rules and reigns over His Kingdom and that we are already a part of that Kingdom? How unmistakably inspiration declares that the Father "hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Already it has taken place, already we have been translated, already we are in that Kingdom, already the Christ has a Kingdom and is its King. The word "kingdom" is derived from the two terms "king" and "dominion" - KING'S DOMINION. It exists wherever the dominion of the Christ rules and holds sway over the hearts of men. Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible. He shall yet arise in power and glory in His completed and perfected body - the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD - and reveal Himself as the great conquering King, initiating the mightiest of all campaigns, bringing deliverance to the whole creation, reconciling all things unto Himself, and then shall all know the glory of His Kingdom as every tongue confesses and every knee bows and all in that day declare that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD - Yahweh of hosts, the Lord of glory, the King of the universe!

### **THE KING ON DAVID'S THRONE**

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy messengers with Him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY" (Mat. 25:31). Darkened minds picture our Lord soaring down out of the skies on a great cumbersome throne, all dazzling white (Rev. 20:11), like a king arrayed in all his trappings in the natural. But we should remember that "the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (Jn. 6:63); we should remember that prophecy is given in prophetic language, in highly figurative speech, the symbols bespeaking SPIRITUAL REALITIES. A throne means dominion and power and authority. White denotes righteousness. So a white throne denotes righteous dominion. Of course our Lord has a throne; in fact, He has many thrones. Those thrones are the hearts of His own faithful saints. That is where He reigns, both now and forevermore.

The throne of God is not established in a geographical or astral LOCATION. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" (Isa. 66:1). God is not a limited physical being that can sit on a tangible throne in one restricted locality somewhere in the universe. God is spirit and God is everywhere and thus His throne is a spiritual throne and is everywhere. The one great truth that all theologians agree on is that God is omnipresent spirit who is everywhere and who fills the whole universe. And our scientists tell us that in that universe there are more worlds out there than all the individual grains of sand on all the beaches of all the world. You cannot put a God who is that great and everywhere present and bottle Him up in a physical throne in one limited spot. NO! He is everywhere and His throne is everywhere. The throne of the God who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent SPIRIT is not a material one, but bespeaks the REALM OF

HIS SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY AND RULERSHIP; and our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of that rulership. The THRONE of God is a sphere of power and authority, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of being. It is the assumption of the almighty power and universal dominion of the Father. It is the dispensing of HIS POSITIVE ENERGY FORCE into His creation. Exalted to that high realm Jesus no longer walks in a limited physical body, for He now indwells the Church, which IS His body, the FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL (Eph. 1:22-23).

Consider for a moment, what the angelic messenger said to Mary, the mother of Jesus. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great ... and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID: and He shall REIGN over the house of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:31-33). Jesus was BORN TO RULE. He was born to REIGN over the nations of earth. Remember what He said to Pontius Pilate? "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a KING then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a KING. TO THIS END WAS I BORN, and for this CAUSE came I into the world..." (Jn. 18:37).

The ascension of Jesus was the supreme political event of world history. He ascended not to a place but to an office. He departed from the arena of humiliation and suffering to enter into His glory. He, in one moment, vaulted from the status of despised Galilean teacher to the cosmic King of the universe, rising over the heads of Pilate, Herod, and Caesar Augustus. The ascension catapulted Jesus to the right hand of God where He was enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords. The implications of this event for the saints and for the world are staggering. It means that though we suffer persecution and the scorn of hostile power structures - though we groan under the demeaning status of an unwelcome minority - our candidate sits in the seat of sovereign authority. The Kingdom of God is not a future age, an unrealized dream or religious fantasy. The investiture of our King is a "fait accompli." His reign is neither mythical nor illusory. It is spiritual, powerful and real. At this moment the Christ of God REIGNS in the seat of imperial authority. To be sure, the Kingdom is yet to be consummated - that is future. It has, however, been inaugurated - that is past. He reigns in power, possessing all authority in heaven and in earth - that is present. His Kingdom is invisible but no less real. He left it to His body on earth to make His invisible Kingship visible.

I have said - and I entreat the reader's attention to it - that the Kingdom of God is a present reality. And may I hasten to add - the rule of Jesus Christ upon the throne of David is no less a present fact. Hear these words of truth and wisdom from the apostle Peter's Pentecostal sermon. "Men and brethren," says Peter, "let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David. Being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would RAISE UP CHRIST TO SIT ON HIS (David's) THRONE: he seeing this before SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION of Christ. This JESUS HATH GOD RAISED UP, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore BEING by the right hand of God EXALTED, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this. Therefore LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISREAL KNOW ASSUREDLY, that God HATH made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD AND CHRIST" (Acts 2:29-36).

Here it is stated as explicitly as words could do it, that the promise to David of Christ's succession to his throne HAS RECEIVED ITS INTENDED ACCOMPLISHMENT - that God HAS raised up Christ to sit upon his throne, in the resurrection and exaltation of

Jesus, as the fruit of David's loins, to the throne of power; and that His first regal authority from the throne of Israel was to send down the Holy Spirit, as had that day been done. Should any reader have missed the full implication of this the first time around I invite him to return to the scripture above and read it again reverently and prayerfully.

Christ's session on David's throne is inseparably linked to the coming of the power and glory of the Spirit at Pentecost. In a certain sense Jesus lacked the authority to dispatch the Spirit prior to His ascension. The very first act of regal authority He exercised after His enthronement was to endow His body on earth with power from on high. His disciples were given a great commission, a mandate to penetrate the whole world bearing witness to the Kingdom. These were and are to be the authentic witnesses of Yahweh. But no border was to be crossed or mission undertaken until first the Spirit fell. The disciples returned to Jerusalem rejoicing for the purpose of waiting; waiting for Pentecost. When the new King of Israel sent the Holy Ghost, the power of the Kingdom was unleashed on the world.

So-called "fundamentalists" scoff at the notion of Christ's NOW sitting on David's throne, and even many precious saints who are pressing forward into the deeper things of God ask a great many questions as to the points of analogy between the throne on which sat the humble son of Jesse in the midst of his subjects in Palestine, and the celestial seat of the Redeemer's present power. In whatever SENSE the seat of Christ's present rule is termed DAVID'S THRONE, the FACT, I will venture to say, is indisputable. That CHRIST IS NOW ON DAVID'S THRONE is as clearly affirmed by Peter in this sermon as words could do it. Let any one read his words again, and see if it be possible to make any thing else out of them. "David," says the apostle, "knowing that God would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne, SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: This Jesus HATH GOD RAISED UP." "Christ's resurrection," says Peter, "was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by David, that He would sit upon his throne." "MESSIAH THE PRINCE" already sits enthroned on high, in the person of the crucified but risen Jesus, ready to dispense, not the poor honors of an earthly sovereignty - for the rule of David's Successor is not like the rule of David himself - but "repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified "both LORD" to RULE, "and CHRIST" to POUR OUT HIS LIFE INTO YOU!

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, THY KING COMETH unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9). "On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: BLESSED IS THE KING OF ISRAEL that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Jn. 12:12-13). Here we are given a picture of Jesus as He neared the end of His public ministry on the earth, fulfilling the Old Testament prediction that He would ride into Jerusalem triumphantly on the colt of an ass and that people, the common, humble and meek people who heard Him gladly - not the unbelievers and money-changers, who hated Him and conspired to put Him to death - would accept Him as their King. Wouldn't it have been thrilling to have been there on that occasion and heard the mighty chorus of this humble throng of people as they cried, "BLESSED IS THE K-I-N-G OF ISRAEL! Truly, then, this is the King of the Kingdom - Jesus, powerful, mighty, bold, just, loving, humble, kind, merciful, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, the lily of the valley, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the rose of Sharon, the bright and morning star, the King of Israel!

If you study the characteristics of the little donkey upon which Jesus sat, you will understand the characteristics of a ministry that is used as a vehicle for the Kingdom, a vehicle to convey and carry the King into Jerusalem. Jerusalem in the Old Testament typifies God's spiritual people in the New Testament. We know that because of what Paul taught in Gal. 4:25-26. "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. BUT JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE IS FREE, which is the mother of us all." The apostle, writing to the Hebrews, made this wonderful statement, "But YE ARE COME unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY (SPIRITUAL) JERUSALEM" (Heb. 12:22).

YE ARE COME unto mount Zion. A traveler by train has often reached a place without knowing he is there. A guard or a friend has to tell him. Often it is because he had expected the journey to last longer. So deep is there in us the spirit of perfection by effort and attainment, by what we see of our outer man and feel, that the rousing call is needed continually. Here you are, sooner than you thought, in very deed, come to mount Zion! "YE ARE COME unto mount Zion." Come, let us walk about Zion, and go round about her. Beautiful in elevation, nestled in the high places of God, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion. God has made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge! And may God, in the power of His Holy Spirit within us, reveal to us what it means, that we ARE COME UNTO MOUNT ZION.

In Rev. 14:1 the Seer of Patmos saw a Lamb standing on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. Zion represents the very highest position attainable by grace. Such are the ruling class in the capital city of God's celestial city, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by king David who dwelt on the natural Zion of old. Israel was the whole nation, all the people of God; Jerusalem was the capital city, the seat of government, those anointed with power and the Holy Ghost; and while Jerusalem comprised all the ruling class, yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king. His was the highest pinnacle of glory and power attainable. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true mount Zion to which we are come, for turning to Ps. 132:13-14 we read, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." And Paul, speaking of the greater house of living stones, the body of Christ, the sons of God tells us, "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).

David was king over fleshly Israel. Christ is King over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells in the spiritual Zion. Zion is the realm of HIS LORDSHIP, HIS KINGSHIP. And this spiritual Zion is composed of all who as members of God's Christ have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem and Israel. Spiritual Zion is composed of the "little remnant", the ones who have followed the Lamb all the way, and have reached the very highest pinnacle of majesty in the spiritual realm, the sphere of HIS LORDSHIP AND KINGSHIP. And that mount Zion is in reality our dwelling place, where the powers of the heavenly world rest upon us and work in us. Glory!

"Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM." Read the description of the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22. "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. The Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. The glory of God did lighten it, and the

light thereof is the Lamb. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it: and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. And His servants shall do Him service; and they shall see His face." The New Jerusalem is a spiritual company upon whom the glory and life and power of God rests and through whom His government is administered to the earth. This is the glory to which Jesus has brought you in, when you were born from above. In the power and experience of that heavenly life the Holy Spirit enables you to live. This Jerusalem, this heavenly life from above, is the mother of us all. This is the Jerusalem from which the Lord has even now uttered His voice (Joel 3:16). This is the Jerusalem from which the Word of the Lord goes forth to all the earth (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2). This is the Jerusalem from which living waters go forth to restore life and blessing to the whole world (Zech. 14:8). "And everything shall live whither the river cometh" (Eze. 47:9). This is the city which Abraham looked for, which hath the foundations in the strength of God. We have come to it! Of this city we are now citizens. In it we live, and in it we have been brought into the Holiest, the very center of the city, the very presence and glory and power of God. We are come to the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

This Jerusalem is the throne of the King. David put his throne in Jerusalem, on the hill of Zion. Melchizedek, too, was the King-Priest of Jerusalem. (For more on Melchizedek, see link below). "He will sit on the throne of His Father David." Wherever Christ sits, wherever He rules, wherever He reigns, wherever His dominion holds sway and His authority is supreme - there the throne of David is, His Lordship over our lives. The throne of David is IN US. The throne was in Jerusalem. We ARE the New Jerusalem people - can we not see by this that the throne of Christ is within us? Jesus Christ in me, and in you, occupies a throne, a realm of authority and dominion in our lives.

When Jesus came into Jerusalem it pointed forth to a time when the presence of the King and His Lordship would be conveyed into our midst by the Spirit. There is something that is radically missing from most Christian's lives, and from most Churches, and that is a great sense of His Lordship. We sing, "He is Lord," but we have no conception of the full weight and significance of that word - He is Lord. If you want to know what He does in the city, what He comes there for, then meditate deeply upon the joyful and impressive shout of the multitude on that long ago day. "Hosanna: Blessed is the KING OF ISREAL that cometh in the name of the Lord!" There is no way to hear the message of the King and the principles that put that message into operation in the home, in the church, on the job, at school - there is no way to hear that message - and remain the same. There is no way you can come into contact with the King and not change! It is my deep conviction that His presence and His power and His ministry and His authority is being restored in the midst of His elect, under His dealing hand, within that blessed company that has received the call to sonship.

When Jesus was revealed by the resurrection as the Son of God with power, from that point on no one ever spoke to Him as Jesus - He was the L-O-R-D Jesus! What does the word "Lord" mean? In the days of Jesus, the word "lord" (kurios - with lower case letters) was what slaves called their masters. When it appeared in capital letters - THE LORD - it meant the Caesar of Rome. As a matter of fact, when public employees or soldiers met each other they used to greet one another by calling out "Caesar is the Lord," and the other responding "Yes, the Lord is Caesar." This presented a problem for the Christians. They insisted to the contrary that Jesus Christ is THE LORD. Caesar did not mind other men being called lords as long as the term "THE LORD" was reserved for him. But the Christians reserved the term for Jesus. They placed Jesus high above the emperor. They

said, in effect, "Caesar, you can count on us for some things, but when Jesus and you are in the balance, we will choose Jesus, because we have submitted our lives to Him. He is the first One. He is THE LORD - the One who possesses supreme authority in our lives." That was the reason Caesar persecuted the Christians.

The Gospel that we have in the Bible is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The Gospel that presents Jesus as King, as Lord, as First One, as the Maximum Authority. Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." What does this mean? I am the king of my life; I am seated on the throne; I make the decisions; I do it "my way." But when the Lord Jesus comes I must abdicate my throne and let Him sit on the throne. Now everything must be done HIS WAY. This introduces a new lifestyle - the life-style of the KINGDOM OF GOD.

Most people are Christians because they want to go to heaven and escape hell. If all the preachers and teachers one day called a press conference and told their people, "We have discovered that there is no heaven or hell," how many would stay in the Church after that? Most of the people would ask, "Why are we coming then?" They were coming for heaven, not because JESUS IS LORD AND EVERYBODY MUST SUBMIT TO HIM. In the hour in which we live the vast majority of Christians are more miserable than most other people in the world. They are only enduring this life in order to eventually get to heaven where they imagine they will spend the next billion trillion years or so singing, strumming harps, and dancing. I am quite sure that if such people would admit the truth, they would admit that even a thousand years of singing, shouting, playing harp music while dancing about in white robes would become very boring, to say the least. I find that most of these people can't endure five hours in a meeting even if the glory is falling all around! Most of them start examining their watches about noon on Sunday morning! The problem is that their theology leaves them with nothing constructive to do and all eternity to do it in! They know nothing about the KINGDOM OF GOD. A Kingdom denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless.

He is the great King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord our God is the King, and His Kingdom shall rule over ALL. And praise His name, He is even now bringing forth in the earth a KINGDOM PEOPLE - the firstfruits of His redemption - who are discovering His Lordship over all of their lives. When all hell assails us, when the power of death all around crowds in upon us, when the pressures of this world would frustrate and vex and suffocate us, when our own passions and emotions and self-will would drown us in a sea of carnality and ungodliness, then HE STANDS UP WITHIN US AS KING - in Kingly authority. When the world, and our own flesh, would tear us apart and smash our lives and our hope of sonship upon the rocks, HE IS THERE, the still small Voice, the deep inner consciousness that all is well, that He, the Lord of glory is with us still, and all is secure in His loving hands, for He ordained our path and made provision for the hour. He is Himself the provision, the indwelling Christ, the anointing, the authority inherent in the Spirit moving in our lives.

Thank God, in every situation and circumstance of life HE IS PRESENT TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS unto Himself, thus reigning as King over our domain. As surely as we are God's Israel, so certain is it that He is enthroned within our hearts upon the throne of His father David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. Blessed be the KING!

# *Chapter 25*

## *The Coming Of The King*

### *(continued)*

Jesus Christ has been chosen by heaven to the high office of Universal King. The collected wisdom of the universe has cast its vote, and elected Jesus Christ to be King over this earth and all things. "A crown was given unto Him" (Rev. 6:2). "We see Jesus ... crowned" (Heb. 2:9). "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns" (Rev. 19: 11-12). God says to the earth, "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the nations" (Isa. 42:1). Addressing His chosen, the Almighty says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). Heaven has declared, "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7). The voice of omnipotence proclaims, "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron... be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth" (Ps. 1:6-10).

The choice of heaven, praise God! is ultimately to be the choice of the whole earth. He whom the Almighty Father has selected to be King over this earth, is enthroned and crowned, and every knee in the whole earth, yea, in the entire universe is going to bow in ratification of heaven's choice. This glorious One, who is the well-beloved of heaven, in whom the Great Godhood is well-pleased, about whose feet the swelling feelings of the innumerable angelic throngs roll in great billows of delight, this Person we are to crown in this earth as its supreme Sovereign. Blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen.

Consider for a moment, what the heavenly messenger said to Mary, the mother of Jesus. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great ... and the LORD GOD shall give unto Him the THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID: and He shall REIGN over the house of Jacob forever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:31-33). Jesus was BORN TO RULE. He was born to REIGN over the nations of earth. Remember what He said to Pontius Pilate? "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a KING then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a KING. TO THIS END WAS I BORN, and for this CAUSE came I into the world" (Jn. 18:37).

I declare to you today that the King reigns, and that the King is coming. The dawning of His coming in that eastern sky is beginning to fill the world with light. From Zion's lofty heights you shall hear increasingly the watchmen cry that the King is coming. God has raised up in the earth in these dark days at the end of the age an elect body, a herald, to

proclaim the supremacy of the Kingdom of God and the absolute submission of all kings, rulers, nations and men to its rule. In the eleventh chapter of the Revelation at the fifteenth verse is one of the most remarkable statements ever written or spoken. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." "The kingdoms of this world ARE become." That is the word! It is not SHALL become, but there is a point at which the "voices in heaven," the proclamation of a people who DWELL IN THE HEAVENLIES, proclaim that the Kingdom of God has gotten the upper hand in the world. There is a time when there is an authoritative decree from God's heavenly people, His Zion company, His kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek to that effect. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

It is my deep conviction that the proclamation the seventh angel is sounding in heaven is causing voices to be heard ringing throughout celestial realms and impacting the earth with that wonderful fiat, "the kingdoms of this world ARE become ... " It is not that the kingdoms of this world, the powers of this age have been obliterated. It means that the reigns of power have been taken possession of by God's sons. That is to say that the Christ has been enthroned in this world in His elect body of sons as King of kings and Lord of lords. As the authority of God's Kingdom is developed in the enchrised ones, the herald sounds forth proclaiming that the King is come, and all realms must stand at attention before Him.

I will now take an illustration from ordinary life. Supposing that Queen Elizabeth II of England were to die today. May God grant that she shall continue to live. But if Queen Elizabeth were to die today you would see a very strange scene. Before more than a very few minutes had passed, the declaration would be made solemnly in the chamber of death that the Queen was dead. In a moment the high officers of state would turn about and salute the King. The heir-apparent would become the monarch in a moment, but before he had ever assumed the reins of power; before he had ever issued a proclamation of any kind; before he had committed a single royal act as the successor of his mother as the King of Great Britain and the Commonwealth of nations; before he had ever done one thing as the great ruler of two and half billion people, a strange thing would happen.

There would issue from the Royal Palace, in peculiar garments, a number of men called heralds. The Chief Herald would march at the head, and they would go into the street in the historic part of London, in front of the steps of an imposing edifice. They would stand there with their long silver trumpets, and the Garter King at Arms would cause them to blow seven times. Then he would declare: "The Queen is dead. Long live the King!" His proclamation would be the first legal proclamation of the reign of Charles Philip, the present Prince of Wales, as the King of Great Britain and the Commonwealth of nations over all the lands and seas. It would not be because the Garter King at Arms was greater than the King, but because the law of England demands that his proclamation shall be set forth in a particular way. Only one man in all the kingdom can do it, and only certain heralds under his command can accompany him. That man is the man appointed by law and by centuries of custom as the Announcer of the death of the Queen and the reign of the new King. The King must BE King, and his Kingship must be proclaimed, BEFORE his authority and rule becomes evident.

Now somebody must proclaim that the Kingdom of God is come in the latter days. Somebody must proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. Somebody must announce the King and His Kingdom. Some Voice must demand the obedience of all men and all nations to that Kingdom. The moment that the herald proclaims it the world becomes the Kingdom of our God and His Christ. For a number of years now by the spirit of revelation I have heard the PROPHETIC VOICE of God's Spirit-anointed remnant heralding with unmistakable clarity and authority the message that the hour is come for every king and every president and every ruler and every system of man and every people and kindred and tongue and nation on the face of the whole earth to hear the word of the Lord and to OBEY THE KING. The proclamation of the power and authority and triumph of the Kingdom of God has issued forth from the heavens, and the hour is wonderfully near at hand when the Lord shall roar out of Zion and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord and all kindreds shall serve Him. The nations must now listen to the Voice which rings from Zion, and bow before that Voice and say, "We will serve the King." The gates of the Kingdom are opening wide. The stage is all set for the coronation of the King over the kingdoms of this world. The King is coming! He is coming to be glorified IN HIS SAINTS and they in Him. The hour is at hand. The time is at hand to enter into the fullness of His life.

### **THE KINGDOM WITHIN**

The focus of the New Testament is upon Christ and His Kingdom. When John the Baptist announced the Messiah's approach two thousand years ago, every thing concurred to give weight to his testimony. Guided by the signs of the times, and by the chronological predictions of the prophets, expectation was everywhere awake for the first sound of Messiah's footsteps. From all parts of the country they flocked to the man of God, who cried alone in the wilderness, "Repent ye! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." With profound and breathless attention the motley group listened to the exciting tidings; and harsh as were his accents, rougher though some of his speeches were than the camel hair garment which he wore, they gladly received them and were baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Presently the Lord Himself appears upon the stage; and John the Baptist, having dutifully fulfilled his role as the herald of the Messiah, retired and was little more heard of. Thus heralded, the Lord's ministry opened with every advantage; and vast crowds followed Him, as they had John, "trusting that it was HE who was to redeem Israel - saving them from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hated them."

Israel was looking for the Messiah to come and deliver them from ROME! They looked for Him to come with the glamour and pomp and power of an earthly Potentate, with the flashing of swords and the snapping heels of His army, to deliver them from their enemies and from the hands of all who oppressed them. They wanted a glorious, wealthy kingdom with prestige and honor for themselves. The prophets had plainly declared that a deliverer would come out of Zion. There could be no mistake about that, but their unregenerate hearts did not understand that the first work of the great Redeemer would be to deliver them from the curse of their sins and to transform their wicked hearts by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which deliverance could only be accomplished by the shedding of His precious blood and the renewing of the Holy Ghost within them. What value would it have been had the Saviour come only to deliver them from the power and authority of Rome if there was to be no change in their hearts? God's word is full of accounts of His mighty acts of deliverance on their behalf, but no

sooner were they delivered from their enemies than they utterly corrupted themselves and forsook the Lord.

The book of Judges records how Israel corrupted themselves utterly before the Lord. The study of the book of Judges is the study of the utter depravity of the human heart. Again and again, over and over, time after time, repeatedly, the cycle goes on and on... "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord... and the Lord raised them up judges...the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge ... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers ... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord ... and the Lord raised them up judges ... and the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge ... and it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they corrupted themselves more than their fathers ... and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord ... and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of their enemies ... the children of Israel cried unto the Lord... and the Lord raised them up judges..." DO YOU GET THE PICTURE? How unmistakably evident that it was not their enemies from whom they needed deliverance - they needed deliverance FROM THEMSELVES! Their great problem was that they continually cried unto the Lord because of the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia, or the Moabites, or the Canaanites, or the Midianites, or the Ammonites, or the Philistines; BUT NEVER ONCE DID THEY CRY MIGHTILY UNTO GOD BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN DESPERATELY WICKED AND REBELLIOUS HEARTS! How like human nature that is!

The corruption of the human heart is incredible beyond words to express and it would have been completely useless had the Lord sent His Son to be the deliverer of His people while leaving their wicked hearts unchanged and their carnal natures undestroyed. The men of Israel could have believed in Jesus as their Saviour from the Romans. As their Saviour from their sins they could not believe in Him, for they loved their sins. The King of heaven came to offer them a share in His Kingdom; but they were not poor in spirit, and the Kingdom of Heaven was not for them. Gladly would they have inherited the earth; but they were not meek, and the earth was for the humble children of the perfect Father. The whole problem with Israel as a nation in the days of Christ was that they were unconverted. There was no birth from above. There was no new heart and no new spirit placed within by which men are transformed into new creatures and conformed into the image of God. They wanted the Christ to come and rule from without over their outward enemies, but they had no desire for Him to march triumphantly into their inner life to deliver them from the kings of corruption and idolatry that ruled upon the throne of their hearts. They wanted deliverance from ROME, but were uninterested in the cleansing of their own domain.

The same crowd is all about us today. They want deliverance from the government, from persecution, from communism, from the antichrist, from the trilateral commission, from the banking system, from the council on foreign relations, from the Jews and the vast political conspiracies that are steadily pushing the world into a nightmare of godlessness. But I do not hesitate to tell you that none of these are the problem. The most powerful kings that rule in the world today are those that rule inwardly - and it is only as the Kingdom of God takes its rightful place in our lives, that these kings are subdued and

brought to naught. In the soul-realm we have the dominant king of self-will, which has usurped control and ridden roughshod over the ways of God. There are religious kings of static dogmas and creeds, traditions and commandments of men. There are kings of passion, bringing the dominion of the flesh. Emotions which usurp unholy sway over people. There are kings of ruling thoughts and imaginations which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. But, praise God! there is a King who is mounted on a snow-white charger (Rev. 6: 2), the prophetic symbol of righteous conquest and dominion. This means victory! The Old Roman conquerors, when celebrating a brilliant conquest, rode down the avenues of the Imperial City upon a snow-white steed, and received the plaudits of the people. And so Jesus Christ, astride the snow-white charger of righteousness and power rides in swiftness and strength into our earth, into our inner land. I have heard the hoofs of His horse thundering through the corridors of my soul as He has marched into my land conquering and to conquer, bringing all into submission of Him.

Jesus, when He appeared on the world scene, came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and the first word of that gospel is this: "REPENT, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" (Mat. 4:17). Jesus saw that their attitude was not simply WE DON'T UNDERSTAND, but WE WILL NOT UNDERSTAND. We do not like the lifestyle You advocate. We are looking for a Messiah who will crush our enemies. We do not want to hear that we are unconverted sinners and that we need a Saviour. The scriptures had plainly foretold that the Messiah would come as a great King. So naturally the carnal minds of men looked for a King who would come in grandeur and majesty, sitting upon a golden throne and attired with costly robes of royalty. Jesus did come as a King, but His Kingdom was not of this world system. His Kingship ruled through righteousness, divine judgment and dominion over every evil and unclean spirit that was in man. "Wherefore receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably – well pleasing with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). We are receiving a Kingdom, because we have received the KING, and He dwells within, and as He rules and reigns within, all of HIS DOMAIN becomes ours as we become ONE IN HIM. His righteousness becomes our righteousness. His joy becomes our joy. His peace becomes our peace. Then, our life manifesting the fruits of this Kingdom, we shall surely be well pleasing unto God.

A preacher once wrote, "Jesus Christ will return to this earth and with a mighty hand FORCE the people of the world to be happy and righteous." Ah, I have news for you, preacher; you cannot FORCE anyone to be happy, much less is it possible to force men to be righteous. Only a mighty transformation by the inworking of the Holy Spirit can accomplish so great a feat. Were Jesus Christ to come to earth to FORCE the people to do right, it could result only in the building of larger and larger prisons to accommodate the rebels; for apart from the washing of regeneration by the Holy Ghost within no man CAN do righteousness!

History is an endless record of wars, maladies, famines, and all kinds of other events which only result from that which is true WITHIN US. All the great events of history are but outward manifestations of the inner condition of the little cosmos of every individual. There is a vast universe without, and a cosmic world of good and evil, light and darkness, Christ and Belial. But all that exists in outer space does not exceed by one whit the realities which are to be found in the unfathomable depths of the INNER SPACE of a man's life. Man is but a microcosm of the macrocosm. Every thing that appears visibly without is first and foremost carried on invisibly within the innermost realms of man's

being. There are inner forces just as complex, intricate, spacious, expansive, unsearchable, inexhaustible, and powerful as those cosmic forces without.

Men have fondly hoped to solve the troubles of the world by treaties of peace, by conferences, by leagues, by alliances, by summits, by understanding and agreement, and above all, through the influence of religion. International conference after international conference has been held; disarmament has been proposed; appeals have been made to the United Nations Organization; a World Court has been formed; leaders of the free world and the super powers have met again and again to compose their differences. But it is becoming more and more plain to all that the evils of the world which turn the hearts of men from peace and righteousness to war and evil cannot be overcome by parliaments, or cabinets, or conferences, or courts, or alliances, or commissions, or councils, or conventions, or treaties, or tribunals, or armaments, but only by a complete change of individual hearts and individual lives by the inner dominion of the Christ of God. For wars issue not from outer conditions, and things, and circumstances, and delicately hung balances between nations, and the breakdown of international diplomacy, BUT OUT OF THE NATURAL HUMAN HEART. Wars and evil are not the result of imperfect human government, but of IMPERFECTION IN THE HUMAN HEART. "Whence come wars? ... come they not hence, even of YOUR LUSTS THAT WAR IN YOUR MEMBERS?" (James 4:1).

The tendency of the human race as a whole has downward spiritually from the beginning. As a whole, man's penitence has been temporary, his apostasy repetitious. His acknowledgment of God's authority has been feigned, or at best half-hearted, his loyalty to the kingdom of darkness practically unqualified. His reformations have been superficial and brief, his revolts deep and protracted. As widely as the race is scattered, so widely have the works of the flesh been manifested. Throughout all generations they have been the same everywhere. The fountain is corrupt, and the stream cannot be better than its source. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, saith the Lord. The source of wickedness is within, and the manifestation of it without. And that is precisely why, precious friend of mine, the Kingdom of God IS WITHIN, and the rule of the King must be established WITHIN.

The persistent, perverse, unholy disposition in the "natural man" and the "carnal mind" does not change itself. Refinement will not change it. Education will not change it. Evolution will not change it. Society will not change it. Religious creeds and ceremonies and programs will not change it. "Deliverance meetings" will not change it. The perfidious hearts and lives of fallen men can no more be changed by these means than an Ethiopian can change his skin or a leopard his spots. The only way a change can be brought about is by being "created (anew) in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). In all the ages of the past the only permanent reformations have been those which were wrought of God in INDIVIDUALS. All national reformations and improvements have ended in degeneracy and revolt. All ecclesiastical reformations, after they have run their course, have ended in backsliding and apostasy.

We have two verses in the New Testament which tell us what the Kingdom of God is NOT. Let us see what they say. When we learn what it is NOT, it explains more perfectly what it IS. "For the Kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink..." (Rom. 14:17). I believe this is symbolic. It means that it is not basically a physical, materialistic or ceremonial thing - "...but the Kingdom of God IS righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Secondly, "The Kingdom of God IS NOT IN WORD, but in power" (I Cor. 4:20). What

does this indicate? It would indicate that the Kingdom of God is vibrant. The Kingdom of God is action. The Kingdom of God is life. The Kingdom of God is creative. If the Kingdom of God IS in power, this means the Kingdom of God is presently alive, active and functioning. Where God is, His presence is emanating life, healing, restoring by heaven's powers. The Kingdom of God is not to be found in the things you know about God or the depth of your knowledge and understanding of the deeper truths of sonship, reconciliation, etc. One knows that a person is in the Kingdom of God because of the life that emanates through him in faith by the Spirit of God. The Kingdom of God is not in word (head-knowledge of doctrines) but it is in POWER. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink but is righteousness - right being and right living. It is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Kingdom of God is POWER. Paul tells us in I Cor. 1:24 that "Christ is the power of God." If Christ is the power of God, what kind of power is He? Why, spiritual power of course! There is nothing clearer in the history of this world than that Christ is power. He has made new men and women of tens of millions. He has turned them right around and set their faces towards God. That is the hardest task in the universe. To create a world is nothing compared with re-creating one human soul. The victories of Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, were child's play in comparison. Their power could crush men into a feigned submission, but it could not penetrate the inner nature and change the secret heart and will and soul. This is what Christ has done again and again. Have you ever tried to reform any soul held in the grasp of some sin? Motive after motive you urge - the injury he is doing to himself, his self-respect, public opinion, the love of friends and family, his place in this world or the next - all in vain. For a moment the poor sinful feet make a feeble struggle to lift themselves out of the mire, and then sink back deeper. A sense of despair comes over you: you feel as if there were nothing to which to appeal. And then one day a new heart, a new will, a new spirit are given by the sovereign operation of God; the man stands up in the glory of Christ. If you ask him the secret, he would tell you, with Paul, that Christ is the power of God unto salvation! Now, believe me, there is nothing worth calling power compared with the power that can accomplish that. To break a man's spirit; to reverse his will; to turn the currents of his heart; to make him love what formerly he hated; to set his spirit triumphantly superior to sin and weakness and sorrow and death; to translate him into the Kingdom of the Son and give him seating in heavenly places; to make him a son of the Most High with a calling to glory and virtue: whoever can work these revolutions is strong beyond all that the mighty of the earth ever conceived of power. And Christ has done it again and again, praise His wonderful name. And He shall reign until all enemies are under His feet and the last soul in heaven, earth and hell has been re-created into the image of God.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10). So then the Kingdom of God originates in the realm of spirit (heaven) and finds expression in the earth-realm (physical). It is set up in the believer's heart. The Lord God omnipotent then reigns when He is known through the indwelling Christ. He takes unto Himself His mighty power and subdues all things unto Himself. He goes into the soul, conquering and to conquer, until He has put all things under His feet. He works in the soul, until every thought is brought into captivity and obedience to Christ. We are praying for the time when God will give every unbeliever in the universe to Jesus Christ for His inheritance. We pray for the day when the uttermost parts of the earth will come under His dominion and possession. We pray for the day when all kingdoms will bow before Him and all nations shall serve Him. We pray for the day when the mountain of the Lord's house, His government of kings and priests, the many-membered Christ of

God, shall be established everywhere. We pray for that day when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in and all Israel shall be saved. In that day it shall be seen that Christ is King over the whole earth. He will appear to every soul on earth, in heaven and in hell as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is proper for those who love Him and seek His appearing, to pray that He would haste the time. Everyone should pray that His Kingdom, the Kingdom of grace and glory and power would come quickly and swallow up the kingdoms of earth.

Men need not a King to straighten out the mess in the outer world - they need a King to change the inside of every man! "Please come Lord Jesus," I found myself saying the other day, after reading the gory news. Killings and muggings, and violent jail-breaks; with endless marriage disputes; child abuse by men who should know better; the video tape muck and mire sewerage through our cities and homes; drunkenness with its toll of killing; mass killings of innocents in bloody strife in countries all over the earth; and last but not least, what kind of a human being have we that could push the red button, sending the whole race into oblivion? And, praise God, the King is coming!

### **REIGNING WITH CHRIST**

When the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation..." That is, the Kingdom of God does not come with outward show, with external pomp, being outwardly observed by all, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you" (Lk. 17:20-21), or as the Diaglott gives it, "God's Royal Majesty is among you." The wonderful and rich truth the Lord presented here is that "the Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU." He was telling us that the King is among His people, or more personally and intimately, Jesus was revealing, "THE KING IS WITHIN YOU, and if anyone says to you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not" (Mat. 24:33). He then states that false prophets and false Christs should arise, and we have seen this come to pass in our day. False prophets and false anointed ones will attempt to tell us that the Christ may be here or there, but we know they are deluded, for Christ, the King, IS WITHIN US.

It is another mystery, but it is a grand fact of truth nevertheless that Christ first reigns IN us that He may consequently reign THROUGH us. "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (I Cor. 6:9-10). "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD..." (I Cor. 15:50).

The word "kingdom" indicates the richness of the heritage of the saints. It is no petty estate, no happy corner in obscurity. I heard a good man say he should be content with a cabin in the corner of glory land or a spot just inside the gate. I shall not be! The Lord says we shall inherit a KINGDOM. We would not be satisfied to inherit less, because less than that would not suit our character. "He hath made us kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 5:10) and we must reign for ever and ever, or be as wretched as deposed monarchs. A king without a kingdom is an unhappy and unfulfilled man. If I were a poor servant, a servant's quarters would be a boon, for it would correspond with my condition and degree; but if I am made a son of God, an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus; if I

am made a priest and a king, I must have a kingdom, or I shall not have attained to a position equal to my nature. He who makes us kings will give us a Kingdom to fit the nature which He hath bestowed upon us. Beloved, do strive after, more and more, that which the Spirit of God will give you, a KINGLY HEART; do not be among those who are satisfied with the miserable nature of ordinary humanity or the childish hopes of the babes in Christ who throng to the churches which are merely nurseries for the birthing, rearing and educating of babes and which then stifle and threaten to suffocate the life out of these little ones with their own static creeds, lifeless traditions and infantine programs. They eagerly look for mansions and harps and golden streets and wings and white night gowns in that glory world above, unable to comprehend that such glittering diadems are only nursery toys to God's true kings; the true riches are ETERNAL SPIRITUAL REALITIES; the true treasury wealth looks down upon the stars. Do not sell yourself short, ye sons of the Most High! Get a kingly heart - ask the King of kings to give it to you, and beg of Him a royal spirit. Act royally on earth towards your Lord, and for His sake towards all men. Go about the world not as mean men in spirit and action, nor yet in false humility as paupers and beggars, but as kings and priests of a race superior to the dirt scrapers who are on their knees, crawling in the mud after fleeting earthly riches and transitory worldly fame.

What Christendom in general cannot comprehend is that the Christ does not rule alone but through a many-membered body. Man in God's image, man in Christ at the right hand of God, is God's government in the Kingdom of God. Was not this magnificent purpose burning in the heart of our heavenly Father when on the sixth creative day He proclaimed the wonderful decree: "Let us make man in our image ... and LET THEM HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). In this shadowy type we behold a vivid portrait of God's purpose for man, that when man comes fully into GOD'S IMAGE he shall be, first, the ruler of things BENEATH, the lowest realms of the bottomless, typified by the fish swarming in the depths of the seas, and the creeping things; next, the things upon the EARTH, typified by the cattle, and all the earth; and lastly, the things of the HEAVENS ALSO, typified by the fowl of the air. And should someone find it too difficult to embrace so great a truth from so small and insignificant a type, I would remind my reader that it was upon this very type from the ancient Garden of God, as reiterated by the prophet David in the eighth Psalm, that the writer of the book of Hebrews enlarged when by the Spirit he wrote, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What IS man, that Thou art mindful of him? Thou madest him a little lower (Gr.: for a little while lower) than the angels; Thou CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, and didst set him OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS: Thou hast put A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S in subjection under his feet. For in that He put ALL in subjection under him, He left N-O-T-H-I-N-G that is NOT put under him! But NOW we see NOT YET all things put under him (man). But WE SEE JESUS ... CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR" (Heb. 2:5-9).

You won't quite grasp that at first. It's too overwhelming! To be CROWNED means to be given KINGLY RULE. To be crowned with GLORY and HONOR is to be given such rule as Jesus Christ has NOW, and of that rule we read, "Wherefore God also hath HIGHLY EXALTED Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow, of things in HEAVEN, and things in EARTH, and things UNDER THE EARTH; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). The rule that Jesus Christ now has is

the very same rule over the identical THREE REALMS of heaven, the earth and the abyss, which God delegated to Adam, the MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE, in Gen. 1:26! We have already stated that MAN in God's image, MAN IN CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD is God's government in the Kingdom of God. What a hope! What a calling! How much better, how much higher and more meaningful is this than harps and fluttering wings and white night gowns! A kingdom denotes rulership and advancement of all kinds. It means WORK and RESPONSIBILITY and a place of ministry and authority to bless. Glory! Little wonder in the light of truth so sublime that Daniel would prophesy three times that the SAINTS WOULD TAKE THE KINGDOM and reign for ever and ever. If you feel weak and helpless before a calling so high and holy, and that you could never fill such a role, remember that it is WITH HIM and UNDER HIM who is the Head and not apart from Him. We will be so fully and completely joined to Him that it will be literally true: AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.

I have met men who professed that they had no desire, no ambition whatever to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. In fact, I have been greatly criticized by some for my hope of inheriting the Kingdom of God and sitting with Christ upon the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers I am vain, conceited, self-righteous, presumptuous, heretical and power-mad because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the Kingdom of God. But I do not hesitate to tell you that Christ Himself has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him His authority over the nations and all things. He would both be King IN US and exercise His regal power THROUGH US. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Such reward to His faithful followers is merely the tangible expression of the approval of God, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of expressing that approval than we may renounce it once it is conferred. HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE. It was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees - "The glory that cometh only from God YE SEEK NOT" (Jn. 4:44). The Spirit of the Lord has been speaking to my heart. He is urging me to become a true partaker of the HEAVENLY CALLING.

Throneship involves far more than mere power over men's lives and events. IT IS A MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY TO BLESS. I might add that it is the greatest ministry available with the largest capacity to bless. The purpose and scope of this Kingship ministry is given in Eph. 1:10 wherein we read, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." The apostle here takes up the divine intent, namely the goal of the divine plan which ordained that the whole creation, fragmented by its subjection to vanity - this gross material realm with its ensuing sin and death - should be restored to its pristine purity and original order, as it was when created "in Christ" in the beginning. Thus he writes that God "purposed in Himself that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather in one all things into Christ." The Greek word translated "dispensation" (IOKONOMIA) is a compound of two words meaning "house" (OIKOS) and "law" (NOMOS). By definition "dispensation" means stewardship, administration or over-sight of a household." In Lk. 16:2-4 OIKONOMIA is translated "stewardship" in the following phrases: ". . . give account of thy stewardship"; ".....taketh away from me the stewardship"; ".....and when I am put out of the stewardship".

In I Cor. 4:1 Paul stated that he was a "steward" whom God had placed over His household, the Church. To him was committed the dispensation, that is the administration, the stewardship of the Gospel (I Cor. 9:17). To him was given "the dispensation of the grace of God" which the apostle explains to be the "mystery" or sacred secret "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, namely that saved Gentiles and saved Israelites from "the same body," which is the Church. Writing to saints at Colossae the apostle refers to this same "dispensation of God" which had been given him for the sake of the Church (Col. 1:25). This was what Paul and the other apostles "dispensed" or administered to the "household of God" (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:2-6). They "dispensed" or administered the grace of God, the gospel of God, and GOD HIMSELF!

It should be clear to every thinking mind that the business of a steward is not only to control the wealth and goods of his master, but to administer, apportion, assign, allot, distribute and dispense to all for whom it is intended. Thus, the "dispensation" of God is not merely the control of the things of God, but the very dispensing of the things of God and of God Himself. If we make a thorough and careful study of the scriptures with spiritual insight, we will realize that the great purpose of God is to DISPENSE HIMSELF INTO HUMANITY. It is regrettable that the term "dispensation" has been misused by the church systems. It means far more than a period of time - it bespeaks the administrative arrangement, the governmental management, or the distributing, dispensing stewardship of God's plan. In this divine dispensation God, who is almighty and all-inclusive, intends to dispense nothing other than HIMSELF to us. There is a "fullness of times" in which God shall dispense the fullness of Himself into everything in heaven and in earth. He accomplishes this by gathering all things together into one IN CHRIST, and it is there, in the Christ, that all the fullness of God dwells. May the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God impress this upon you deeply!

As one has written, "God is exceedingly rich. He is like a successful business man who has an enormous amount of capital. God has a business in this universe, and His vast wealth is His capital. We do not realize how many billions, countless billions, He has. All of this capital is simply HIMSELF, and with it He intends to "manufacture" HIMSELF in mass production. God HIMSELF is the Businessman, the Capital, and the Product. His intention is to dispense Himself to many people in mass production. Therefore, God requires such a divine arrangement, a divine management, a divine dispensation in order to bring Himself into humanity." Praise His name! As His Kings and Priests upon His throne the elect sons of God are the governmental arrangement by which and through which God dispenses Himself into His creation. What an opportunity to change things! What an occasion to bless and heal and lift and transform the world! It would be a crime against humanity, my beloved brethren, to carelessly neglect and thus despise, as Esau despised his birthright, the position of responsibility and opportunity to bless and restore creation proffered to us by the illustrious King of kings and Lord of lords!

## **PREPARATION FOR KINGSHIP**

The reason so many people fail to attain to the great heights of the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they have no particular incentive to seek the great heights that are in Him. So many Christians are far too taken up with carnal ideas and childish notions about mansions and harps and sitting on clouds eating pork chops with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in, to be able to grasp the true purposes of God!

There are certain basic principles of the Kingdom of God that must be a part of the frame of mind and the experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We must learn to think like God. We must begin to **RULE WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE**. Too many saints are weak, frustrated and defeated. May the dynamite of God's Spirit blow us all out of the low places of lethargy, discouragement, oppression and defeat into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy and triumph of His Kingdom. "Strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete amour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world - the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore put on the complete amour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground **IN THE EVIL DAY**, and, having fought to the end, **TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD**" (Eph. 6:10-14, Weymouth).

We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of **UNIVERSAL DOMINION**. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and universes if he is unable to **RULE HIS OWN SPIRIT**? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16:32). 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).

You can never rule anything until first you overcome it **WITHIN YOURSELF**. To "overcome" means **TO COME UP OVER THAT WHICH IS OVER YOU**. When, within yourself, you rise up above the circumstance, the problem, so that it no longer controls or harasses you, you are then ready to begin to control it, to no longer be the victim of circumstances, but the master of them. Come up over what the religious systems have fed you. Come up over your own pride and inherent weaknesses. Come up over your desire to build a reputation for your name. Come up over the myriad pressures from within and without. Come up over the world of confusion and turmoil about you. You are called to be an **OVER-COMER**. Come over that wall! Come over into the Kingdom of God and a realm of complete victory.

One cannot make way for the King in other realms effectually, until his own heart has been cleared for the coming of the King. Here in one's self the wilderness is to be penetrated - depths of depravity must be filled; heights of insubordination must be lowered; all rough ways of self-will must be smoothed; and the crooked roadways of the carnal mind must be re-laid with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. Here in one's own heart and life the work of kingship is to begin. We must reign as kings in the little kingdom of our own nature where we have been slaves. The rebel elements within our being must be conquered once and for all.

It is by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, that we overcome the enemies. As we use the weapons which we have carefully hung about our necks, we go from victory to victory, and hang up the trophies we take in battle until the walls of the armory

are adorned with the weapons and shields that we use, and the weapons and shields that we have captured from the enemy. If we cannot come out victoriously over ourselves and over the little temptations and frustrations here, how can the Lord trust us to reign over that which is without? What kind of warriors would we make? How much could He depend upon us? He will give us the place for which we are prepared and qualified; we must set our faces to be overcomers if we are to sit with Him upon His throne and reign with Him. We must know how to use the armor which He has provided, the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

When God gets ready to assume His rightful place in the universe again, He will say, "I have people here who have been tested." How can we rule in the Kingdom of God unless we are tested first? How can God trust us to rule or to have dominion over the universe if He can't trust us with our own families. If God cannot trust us with ten dollars, how could He trust us with the wealth of the nations and the forces of the cosmos? Have you met the kind of person who can never keep a steady job? The first day that something goes wrong, they want to quit and look for another job. And usually the thing that went wrong was that the boss expected his money's worth! They might complain about the working conditions, but most folk simply want to complain about work. The carnal mind is lazy. It doesn't want to work or exert itself. It is too slothful to OVERCOME! This is the kind of person who is unstable as water (Gen. 49:4). I do not hesitate to tell you that such cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

Man's first instinct under pressure is to run, to extricate himself from the situation. When we run from the problem immediately we FLUNK THE TEST. When we fail to overcome IN the problem, our character in that area is left weak, undisciplined and undeveloped. Oft times, so they can appear "spiritual," men divorce their wives, wives divorce their husbands, parents abandon their children, people move from place to place, from job to job, from church to church. Often people pray like this: "Lord deliver me from this job where everyone is so filthy and the boss so hateful; give me a job with the Full Gospel Business Men where everyone is spiritual and praises God and speaks in tongues!" Ah, we seek an "environment" that is "conducive" to our "spirituality," little realizing that in that environment where all is so beautiful and harmonious we only APPEAR to be spiritual because there is nothing to cross us, nothing hostile, no adversities, no inconveniences, in short, NOTHING TO OVERCOME! You can run from the problem, my friend; you can seek an environment where nothing is adverse to you, my beloved; you can even have faith where God will just solve all your problems and pour down the healings, prosperity and blessings; yes, you can do all this and be a Christian, even a good Spirit-baptized Christian, and make it to heaven someday; but I would be remiss if I did not warn you that you cannot do this and BECOME A RULER! The journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ first from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from universe to universe, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here, careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the galaxies, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to MAKE WAY FOR THE KING! This present time 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 a world to come, and a Kingdom of Life and Light, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, Spirit of His Spirit, nature of His nature, life of HIS LIFE!

# *Chapter 26*

## *Coming On A White Horse*

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

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

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

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

The, condition of Christ in the vision is very significant. He is mounted on a snow-white charger. This meant victory. The old Roman conquerors, when celebrating a brilliant conquest, rode down the avenues of the imperial city upon a snow-white steed, and received the plaudits of the people. The Lord is described as the Word of God emblematically riding on a white horse; it is the image of aggressive action, of a prosperous conquest over His foes. The horse in scripture represents strength, and fearlessness to accomplish its task. "He paweth the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrightened; neither turneth he back from the sword. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting" (Job 39:21-22, 24-25).

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

His color is white, an emblem of the Christ's purity and divine holiness. White also bespeaks of light - illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the churches, the out-called, challenging them to OVERCOME, we read, "I counsel thee to buy of Me ... WHITE raiment, that thou mayest be clothed" (Rev. 3:18). This is naught but the transfiguring glory of Christ, as it is written, "And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Mat. 17:2). The light is the robe of divine majesty, the incorruptible life of God emanating from the nature of absolute righteousness.

And so Jesus Christ, astride of the snow-white charger, is put in a position where He is perpetually celebrating a victory. His march is a victorious march. His movements always meet with success. His plans are fulfilled, and His campaigns unfurl to the breezes the banners of triumph. Jesus Christ is going forth as a conqueror, and He does so with great power. It is no easy campaign upon which He has entered. The action in which He is engaged requires the greatest power; and His movements are energized with tremendous force. The Bible represents Him at times in conditions and possessed of moods when He sits and reclines in repose, already having accomplished His purposes. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). But here in the saddle He is roused, every faculty excited, every source of strength summoned, and He is bearing forward for the purpose of accomplishing something not yet attained.

The horse in those times was regarded as the embodiment of speed. He who was mounted could get over a greater distance, do quicker work, than on foot. Thus with

Jesus Christ. He was to carry on His conquests with great rapidity. Swiftly, as well as powerfully, would He move down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, would charge upon the opposing ranks, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they had recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack.

## **THE BATTLE**

Once I heard a preacher say that he believed Jesus Christ would LITERALLY descend from heaven riding on a white horse. "Jesus Christ created the horse," he declared, "and if He chooses to charge through the clouds on one, He certainly can." Certainly He can! But I do not hesitate to add that lack of spiritual discernment is the greatest curse upon the Lord's people today. People are so afraid that someone will "spiritualize" away something in the Word of God, realizing not that they themselves are "carnalizing" away the Word of our Lord, for, said Jesus, "the words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" (Jn. 6:63). Spiritual intelligence is the rarest of all spiritual things - and the least valued. In God's sight it is the only true wealth. How rare has true spiritual understanding become! The trouble with God's people today is with their ears and eyes. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day they insist that they DO hear and they DO see. But they do not understand. Neither do they know. Two worlds exist all about us - the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural realm is the realm of man, but the spiritual realm is the realm of God. The carnal mind CANNOT understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are SPIRITUALLY discerned. The greatest need among the saints today is for God to send forth into our hearts the spirit of wisdom and revelation to dispel the darkness of the natural mind that ever hangs as a veil about us, that He may reveal to our wondering eyes those supernal things that pertain to HIS REALM.

Words utterly fail me to describe the scene of the Rider upon the white horse! It is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, that it completely defies all human description. Behold! the open heaven, the white horse, the name Faithful and True, the righteousness of His judgment, the eyes of flame, the head bearing many crowns, the vesture dipped in blood. Hear the name The Word of God. See the armies of heaven following, which are the vast multitude of the enChristed sons of God, and their fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints, and their white horses, which bespeak the strength, victory and power of the Christ by which they conquer. Consider the sharp sword with the double edge that goes forth from His mouth, the spoken Word of God - a sword to smite the nations, not with cruel force and merciless slaughter, but with TRUTH and LIFE. Behold, too, the name inscribed in His vesture and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!

The book of Revelation is first and foremost a SPIRITUAL book. It is a book of spiritual realities communicated by means of signs and symbols. You will not read the fulfillment of its prophecies on the pages of Newsweek magazine, but you will see them manifest in the lives of men and women and in the great accomplishments of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the Kingdom of God? The battles beheld in spirit by the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos signify spiritual combats, combats between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between the carnal mind and the precious mind of Christ, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death. A man must experience this combat

within himself to become a spiritual conqueror and gain the crown of life. Our Lord, when in the world, carried on such spiritual warfare in an infinitely greater way than others, overcoming the compounded powers of the world, the flesh and the devil, and opening up the way to victory and triumph unto all who are willing to follow Him into the lifestyle of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord is a SPIRITUAL CONQUEROR!

The apocalyptic description of Christ coming out of heaven on a war-horse, magnificently attired - attended by armies of celestial horsemen - to fight the battle against the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. It is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer and His heavenly legions confront the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus or Wells, or any other historian, for the events which correspond with these symbols. Nor shall we find them in the headlines of the Washington Post or the Miami Herald! The scene reveals one divine and sublime truth: CHRIST SHALL, CONQUER! The Kingdom of Christ is "not of this world" and does not conquer the nations in any such "pitched battle" as the armies of men contend for the mastery in. The Kingdom of Christ does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. I believe in no such way of deciding the question between Christ and antichrist - between "the Kingdom which the God of heaven has set up," and "all these kingdoms" which it is to "consume and destroy." Believing that "the weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL, but (just for that reason) almighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," I believe the warfare itself to be not carnal.

Ah - is it not within the corridors of your own soul, precious friend of mine, that you must hear the hoof beats of the great white steed thundering! He must ride right into YOUR EARTH, conquering all the territory of YOUR LAND. Don't you hear the clatter of the hoofs of that gallant charger as he bounds through your own world, carrying its Rider to grand battlefields and glorious victories within? Don't you see His saber of truth flashing its dazzling light upon the eyes of your understanding, and swinging effectively in the direction of every cherished tradition and human interpretation? His victories are victories of peace over conflict, of joy over sorrow, of faith over fear, of righteousness over unrighteousness, of love over hate, of truth over error, of holiness over sin, of health over sickness, of power over weakness, of the image of God over the subterfuge of self, of life and immortality over corruption and death.

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of Man. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ - a triumph which is even now proceeding into the heavenly city.

We don't have to wait until "some glad day after while" because the battle is going on right now. GOD ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST (II Cor. 2:14). I want to

tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these lines have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, our General has WON the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of evil! And now He brings that triumph to us! And we can receive the spoils of His warfare! How can we be winners and partakers of that victory? First of all we need to know that we can never be part of those that conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Him. It was not until Saul had been knocked to his knees in the dust and all his own struggles and battles had been lost, that he entered into the victorious army of Jesus Christ. In that conquest Saul of Tarsus was slain and Paul the apostle rose up to take his place. Perhaps you are struggling in your spiritual life, you are trying to overcome, but the problem is you have never completely surrendered to Jesus Christ. That surrender cannot be simply by word. It must be in reality. There are those who offer Christ their praise and speak great swelling words of revelation in the gatherings of the saints, but go out and know that their life is not conquered by Jesus Christ.

When Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington he came up to Washington and his aides, each dressed in their finest military garb. Cornwallis began to extol Washington's virtues as a commander and military strategist and told him how impressed he was with the incredible maneuvers he had used. He continued in this way until suddenly Washington interrupted him and said, "Your sword, sir!" We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His Kingdom must reign supreme within. Our hearts are the seat of the throne of God, because there He reigns. The royal seal is the image of Christ in the heart; and where this is in the heart it extends over the whole soul and body.

## **HIS EYES**

His eyes were a flame of fire. As John gazed upon Him, his attention was attracted to His eyes, which blazed like flames of fire. The spirit within was so aroused that it shone through His eyes. This description concerning the coming of the King of kings and the Lord of lords is most illuminating. George Hawtin has commented on this passage: "The eyes of the Son of God are completely different from all other eyes. The eyes of mankind and of every living creature are capable only of receiving light. Our eyes receive reflections and images of things that are without, but the eyes of our Lord not only receive reflections of things without, but are LAMPS OF FIRE, shedding abroad the light of God whithersoever they are turned. Every creature and everything upon which His eyes shall fall will receive the LIGHT OF GOD. 'They looked upon Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed' (Ps. 34:5). Even in the hour of Christ's greatest humiliation when Peter had denied his Lord, the Lord turned and LOOKED upon him, and at that look the light of truth dawned upon this trembling and heartbroken man as he sat in his dismal despair and, being thus enlightened to the truth and to the knowledge of his guilt, he went out and WEPT BITTERLY in repentance and contrition. But this manifestation of the light of truth that shines as a burning flame from His eyes is merely a fleeting shadow of greater things to come. It is as a feeble candle in the night compared to the illuminating rays of the sun at noon.

"The day is coming and is near at hand when Christ shall be the Light of the World in the fullness of its meaning. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole world and wheresoever He looks the light of heaven will shine. Upon whomsoever His eyes shall fall darkness will be dispelled from him and the light of Christ will shine upon him. Through long millenniums has the world sat in outer darkness and in the cold and gloomy

shadows of death, but He who soon will come riding triumphantly through the open heavens has eyes burning as lamps of fire, before whose shining darkness and shadow will flee away forevermore" -end quote.

The One who has the eyes as a flame of fire is He who comes to judge and make war. To judge rightly He must see through and through, search all depths, look beneath all masks, penetrate all darkness, and try everything to its ultimate residuum. There is often something wonderfully luminous, penetrating, overawing, in the human eye. Men have been blinded by the look of kings. It is like the living intellect made visible, which seems to read all secrets at a glance. It is this infinitely intensified, flashing like a sword of fire that the apostle beheld in this Warrior Judge. It is an eye flame of Omniscient perception, a searchlight that penetrates to the inmost thought and intent of the heart, laying bare in its awful revelation every fiber of self, even in purposes supposed to be pure, scorching, burning, shriveling every hypocrisy, and withering away every breath of the flesh.

Oh the eyes of the Lord! the eyes of holiness, the eyes of infinite discernment, the eyes of depthless love and burning desire for those apprehended to be conformed to His likeness. They descend into the depths of the soul, the candle of the Lord, to search out and make known what is of soul and what is of spirit, and flash with their flame of sincerity, truth and shadowless righteousness. The Word of God is quick and powerful - living and active - sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder (separating) of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow - the deepest part of our nature. And when the King of glory marches into our land He comes with eyes that are shining lamps of heavenly fire, ILLUMINATING mind and heart, revealing all that is there, destroying every selfish and secret motive, consuming every vestige of the carnal mind, purifying the deepest intents of the heart, and flooding the whole being with righteousness and purity and power. Some things in our lives are deeply hidden, but the eyes of the Lord, the dealings of God, are going to cause everything to surface and be brought out of the darkness. The fire of those eyes is such that all the dross is made to emerge. Do we really want the Christ to invade us through and through to thoroughly touch every area of our lives? We will never conquer until we are conquered! Praise God! This moment He is mightier in His elect than He ever was before. This moment He is conducting a campaign vaster, stronger, deeper, more overwhelming than ever before. He will direct it on from one degree of glory to another, until every human being will bow before Jesus Christ as their supreme Lord and King. He will shine forth the glorious light of His illuminating eyes into the darkened hearts of billions who never have known aught but shadows of death. His battlefield is the world. His warfare extends through the ages, down to the end of time. And He shall be victorious, totally victorious - praise His worthy name!

## **HIS WEAPON**

"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations." The sword that goes forth from the mouth of Christ is without doubt the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God. His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. He is the LOGOS. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Ps. 33:6). This is He who was in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word" (Jn. 1:1). This is the Word that was God. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "He sent His Word, and healed them." This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In this vision He is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, indicating

that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth - truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapons of truth. Christ does not come to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His words smite all who hear them. As someone has said, it will smite them with conviction and bless them with conversion. The spirit which animates Him is the warrior spirit. His object is the conquest of the world. He has formed the resolution never to cease from His campaign until the whole world, a conquered realm, bows devotedly before Him as its rightful Lord and Master, and only true King.

It has well been written: "When we read, 'With it He will smite the nations,' our first thought must not be vindictiveness as so many preach. This sword of the Spirit does far more than kill. It pierces to the dividing asunder of flesh and spirit and discerns the thoughts of men and the intents of their hearts, and more often than not it brings repentance rather than judgment. The mighty outpouring of God's Word at Pentecost caused men to be pricked and cut and pierced to the heart until they cried, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' And the answer of the word was quick and clear: 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ... then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls' (Acts 2:37-41). When Stephen preached the Word, they were cut to the heart, and to Paul the Spirit said, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' That is the way His righteous sword is wielded. It kills only to make alive and wounds only to heal. It kills only those things that should die and makes alive the things that should live. Thus will He rule the world with an iron rod - the rod of true judgment and the scepter of true authority" - end quote (The Page). Christ the Conqueror goes forth to conquer. He has a sword, and His sword comes out of His mouth, and He is riding the white horse, and the cutting edge of divine conviction is piercing multitudes of hearts.

The apostle Paul says, "Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Many commentators have noted that this is the only offensive weapon listed in the ARMOUR OF GOD. But I question that. A sword can be a defensive weapon in the hand of a man who has no offensive intentions or no heart for the battle. But I assure you, when the legionnaires of Caesar girded on their belts and fastened their breastplates in position and took upon themselves their helmets and picked up their shields and swords, they were not going forth to defensive warfare. They were going forth conquering as a conqueror, to travel across the face of Europe for imperial Rome, and to conquer all that came before them. How is Christ going to conquer? By His WORD!

When I speak, or write, I manifest spiritual influences; and the force of these influences is proportionate to the inner power, and their effect is proportionate to the state of reception of my hearers. Words are thus seen to be the representatives of spiritual forces. The action of spirit on spirit is inappreciable by the senses; but could we look behind the veil of nature when a crowd or a congregation is swayed hither and thither by the speech of one man, we should see that the influence exerted was as real and actual as muscular force. From this we learn that words are not mere sounds, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" (Jn. 6:63).

The Lord's speech is the manifestation and influence of His inner life poured forth upon those to whom He speaks. An incident in the life of Jesus, recorded in Luke, chapter seven, provides a picture in which may be discerned the POWER OF THE WORDS OF

GOD. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. Moved with compassion for the sorrowing woman He bade her dry her tears. The astounded crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The power of the speech of the Prince of Life pierced the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. The tender Christ delivered him to his mother, and made effective His command, "Weep not!" Her son was not only brought back from the gates of the tomb, but was restored to her as a gift from the Lord BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD.

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

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the sword that goes out of His mouth. The Word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that Word flows forth as the sound of many waters. There are not to be two swords - one out of the mouth of the Lord, and the other out of the mouths of His ministers. There is one sword, and it is HIS. Our quotation of scripture and our knowledge of the Bible and our understanding of truth is not the sword of the Lord. The sword of the Lord is that Word which proceedeth only out of His mouth, and out of ours as we are MADE ONE IN HIM. The sword of the Lord bespeaks a purified people, holding forth the Word of Life in the power of the Holy Spirit, and how we praise God for this company!

This is not some carnal battle fought with carnal means, but the utterance of the Living Word of Truth which no man shall be able to disannul. Ah, how fleshly have been the swords by which the religious systems have conquered! These "Christian" countries even go to war with one another. These "Christian" armies send thousands into a fast hell. The "Christian" nations are on fire with brawls, party against party, faction against faction. These "Christians" have deceit and fraud, oppression and wrong, robbery and murder, in their streets. The "Christian" families are torn asunder with envy, jealousy, anger, domestic disputes, without number and without end. And what is most dreadful, most to be lamented of all, are those "Christian" churches. Those churches that bear the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, wage continual war with each other. Through long centuries this church has attempted to convert sinners by burning them alive. It has been drunk with the blood of saints and of martyrs. It has brought praise only to Satan. It is a false church, a false Christ, a false sword, a false word. This false sword, this spurious gospel is going forth conquering and conquer over the earth. True revival and true worship have

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

In contradistinction, the Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that CLEAR WORD OF THE LORD which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to naught. It was said of our Lord and elder brother, "Never man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:46). "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him" (Mk. 1:27). "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Mat. 8:27). That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered-brethren-company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, BUT ACCORDING TO MY WORD" (I Kings 17:1). The pure and powerful Word of God shall cause His servants to ride victoriously. Naught shall be able to stand before the two-edged sword of H-I-S W-O-R-D. How glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company!

Fear not. Have hope. Believe in hope! It is God's good pleasure to yet renew the face of the earth. Surely all these things shall come to an end. All the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they know war any more. The mountain of God's house shall be established on the top of the mountains. All the kingdoms of the world shall become the Kingdom of God. Then they shall not hurt nor destroy His holy place. They shall all be without spot or blemish, loving one another, even as Jesus has loved us. You are called to be a part of the firstfruits, even if the total harvest has not yet come. You are to love your neighbor as yourself. You are to love your enemies and bless them that curse you and do good to them that hate you. You are to wield the mighty sword of the Spirit. You are to ride forth in majesty as the expression of God's Kingdom on earth. You are to utter His burning Word of authority, smiting the earth with the rod of His mouth.

## **THE ARMIES THAT FOLLOW**

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven He does not come alone. Even before the flood, Enoch prophesied of this appearing of the promised One, and said, "Behold the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14,15). John saw, and writes, "The armies, the ones in the heaven, were following Him" (Rev. 19:14). Christ Jesus is the Head and the Leader as He goes before; His holy ones follow in His train. They are represented as armies. They come forth as a body of fighters. He has many under His command. The armies of the heavenlies are His, and He does battle with them, by them and through them, even "the called, and chosen and

faithful." There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all of the horses are white, and everyone who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignitaries. Moreover, they have no weapons, except the sharp two-edged sword that proceeds out of HIS MOUTH, which is the Living Word of God. They are dressed in white, for they are all righteous, cleansed by the crimson tide in which His cloak was dipped.

Again, I would share with you from the anointed pen of George Hawtin as he describes this glorious army. "This is the army of the SAINTS OF GOD, thousands upon thousands of blood-washed sons, all members in particular of the mystical body of Christ, and though they be so many, yet are they but one Christ. These are they of whom it is written: 'They that are with Him are called and chosen and FAITHFUL.' He who rides at the head of this heavenly host, which for six thousand years has been preparing, is the first begotten SON OF GOD, the firstborn from the dead, the PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH. He is the firstborn of MANY BRETHREN. He is the eldest in a vast family of God's sons. This, I declare, is the manifestation of the true body of Christ, the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD. These are they who during their life on earth went unto Him without the camp of the world's denominations and systems, bearing His reproach, that they might be received and taught as sons by their heavenly Father. Long ago amid the shadows of earth they heard and obeyed God's call, 'Come out of her, My people, and be separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' In their obedience God became their Father. As a Father He instructed them, broke them free from the blinding traditions and doctrines of men. He rebuked them as any loving father rebukes his children. He chastised them as a father chastises his son, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? For if we receive not chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. As a Father He fed them, and He fed them on His living word of life, they became partakers of the divine mind, the divine nature, and the divine will. The mind that was in Christ Jesus dwelt in them and as it increased they were thoroughly transformed by the renewing of their minds" - end quote.

But now the days of their rebuke and chastisement are over. The great Captain is mounted, and they are mounted too. He comes as Warrior, Judge and King, and they share with Him in the same character. They are warrior judges and kings with Him. They are clothed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. They wear no armour. They are immortal and incorruptible and cannot be hurt.

In the Song of Solomon 1:9 the shepherd lad extols the qualities of His beloved Shulamite in these significant words: "I have compared thee, O my love, to a COMPANY OF HORSES in Pharaoh's chariots." The historical allusion here, is to Israel as they fled before the horses and chariots of Pharaoh. None knew better than the children of Israel how swift were those famous horses; but by the strong arm of Yahweh, the Israelites outran and outstripped them. There were many steeds in Pharaoh's chariots, and the virgins who make up the followers of the Lamb, while they are few compared to the many who are called, are as a GREAT COMPANY.

Pharaoh's horses were famous for their value and beauty. They were the swiftest and the surest footed of all horses. They could go up over the hills and down through the valleys; they could leap over obstacles, and they never fell nor stumbled. In battle they obeyed, though they plunged into the face of the enemy and into death. They bore the chariots of war, they drew the chariots of the pomp and glory, the grandeur of the king. Egyptian

horses, especially from the royal stables, were magnificently decorated, particularly their heads and cheeks, with brilliant ornaments, sparkling jewels, glittering with gold and silver lace, and on their necks were chains of gold, composed, I fancy, of medals recording victories won and glories to be remembered. One historian has recorded that the Egyptian horses were even exported to the neighboring countries, and Solomon bought them at a hundred and fifty shekels of silver, from the merchants who traded with Egypt by the Syrian desert. Such a steed in a chariot, like that which Solomon had brought out of Egypt by his agents, was an object of great beauty to the eye, especially when adorned with the costly trappings then usual. Pure white and beautiful, they were indeed marvels of swiftness and symmetry; each one garnished with gold and precious stones worthy of a king's ransom.

As the Israelites outstripped the horses and hosts of Pharaoh, so the followers of the Lamb have obeyed their Lord's command with such fervor, that they have overtaken and passed all the adversaries. As Pharaoh's horses were famous for their speed and beauty, as they were sure-footed and bore the pomp and grandeur of the king, so the speed and beauty of God's elect are becoming marked, and they bear the glory of the King. It is through us, precious saints, that the power of Christ's redemption is manifested upon earth. It is through us that this salvation is put to the test, and men see what it will do. It is in our lives, that its power to give speed, strength and victory is manifested. It is because His beloved has pressed along after Him so swiftly, and been obedient to His voice though He did not lead her as she would have desired, that He has likened her to these famous horses. He has been teaching her that to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. She has hearkened to each command of His voice and taken each step as He has directed. So fervently does she obey the voice of her Beloved, so eagerly does she pursue after Him, that finally she hears His voice whispering to her, "I have compared thee, O My love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots."

Unseen by her, unknown by her, His hand has upheld her as she ran. He has lifted her over all the hard places, He has established her steps that they should not be moved. He has kept her feet from slipping, He has lifted her over the precipices, so that many times she has not even seen them. Then after supporting her, and bringing her on according to the desire of her heart toward Him, He compares her to the swift steeds in the chariots of Pharaoh. The message is clear - how tenderly and graciously does our Lord address us. He keeps us faithful, and then He says: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" He spoke to, and dealt with Gideon so gently and encouragingly, when he was hidden in the winepress beating out wheat. The angel saluted him with: "Yahweh is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." Gideon did not appear to be either a mighty man or a man of valor, for he was hidden away for fear of the enemy. But it was not anything in Gideon that made him mighty; it was because Yahweh was with him. And the Lord led him on until His gentleness made Gideon great, and he really became a mighty man of valor. How precious God woos us on; and as we yield that He may work in us, He ascribes to us the fruit of His own working upon and within us, for His work becomes truly our very own as we are made ONE IN HIM. Hallelujah!

Ray Prinzing has expressed the following words of inspiration and instruction: "One historical writer has pointed out that everyone of Pharaoh's horses were THOROUGHBREDS. There was no adulteration or mixture of some lesser strain, with some weakness showing up during the heat of the battle, or some renegade trait showing up during a race which would also cause a defeat. The Lamb was without spot and without blemish. And surely the purification process must be complete in us, the

regeneration must include our whole being, we are to be an entirely NEW CREATION, a new thoroughbred species. That is why He is dealing with us so intensely to guard our spirit, He would have a virgin spirit, undefiled with anything that pertains to the spirit of the world. No trait or strain of the old nature left in this company of God's choosing. Old things have passed away, and behold, ALL things are becoming new. This is why, also, He has been calling us out of Babylon, and then been purging Babylon out of us, for it is written: 'Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain (Babylon), saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and I will make thee a burnt mountain. AND THEY SHALL NOT TAKE OF THEE A STONE for a corner, nor a stone for foundations' (Jer. 51:25-26).

"We await the day of HIS COMMAND. We do not wait for an escape out of the world, but we wait FOR HIM. 'For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... '(I Thes. 4:16). The Greek word that is used here for SHOUT, literally means A WAR CRY. It signifies that the time has come when HE shall DO BATTLE against all unrighteousness. And for this day of battle He is now preparing His HORSE-HORSEMEN COMPANY. 'None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint' (Isa. 5:27-28). Hoofs like flint! This was a highly prized quality in a good horse, it meant that they could run farther in the battle, endure longer over the rough rocks, and not become lame. There shall be an ENDURING QUALITY in His elect, they shall be able to GO ON from victory to victory, and make progress over all the rough areas of testing and trial. Perhaps to us this is a rare and unique feeling, one we do not have every day, but there are those moments, when with the Psalmist you could say, 'By my God I can run through a troop, and leap over a wall.' During those times when the vision is so bright, and the sense of His anointing surges through you, you do find that 'perfect love casteth out all fear,' and IN HIM you are strong. Then the processings continue until what we have glimpsed BECOMES A LASTING REALITY" -end quote.

The army of the Lord is at this very moment in careful preparation. The mountains are full of horses and chariots of fire, which the King mustereth for the battle. His great command is FOLLOW ME. He rides the white horse of universal conquest. He goes on from conquering to conquer. Follow the King from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph in your own life; then you, who constitute the King's hosts, will move forward, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners (S. of S. 6:10).

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

# Chapter 27

## *The Coming Of The Bridegroom*

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; go ye out to meet Him" (Mat. 25:6).

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

We approach in this study the consideration of the crowning mystery, and yet the most wondrous revelation of truth. It is at once a mystery and a revelation. Nothing but a revelation could have suggested such an idea to our minds, or have allowed us to entertain it without being guilty of irreverence; but the revelation is made in language so distinctly figurative that the great apostle Paul himself is constrained to say of the truth which it manifests and conceals, "This is a great mystery." The revelation of Christ as the Bridegroom permeates His teaching and His parables and suggests the grand truth to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. More than once He refers to Himself in His utterances as the Bridegroom. The solemn midnight cry raised by the expectant throng is, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh," and they that are ready are represented as accompanying Him to the marriage. He speaks of His disciples as "children of the bride chamber," who at that time had the Bridegroom with them. He alludes to "the wedding" in the earnest exhortation which He utters, impressing upon His disciples the necessity of being prepared for His coming as Bridegroom. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding." And He suggests the true purpose of all God's dealings with man in the parable of the wedding feast, whose opening words declare that "a certain king made a marriage for his son."

What a blessed and thrilling revelation lies couched in the following passage recorded in connection with our Lord's miracle of turning water into wine. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him" (Jn. 2:11). In our meditations on the Bridegroom and the bride it is appropriate that we consider the marriage in Cana of Galilee. The apostle Paul frequently spoke of the vast mysteries of God and, in speaking of them, he left no shadow of doubt that naught but the revelation of the Lord could unfold those eternal mysteries. The Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry at a wedding. May I say to you that that is important and it is profound, and it seems passing strange. Why didn't He begin at Jerusalem, the religious capital of the world? Why didn't He go to the temple to begin His public ministry? Or, better yet, why didn't He go to Rome, the power capital and political capital of the world of that day? Or why not go to Corinth, a great commercial center of the time? Why begin at Cana of Calilee at this wedding? Ah the Lord came from heaven's glory and He began His ministry at a wedding of two unknown, poor peasants yonder in the dusty little village of Cana.

But if we stand back and get a correct perspective of the sweep of the entire picture I think we will understand it. You go back to the very beginning - marriage was the first institution that God made for man. And it was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ

Himself that brought the first woman to the first man. He introduced them and He performed the marriage for them and made them one. Then I look into the prophecies of the Bible and discover that there is an event called "the marriage supper of the Lamb." The Lamb is there and a people called the bride is there. And the Psalmist relates the wonderful scene in these descriptive words, "Kings' daughters were among Thy honorable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir" (Ps. 45:9). Long centuries later John the Revelator stood transfixed in rapturous wonder at the scene and penned these challenging and electrifying words of spiritual instruction: "Let us rejoice - and shout for joy - exulting and triumphant! Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has prepared herself. She has been permitted to dress in fine radiant linen - dazzling and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. 19:7-8, Amplified).

Long millenniums ago at the dawn of human history the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). What fathomless and holy truth lies buried in this remarkable statement! While God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone," I would like to give another rendition and it goes like this: "It is not good that GOD should be alone." It is my conviction that God's creation is an expression of God's own personal character and state of being. It will take the mind of the Spirit to understand what I say when I declare that when God saw Adam in his loneliness and said, "It is not good that the man should be alone," God was expressing a consciousness within Himself. God had need for companionship. This divine need is expressed by the apostle in Eph. 1:4-6, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be ... before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

God's ultimate need was for the companionship of beings like unto Himself, of His own kind, with whom He could share His mind and heart, and whom He could incorporate into the outworking of His own eternal purposes. As we view from the Father's heart it becomes obvious that God in His paternal nature has "marked out for Himself" a vast family which shares His very own life, nature, spirit, purpose and power. I do not believe that any creature or entity which existed before man either in heaven above or the earth beneath, provided what God needed. This is the condition which prompted God in that long ago beginning to issue the wonderful fiat, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness" (Gen, 1:26).

Little wonder, then, that we read these remarkable words, "And Jehovah God saith, Not good for the man to be alone, I do make him a helper - as his COUNTERPART" (Gen. 2:18, Young's Literal). The Goodspeed translation reads, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I must make a helper for him WHO IS LIKE HIM." Another interesting translation says, "And God made for Adam a COMPARABLE helper." That is the first symbolism of the bride of Christ. God made for Adam someone with whom he should have complete and total intimacy. God Himself had that desire so He came in the cool of the evening to fellowship with this man and woman made in His image. If the Christ is to have a bride then the bride must be COMPARABLE to Christ. That's awesome, isn't it! But how could Christ become intimate with anyone who is not comparable to Him? Would He become intimate with a little girl whom He might abuse? Would He share all He is and has with a child who is physically and emotionally unable to return mature love or participate in His activities?

God gives us patterns in the Bible. All the patterns point to the central truth that God wants a people for Himself - a special, purified, obedient, prepared, developed, matured, loving, capable people joined in union with Himself. All other doctrines and revelations are secondary to that. God's desire for a people is the thrust of the entire message of the Word of God. Everything must revolve around that truth. It was not good for man to be alone and God was saying that it was not good for God to be alone. He wanted offspring, and Acts 17:28-29 tells us that WE are the OFFSPRING of GOD. Nature itself teaches us that pigs have little pigs and dogs have little dogs. I do not hesitate to add that Gods have little gods! We are made in His image - COMPARABLE! When once we learn this one grand truth all the Word of God begins to fall into place. My beloved, it is therefore in keeping that our Lord should go yonder to a wedding in Cana of Galilee and begin His ministry. There He went and put His seal of approval and His blessing upon it. He was there by His very presence to proclaim that UNION between God and man is the grand theme and purpose of God in creation and redemption!

### **BRIDESHIP AND SONSHIP**

As God continues to deal in this hour with a people, to bring them into His fullness, there are questions which arise concerning definitions and applications of terms which the Spirit of God is bringing forth as He speaks to His elect. Two of the terms which the Spirit is emphasizing are BRIDESHIP and SONSHIP. Some become confused by these terms and wonder whether there is a difference between the two - or whether the bride and the sons are the one and same company of people. If we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying there need be no confusion at all. God wants us to UNDERSTAND!

It should not take much reflection to reach the conclusion that a bride and a son are NOT the same! If you are a married man with a family, think! - are your wife and your son the same? Though it is evident that they are two separate persons, what is it that really makes the difference? You may answer, "Well, one is female and the other is male." True, but that is still not the basic difference! A member of your family may be female and yet NOT be your wife. She could be your daughter, your mother or your sister. Likewise, a male member of your family may be someone other than your son. So, while it is true that a wife is always feminine and a son is always masculine, the primary difference is one of RELATIONSHIP - the WAY in which they are RELATED to you. In like manner, through the new birth we have come into the God Family - the very universal Family which is GOD! And being birthed into the God Family we are now related to God, we have entered into a FAMILY RELATIONSHIP with Him; true, glorious and eternal kinship to Him in His very own life-form and species!

One can enter God's Family only by birth. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again...he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3,5). "But to as many as did receive ... Him, He gave the authority, power, privilege, right to become the children of God ... who owe their birth neither to bloods, nor to the will of the flesh, nor to the will of man, but to God - they are born of God!" (Jn. 1:12-13, Amplified). Newborn babes in Christ, and all children who have not grown up into spiritual maturity, are always referred to simply as the "children" of God without reference to gender or sex. "Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called "children of God" - and that is not just what we are called, but what we are. Here and now, my dear friends, we are God's children. We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I Jn. 3:1-3, Phillips translation). So you see, precious friend of mine, in our spiritual infancy and immaturity

God does not call us either His SONS or His WIFE but His CHILDREN! A study of the various Greek words for children and sons is most helpful in understanding this truth. "Children" is our first relationship to God in His family. We ARE His children. And what we are ultimately destined to be has not yet come into view or become reality until we pass our spiritual adolescence!

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this truth of relationships. Each of us is related to a great many people in a variety of ways. To my wife I am a husband. To my sons and my daughter I am a father. To my father I am a son. To my brothers I am a brother. To many I am a friend. To others I am an uncle, nephew or cousin. Obviously, this does not make me more than one person. I remain but one individual, but in my relationships to others I am different things. The Lord Jesus is spoken of in scripture as our Father, Brother, Husband, Friend, Master, King, Priest, Judge, etc. etc. Our American President, at the time of this writing (1988), is Ronald Reagan. To many he is "Mr. President" - and rightfully so. But previously he was a Governor. Would it make sense for people to start wrangling over his title as to whether it is Mr. President or Mr. Governor - a generation or two hence? Supposing he were to become a Senator from California at a later date; others a generation hence, might speak of him as The Senator. All of such names and titles are but designations of offices held, of particular relationships the person has had to the people. And yet each is, in a sense, like a DIFFERENT PERSON in each unique relationship!

There are so many profound and beautiful ties between Jesus and the elect, which are shadowed forth in the tender relationships between Adam and Eve; for Adam was in reality both father and mother to Eve, and then she was not only his child, but his sister as well, and also his wife. The same person can stand in varied relationships, filling different roles, while remaining the same person. All the right and natural relationships in which human beings stand to each other are meant to reveal something in God - some relation in which He stands to us. He is as a King to His subjects, giving them laws and governing them for their good. He is as a Father to His children, providing for their needs, training and disciplining them in love to become mature members of the Family of Elohim. But there is something, if one may say so, deeper than even this - something that corresponds to the tenderness of a mother, especially in her gentle power of comforting the weary and wounded spirit of her child. Isaiah cried out in the spirit of wisdom and revelation and declared, "For thus says the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; then you shall be nursed, you shall be carried on her hip, and be trotted on God's maternal knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you" (Isa. 66:12-13, Amplified).

The word "one" in the passage above is in the Hebrew A MAN. And the prophet is not thinking of a little child, but of the grown man. His words are, in the original, "As A MAN whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you." The feminine name of God is EL SHADDAI meaning "the breasted - a woman's breast" and indicates the One who out of maternal bountifulness is the shedder-forth of blessings, comfort, nourishment and life. There is something in God which corresponds to that power of tender mother-comfort, something of which, indeed, earthly mother-comfort is only the shadow, the earthly reflection. Ah the motherhood of God! Consider the wonder of it! And when we get a clear spiritual discernment of these multiplied relationships of God to us, it breaks us into perfect abandonment to Him, and draws us like the resistless tide of a sucking whirlpool, down into the fathomless gulf of His love and all-sufficiency!

## MATURE RELATIONSHIPS

Children are children. Children are not SONS in the scriptural sense, for sons are those who have grown up into the nature and authority of the Father. A girl, as long as she is a child, is neither prepared for nor capable of fulfilling the role of a WIFE. In order to enter into marriage a young girl must pass through years of physical, mental and emotional development. Finally, upon becoming mature in all these areas, she is fitted for marriage and her role as wife. And so is it in God's Family! The term "child" describes the believer in his walk of immaturity in God. But as one begins to grow up into SPIRITUAL MATURITY it is then that the truly feminine and masculine aspects of his or her relationship to God begin to form and become manifest. "Vive la difference!" someone once said. And starting from early childhood we all begin to notice there is indeed a difference. We become increasingly aware of it as we grow up. But it is only as fully developed adults that the true power, potential and purpose of the feminine and masculine attributes find their fulfillment.

The following words by Ray Prinzing are freighted with spiritual wisdom and godly instruction. "There are many relationships that are spoken of in the scriptures, and for years all we heard taught was on 'the bride of Christ.' Then came the unfolding of the precious truths of sonship. And soon the one was pitted against the other with emphasis on the position to be obtained, this greater than that, etc. But we are coming to see that all of these relationships are allegorical - we can draw from them all some needed instruction, but we must not reduce them to physical, carnal realms, and hold them there. And all these allegories serve to bring out the characteristics desired. Bride, groom, son, daughter, friend, etc., these are not positions and realms to which we aspire, they are but allegorical relationships used to help reveal qualities and characteristics which are essential to every believer that desires to become ONE IN HIM, fully conformed to His image and likeness. ONENESS WITH CHRIST in its full reality goes beyond being a bride, or a son, or male, or female. So regardless of the symbol at which we are looking, it is the deeper meaning and truth which we desire, and may the Lord quicken to us this vital instruction for our up-building in Him. To be perfect in Christ, complete, mature, ONE IN HIM, this sums up all the facets used to illustrate our growth and development, characteristics, attributes, etc. Dare we settle for anything less? Can any parabolic example reveal such glory? Each part reveals something unique and wonderful, but they all fall far short of expressing the WHOLE which is SUMMED UP IN CHRIST. He is ALL IN ALL, the fullness that filleth everything with Himself" -end quote.

As God becomes so many things to us, even Mother, so must we become many things to Him. When God created man male and female in His image He revealed that He is Himself male and female in His attributes and nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in all the facets of His nature. We may truly become the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father and many other things as well. The bride relationship bears the feminine nature whereas the sonship relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine nature. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion are among the traits of the masculine sex. Hence the Lord says to the overcomer, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My SON. To him will I give POWER over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with MY FATHER in His throne" (Rev. 21:7; 2:26-27; 3:21).

Modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness and dependence are attributes of the feminine sex. Spiritually, these are the characteristics of the bride of Christ, as the apostle says, "Wives, be subject - be submissive and adapt yourselves - to your own husbands as a service to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Saviour of His body. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things - that she might be holy and faultless" (Eph. 5:22-27, Amplified).

Can we not see by this that brideship bespeaks the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverent submission to Christ, whereas sonship embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength, authority, power and dominion to rule and reign over all things. Ah, beloved, let us never become so overbalanced in our zeal to become SONS OF GOD that we circumvent the marvelous reality of BRIDESHIP! The simple but sublime truth is that THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESHIP! This is why the Spirit has given us in Revelation chapter twelve the example of a glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. It is the inworking of brideship that births the realm of sonship. Jesus said, "I am the WAY, the truth and the life; no man COMETH UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." Your relationship to Christ as a bride will forerun your relationship to the Father as a son. Brideship is the harbinger of sonship. It is through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, made ONE IN HIM IN LOVE that we are initiated into that illustrious glory of strength and dominion over all things as sons of God. This is a true principle in God that I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss!

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

May the Spirit of God help us to understand that it is only in that exquisite relationship where the believing heart completely yields itself to the Spirit, the presence, the mind and the will of God, where the believer proves by his wholehearted response that he totally and truly loves the Lord, that he KNOWS and is KNOWN of God. This is the basis for Israel as a people being given the name "wife of Yahweh," and the chosen ones of this age the intimate title "the bride of Christ." As husband and wife, by means of the act of "knowing" become ONE FLESH, so Christ and the believer, by the spiritual act of "knowing" become ONE SPIRIT. "He that is joined (in union) unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17). The intimate relation and ecstasy here portrayed, are not found in the lives of any but those who are following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

While we write much in these pages of the glorious truth of sonship, we want to contemplate in our meditations at this time what it means to be the bride of Christ. If you have never really fallen in love with the Christ of God - and made HIM YOUR HEAD and ABSOLUTE LORD - don't ever expect to be a son. If you are not truly VIRGIN in your desires toward the Lord; if you are not walking in the Spirit, keeping yourself unto HIM and unto HIM ALONE; if you have never really forsaken the company of the wanton harlot of Mystery Babylon, the carnal religious systems called the church; if you have not renounced the schemes and plans and ambitions of the carnal mind nor abandoned your love of the world and the desires of the flesh - don't expect to be birthed into that glorious company of the sons of God who shall set creation free from bondage and corruption. If you have any other love before Him, any other master that rules your life, any other lord that dictates your actions, any "reserved" areas of your life, then you have not yet learned HOW TO B-E A BRIDE to Christ! One must first BOW in feminine love and submission to Jesus Christ the Lord - as a wife - before he can pass beyond , birthed to stand tall and erect in the majesty and splendor of sonship. it's just that simple. There IS NO OTHER WAY!

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

I think I understand why so often men fall in love with their secretaries and leave their wives. A secretary is TOTALLY DEVOTED to the man by whom she is employed. His every wish is her desire; and a good secretary even anticipates his needs before they arise. Men are always impressed by such devotion in a woman. She has no goals of her own. Her only priority is to meet his needs. And, my beloved, when once we enter into the bride relationship to Christ we lay down our own identity and take upon us a new nature. In the feminine aspect of this nature we learn to yield - obey - this is the action of our will, giving our will over to become aligned with HIS WILL. Submission is more than blind obedience to demands laid upon us, it is the loving surrender of the will, otherwise one will soon revolt and try to throw off the yoke, or find a way of escape. But when it is OUR WILL to do HIS WILL we stand steadfast and carry on. There is a giving up, a surrender of our will, that is, the flesh-motivated will, the carnal-minded will, BUT HIS WILL IN US IS TO BE RETAINED AT ALL COST. God is working in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), and we say "I WILL" in surrender to all of His exercise of His will in us. As one has written, "It seems that many people are more afraid of God's will for their life, than of anything else, as if it would be bad for them, hurt them, cause them distress or pain, to make them miserable, and they seem to fear yielding to His will, as if that would end all the joys of life, and yet they say they want to go to heaven. But surely heaven implies wondrous bliss because HIS WILL IS BEING PERFECTLY DONE THERE. Indeed, heaven is a state or a condition, the glory of which includes perfect oneness in His will. God loves His creation, and the 'will' of love always seeks the best for its loved one. Even in the natural, we would, if we had the power and the means to carry it out, do much more for those we love, simply because it is the nature

and the will of love to do so. It is the hangover of tradition's 'monster God' that causes men to be afraid of God's will, BUT LOVE REMOVES ALL THIS TERROR. How much struggle and friction go out of our lives when we come to the point where we will have God's will, and then rest in the outworking of His will" -Ray Prinzing.

LOVE! Ah, this is the key. There is a call to love HIM so passionately, that everything else appears as hatred in comparison. When we are mere children, we love Him out of a childish, immature love. We love Him primarily for what He GIVES US. When you hear someone testify, "I love the Lord BECAUSE He saved me," or "I love the Lord BECAUSE He healed me," or "I love the Lord BECAUSE He answers my prayers and supplies all my needs," you know that you listen to the testimony of a CHILD, imperfect in love. That kind of talk is like the girl who married a rich man and said, "I love John because he provides me with a million-dollar beach house, a new Mercedes, a mink coat, and \$1000.00 a week spending money!" Obviously, she loves John ONLY FOR HIS MONEY! Should John lose his wealth her love would soon die. And most immature Christians, the "children" of God, profess to love God basically out of these same selfish motives. But a true wife loves her husband FOR WHO AND WHAT HE IS! When a wife really loves her husband, she loves him just as much if they are poor and have nothing. As God brings forth a people into brideship to Christ, this people is coming to love our Lord Jesus Christ FOR WHO HE IS and not because of the blessings and benefits received from His loving hands. Children are always excited about the GIFT, but the bride is excited about the GIVER!

Do we really love Him, or are we merely using Him? Do we know what it means of come into His sweet presence, asking nothing, but only reaching out to HIM with gratitude and thanksgiving for loving us so completely. Haven't we become very selfish and egocentric in our prayers? We will pray to save America from judgment. "Spare us - don't judge us," we cry. "Give us, meet us, help us, bless us, prosper us, use us, protect us" - and that may all be scriptural in its place, but the focus is still on US. Even in our work for Him we have become selfish. We want Him to bless our service to Him to prove our faith is genuine. We want to be considered diligent, capable, successful as a sign of His blessing upon us. But the claims of the Bridegroom are paramount upon the bride - she is to love Him, not for His gifts, not for what He can do for her or make of her, but for HIMSELF!

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

Just this morning I was reading a splendid article by Lyn Gitchel which I am deeply impressed to share with our readers. Lyn writes: "Today, most of God's people, that are aware at all of what He is doing, are readily admitting that we are on the verge of a new day, a new dimension in the Lord. Everywhere you can hear the trumpet call of the message that His kingdom is near. Dry and parched bones are awakening at the sound of His voice and are arising to be prepared as a mighty army to meet the enemy and take the kingdom. The word 'kingdom' is heard more than ever before... and expectancy... is arising in the hearts of those who are waiting for Him.

"All this is good, but I have become aware of one thing. In all the striving for perfection, teaching of the kingdom, and preaching of the gospel of redemption that will be completed this side of eternity, we are strangely far from the real goal of it all. Some are striving for a greater understanding of the scriptures and the things of God, and some for a bigger and better revelation than ever before. Some are striving to become like Him, formed into His image; some are looking to become His dwelling place on this earth. Some are seeking to become mature 'sons,' and others are looking towards becoming the 'order of Melchizedek.' All these are fine goals, but they are not THE GOAL that God intends for us. The goal, and the only goal, is set out in the first commandment which bids us seek God first with every part of our being. To move into Him; to establish a ONENESS WITH HIM - this is the only central goal of it all. So often we are seeking something so close to the real thing - and yet not the real central goal. We seek God in order to receive something from Him - or to be made holy, or like Him in some other way. We seek Him to have Him dwell in us, or to have His power, or joy, or peace. None of these are wrong! They are just not the goal!

"What kind of response do you think you would get if you were moving into a love relationship, with the intention of marrying that person, and then, when they asked you why you wanted to enter into that depth of relationship with them you replied, 'So that I can become like you!' or, 'So that I can have your power!' Too often that is the way we look at God. We have sought to come close to Him so that we might become like Him, or so that His power might be seen in us. Both are admirable desires, but they are not desires that will be fulfilling to the heart of God. He wants us to draw close to Him, not that we might become like Him, or that His nature be found in us (though, inevitably, that will happen), but solely to draw close to Him BECAUSE WE LOVE HIM FOR WHAT HE IS. He wants us to come to Him WITH NO OTHER INTENTION in our hearts but to fellowship with Him, to love Him, and to appreciate Him, sharing with Him all the love-flow of our hearts. Everything else, no matter how fine a goal, must be second to that!" -end quote.

To the venerable prophet banished to the desolation of Patmos came the rousing command, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). To understand what the Spirit means by the term "bride" we must break away from our western concepts of what a bride is. Bride in Hebrew is KALLAH meaning "the completed one" or "the perfected one." It reveals the concept of a woman being completed once she is married to her husband - and, as Paul so beautifully expresses it, "YE are COMPLETE IN HIM!" When two become one - right man - right woman - they are totally dependent upon each other. They will never be anything without the other again. Each sex is incomplete without the other. In Genesis, before ever Adam named the woman God took and builded from his being, he did some explaining. The Hebrew actually reads, "And Adam said, This one (she) now bone from my bones, flesh from my flesh, this one, (she) shall be called woman (ISHAH), because this one, (she) was taken from man (ISH)"

(Gen. 2:23). Adam said, "This-now," or literally, "this one, she." There is no verb here. You don't need a verb at a time like this! Remember, the Lord is bringing to him the most perfect and beautiful woman ever formed. It just took his breath away when he saw her! "This one, she bone from my bones" - Adam knew that something was missing from his very being and that this woman would complete him. What was missing would come back with INTEREST. So he adds, "Flesh from my flesh, this one, she, shall be called ISHAH (woman)." Why? Because she was taken out of ISH (man)! Once the woman is given to him they become ISH and ISHAH. When ISH and ISHAH are joined together they become ONE; he fulfills her and she completes him. She is the bride, the "completed one," the "perfected one."

In Rev. 21:9 the messenger entreats the apostle John, "Come hither, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." The message is clear - "Come hither and I will show you a COMPLETED PERSON, a PERFECTED PERSON, or, if you please, a CORPORATE BODY OF COMPLETED AND PERFECTED PEOPLE!" The holy city of New Jerusalem is the beautiful symbolical representation of the virtues, nature and glory of the Lamb's bride. Meditate deeply, precious child of God, on the symbolisms of that city, for they serve as an instruction manual outlining the processes by which one is ushered in to that most precious and intimate and glorious relationship with God's Lamb.

## **THE BRIDEGROOM**

We are told that: in this, our day, shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten virgins. Virgins are pure and undefiled: not the common run of Christians who have defiled themselves with every lover-idol they can find and have departed from a walk in the Spirit of God and slithered off into the ditch, there to slop and flounder around in error and deception and ignorance and fleshly religious activities of every kind. Virgins are not even defiled with women - with the organized church systems. They follow the Lamb whithersoever HE GOES, and not human leaders who have set themselves up between Christ and His saints (Rev. 14:4).

These ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Not very many people who name the name of Christ are doing that! Not very many know who or what the Bridegroom is, and therefore do not know where or how to meet Him. Not very many Bible students even suspect that the coming of the Bridegroom is different than the coming of the King or the coming of Christ in other dimensions. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. All their fuss and stir will be in vain. For no one will ever go "up" to meet Him! There is not one scripture in the entire Bible that speaks of being "caught up" to meet the Bridegroom or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They have confused His coming as the Sun of Righteousness with His coming as Judge. They have confounded His coming as a refiner's fire with His coming as the rain. They have mistaken His coming WITH His saints for His coming IN His saints. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom. To their unenlightened minds there is but one single coming of Christ when He crashes down through the clouds of earth's atmosphere. Most saints today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be all ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. But not so with the virgins. They are in the right place at the right time, and all looking for a very blessed

event - the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom. And they are spiritually intelligent enough to know that no one will ever go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. But in order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go "out." "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him" (Mat. 25:6). And the only way one may go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is to "come out" from among the world and the flesh and the harlot churches with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union.

The cry was, "Behold the Bridegroom!" This addresses the heart. It is not an historic event. As sure as you hold any truth intellectually you will eventually become an opposer of it. If you hold the coming of the Lord as a singular historic event I am bold to say that He will come and you will not recognize Him in His coming and you will oppose Him when He comes just as did the Jews of old. The coming of the Bridegroom is that revelation of the Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. You cannot understand the relationship of the bride until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name of bride expresses until you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. And this is a present reality! If you say the bride is only future, if you say the coming of the bridegroom is in the sweet bye and bye, you ignore the words, "The Spirit and the bride SAY, COME" (Rev. 22:17). When I know that I am united to the Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it. A wife is one who has reached full maturity, one who has given herself completely and unreservedly for her lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take his. She has left all to follow him. The result of such a union is, as stated by Paul in Rom. 7:4, "that we should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

The word "bridegroom" is from the Hebrew CHATHAN of which the root meaning is "to contract affinity." According to Webster affinity carries these shades of meaning: 1. relationship by marriage. 2. close relationship; connection. 3. a similarity or likeness implying common origin. 4. a spontaneous attraction to, or liking for, a person or thing. 5. a person of the opposite sex who especially attracts one. 6. the force that causes the atoms of certain elements to combine and stay combined.

For millenniums it has been believed that people who have the same birthdates, the same hour of birth, and were born on the same longitude and latitude generally live parallel lives. It is an affinity - a relationship, resemblance, likeness, connection, correspondence under the stars. Joseph Goodavage recorded the true story of two unrelated women who met for the first time in a hospital room in Hackensack, New Jersey in 1939. Their last names were Hanna and Osborne, but they had the same first name - Edna. Each woman had a baby at the same time; the babies weighed the same and were given the same name - Patricia Edna. Here is what their conversation revealed: both husbands were named Harold. Each Harold was in the same business and owned the same make, model, and color car. The Hannas and the Osbornes had been married exactly three and a half years and had the same anniversary. The babies were their first. Both fathers were born in the same year, month, and day. The mothers too had the same birthdates - and the same number of brothers and sisters. Each Edna was a blue-eyed brunette, same height, same weight, and wore the same size clothes. Each family owned a dog named Spot - same mixed breed, same size, and same age.

AFFINITY means you have the same genetic makeup, you have the same thoughts, the same ideas, the same emotions, the same actions, even when you are not physically

together. It is to be like another person. Bridegroom means AFFINITY - TO CONTRACT AFFINITY! The Bridegroom agrees, yea, purposes to spiritually bring affinity into the life of His COMPLETED PERSON. As the bride you will yield yourself to the process of completion and perfection in the Christ, but as Bridegroom HE IS DETERMINED THAT IT WILL HAPPEN! He is resolved that this high and holy calling be your destiny. First He attracts you, He allures you, charms you, draws you, captivates you with His love. Then He invites you to a contract, an agreement, a covenant. By the terms of that contract you WILL come into oneness with the Christ and by the very genes of your new creation life you will think and purpose and act like Him in all things. Hallelujah!

"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).

The Bridegroom has special qualifications. He must love the bride in a special way; He must give Himself to her; He must make a vow to her and enter into a covenant relationship with her. He is fully responsible for loving and providing for her every need. There are six things listed in the passage above that the Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom, assumes as *HIS responsibility*:

1. Loving her
2. Giving to her
3. Sanctifying her
4. Cleansing her
5. Presenting her to Himself proudly
6. Nourishing and cherishing her.

It is interesting to note one characteristic that is significantly missing from this list. Have you noticed that there is never any CHASTISEMENT spoken of in scripture with regard to the bride? The Bible says that sons are corrected and chastised, but the bride is not in any way punished! Hers is a love relationship whereby she does what pleases her Lord just because of who she is - His bride. It is the RELATIONSHIP that is the emphasis when the bride is spoken of, not the usefulness. The sons are chastened and corrected because they are given great power and authority, but the bride is loved, cherished, nourished, attired, cleansed and made beautiful because she is made ONE IN HIM. Sons are taught how to use great power and glory, whereas the bride is instructed how to fulfill and complete her husband.

The question is arising in some minds: "What company am I in? Which am I apprehended to? Am I destined to be of the bride company, or a member of the manchild? Which should I DESIRE to be? Can I be BOTH? Is there really a difference - a separation between the two?"

Ah, my beloved, we have had such a veil over our minds! May the blessed Spirit of truth quicken the understanding of all who read these lines to see and discern that what the revelation of God teaches is just this: the WOMAN gives birth to the MANCHILD - THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESHIP! It is the relationship of brideship that births the reality of sonship. One must fall madly, fiercely, intensely in love with the Lord Jesus Christ, making Him Head and Absolute Lord, keeping oneself unto Him and Him alone, entering the secret chamber of His love, reserving nothing unto oneself. We must first BOW in

feminine love and submission before we can be birthed to stand tall and erect in the majesty of sonship unto God. There is NO OTHER WAY!

Union with Christ is most assuredly NOT a physical union. To be the bride of Christ does not mean that we experience a physical love relationship with Jesus. It is, rather, a spiritual union, joined to the Lord as ONE SPIRIT. Since it is a spiritual union it does not necessitate the PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF THE MAN JESUS as Bridegroom. Gaze not, my brother, my sister, into the sky to behold Him coming down through the clouds. You will never see the Bridegroom riding upon a cloud should you stare into the heavens for long millenniums to come. The coming of the Bridegroom is a spiritual coming forth of the Lord unto His elect bride. Do you not now hear the cry reverberating down the corridors of your soul - "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!"

So many Christians today are satisfied with merely an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Their eyes are blinded to eternal values, and any efforts to lead them on to higher ground are rebuffed and resisted by a human reasoning which asks why one should waste time on them since they are saved. But salvation, while it is the most astounding miracle of the ages, yet is the birth of a MERE SPIRITUAL INFANT. There are many further steps which must follow this birth if one is to come into all the glories and the full heritage which is prepared for those who follow on to know the Lord. And not one of us has come all the way up to our full privileges in Christ. There is great glory and heavenly wealth awaiting those who become fully equipped unto God's great plan and purposes. Salvation is nothing more than the beginning of an eternal, heavenly, God-kind of life. Then the recipient may remain a baby spirit delighting only in the FACT of its childish spiritual existence. Salvation is a free gift, through unmerited mercy and favor: a new heavenly life begun by means of the new birth. But the outworking of the divine PURPOSE for that life is realized only by those who have salvation, and then go on to grow up into the "measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ."

May God help us to truly BE A BRIDE that we may also learn how to BE A SON that God may in and through us BE ALL IN ALL!

# *Chapter 28*

## *The Coming Of The Bridegroom*

### *(continued)*

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; go ye out to meet Him" (Mat. 25:6). "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

The revelation of Christ as the Bridegroom permeates His teaching and His parables and suggests the grand truth to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. More than once He refers to Himself in His utterances as the Bridegroom. The solemn midnight cry raised by the expectant throng is, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh," and they that are ready are represented as accompanying Him to the marriage. He speaks of His disciples as "children of the bride chamber," who at that time had the Bridegroom with them. He alludes to "the wedding" in the earnest exhortation which He utters, impressing upon His disciples the necessity of being prepared for His coming as Bridegroom. And He suggests the true purpose of all God's dealings with man in the parable of the wedding feast, whose opening words declare that "a certain king made a marriage for his son."

The cry was, "Behold the Bridegroom!" This addresses the heart. It is not an historic event. As sure as you hold any truth intellectually you will eventually become an opposer of it. If you hold the coming of the Lord as a singular historic event I am bold to say that He will come and you will not recognize Him in His coming and you will oppose Him when He comes just as did the Jews of old. The coming of the Bridegroom is that revelation of the Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. You cannot understand the relationship of the bride until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name of bride expresses until you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. And this is a present reality! When I know that I am united to the Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it. A wife is one who has reached full maturity, one who has given herself completely and unreservedly for her lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take his. She has left all to follow him. The result of such a union is, as stated by Paul in Rom. 7:4, "that we should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

It was to the church which is His body that Paul wrote, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" (Eph. 5:31-32). It was also to the church that Paul addressed these significant words, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to HIM who is raised from the dead..." (Rom. 7:4). Again, it was to the members of the church that Paul explained, "For I am jealous over you with godly

jealousy: for I have espoused you to ONE HUSBAND, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to CHRIST" (II Cor. 11:2). I have heard great stress laid upon the fact that the bride of Christ consists of a body corporate, not of the individual; and therefore that we cannot, without irreverence and impropriety, personally experience Jesus Christ as the spiritual Husband of the individual soul. I readily admit the fact, but I demur to the inference. The church, though a body, is made up of individuals; and it is as an aggregation of individualities, each containing its own individuality, and not a unit - in which individuality is sunk and the individual absorbed - that the church is to be presented to Christ. We no more believe in the absorption of the individual in the church than we entertain the notion espoused by the eastern religions of the absorption of all things into God in such a way that all identity is lost.

The body of Christ is now multiplied by thousands, and it is not just one little girl that Christ will receive but a corporate bride composed of a vast multitude of individual members. The point is just this: all that happens to the corporate body must be experienced by each member - it is first and foremost the experience of each member that finally constitutes the experience of the whole. If I do not know Christ PERSONALLY as my Bridegroom, it is impossible for me to be a part of that corporate body which is joined into union with Him. Let us by all means remember that we are to be perfected in One; but let not this check the outflow of our individual affection to Him with whom, in some strange way, we are to be thus closely related. The thought of this intimate relationship loses all its warmth, and even its reality, when we miss or eliminate the personal element in it. We teach the sinner to see in "God so loved the world," God loved ME. Surely we can't be wrong in seeing in "Christ loved the church," Christ loved ME!

It is a precious experience when any child of God begins to understand PERSONALLY something of the import of these prophetic words, "In that day thou shalt call me no more Baali (that is, my lord); but thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband)." And there are moments when His voice seems to sound in our ears, as though we heard Him say, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider ... forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty: for He is thy Lord God; and worship thou Him." He is the Bridegroom of the corporate bride, but our love and relation to Him is to be as gloriously personal as though to each of us He had made this revelation of Himself, and to no other. Let it be the one work of our lives to fit ourselves for the enjoyment of this wondrously close relationship to Him. Let all lower affections be dominated by this one, and all that is unworthy of this be renounced. We are espoused to Christ. We are to be presented as a chaste virgin to Him. Oh let us be true to His claims upon us, and gladly sacrifice all that keeps us back from full self-surrender to Him. So shall the King have pleasure in us, and we shall find our crown of eternal fulfillment in HIM.

## **THE BRIDEGROOM WITHIN**

In our consideration of the Bridegroom and the bride we need to remember that first of all these precious realities are fulfilled in us personally. Christ is not just in some far-off heaven somewhere; for us He is our hope of glory, and it is CHRIST IN YOU. That is a phrase of inexhaustible wonder - "Christ in you." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not 1, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME" (Gal. 2:20). "For He abideth with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU" (Jn. 14:17). "He shall be IN you." In these simple words our Lord announces that wonderful mystery of His indwelling which was to be the fruit and the crown of His redeeming work. It was for this man had been created. It was for this, God's

mastery within the heart, the Spirit had striven with men through the past ages. It was for this Jesus had lived and was about to die. Dwelling in them, He would prepare them to receive Himself as their Lord - as Bridegroom. We will never understand the deep mystery of the Bridegroom and the bride until we know that Christ is the Bridegroom and that Christ lives in us. If you give godly consideration to these simple truths, you cannot avoid the conclusion that THE BRIDEGROOM IS IN YOU. There is a place within you where the Bridegroom dwells and He comes out of that place and woos you into relationship with Himself.

Suppose someone wants to visit me. He must first find where I live. If he cannot locate my home, he will have to forfeit his visit. Although there is much talk about Christ living in us, many Christians have no idea where He dwells. In Rom. 8:9-10 we read, "...the Spirit of God dwelleth in you...and if Christ be in you, the body is dead ... but the spirit is life." Rom. 8:9 refers without doubt to the Holy Spirit of God, but verse 10 speaks of the human spirit. "The body is dead...but the spirit is life." Of course, the Holy Spirit cannot be compared with our body. The contrast is between what is true in OUR BODY and what is true in OUR SPIRIT. If Christ is in us our body (the earth man) is dead, but our spirit is life, quickened and energized by HIS INDWELLING LIFE.

"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). This verse speaks of two distinct "spirits": one is capitalized and the other is not. The first occurrence of the word refers to the Holy Spirit, and the second to the spirit of man. That which is born of the Holy Spirit is the human spirit. Another verse showing these two "spirits" is Jn. 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit." Again, the first "Spirit" is capitalized and the second is not. We must worship God, who is the Spirit, in our human spirit. Rom. 8:16 further confirms the existence of two spirits: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The pronoun "our" definitely designates the human spirit and removes any ground to doubt the reality of both the divine Spirit and the human spirit.

Bible translators have found it very difficult to decide whether "spirit" in some passages refers to the Holy Spirit or the spirit of man. The reason for this difficulty is that in the believer the Holy Spirit and the human spirit are joined together as one spirit! "He that is JOINED unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17). We are one spirit with the Lord, but one which is clearly joined with the Holy Spirit. It is like joining hydrogen and oxygen to make water. Such a united spirit makes it difficult for anyone to say whether this is the Holy Spirit or the human spirit. The two are compounded as one. We may say it is the Holy Spirit, and yet we can also say it is the human spirit. Sometimes we make a beverage by mixing two kinds of juices - apple and cranberry. After it is mixed it is difficult by taste to tell what kind of juice it is. Is it apple or cranberry? We would have to call it apple-cranberry. In the realm of the spirit it is wonderful to see that the two spirits, the Holy Spirit joined with our spirit, ARE ONE SPIRIT.

Ah - Christ is in us, but where within us is He? In what part? It is abundantly clear - Christ today is in our spirit. We should not be so vague, like many who say, "Oh, the Lord is in you and the Lord is in me." The last verse of II Tim. 4 definitely states that Christ is in our spirit. "The Lord be with thy spirit" (II Tim. 4:22). The preposition "with" is from the Greek SUN which denotes "union." The Lord is in union with our spirit! There is a mighty working taking place within God's people - no more to have that duality - our spirit, His Spirit, but to be so fully merged into one with Him that HIS Spirit is mine, and my spirit, quickened by His Spirit, is swallowed up into His. "There is ONE SPIRIT" (Eph. 4:4), says

the apostle. That one spirit is neither the Holy Spirit nor our spirit - it is His Spirit joined to our spirit - for "He that is joined to the Lord I-S O-N-E SPIRIT."

He that is JOINED TO THE LORD IS ... The unregenerate man is not one spirit with the Lord. The spirit of the unregenerated man is DEAD, and is therefore UNRESPONSIVE to that sphere from which man fell, which is the sphere of life in the spirit. The natural man is a lamp that is not lit, lacking the essence-life of God. A fallen man, dead as he is in spirit, can only live by the senses of the flesh. But we who have been born again from above have a quickened spirit, are made alive unto that higher dimension, and can live by the spirit. God has quickened us so that we can return to the spirit and live by the spirit.

The truth of the revelation of Christ in you is not a revelation of "The True Self," or "The Real You," or "The Inner You," or "The Christ Consciousness," of pagan eastern philosophy and its hybrid, metaphysical Christianity. Until a man receives birth from above by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, his "Inner Self" is just as profane as his "Outer Self" and ALL SELF MUST GO. The complete self, the whole man: spirit, soul and body, must submit and bow to the power and life of the transforming Holy Spirit, the Christ of God. This, then, is the revelation of "Not I," but of "He that dwelleth in me." Many have erroneously perverted the real truth of "Christ in you" and have identified the inherent, unquickened, unregenerated spirit of the natural man with the "Inner Self" of Unity School of Thought, Science of Mind, Christian Science, etc. etc. They give place to their own corrupted "Inner Self" disguised as "the Christ." This self-transformation is not Christ; it is satanic. Satan is the great "Self-Transformer" who "transforms himSELF into an angel of light" (II Cor. 11:14). Whenever you try to "make yourself" like the Most High, this is the gross deception of Satan and this unclean spirit will deceive the very elect, if it were possible. But of those who have bowed low before the Christ of God, whose spirits have been lighted by His Spirit, it is written, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:9, 15-17).

The reverent heart is made to wonder at the unmistakable simplicity of the ways of God. Long centuries ago the apostle penned these meaningful words, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). This verse tells us that GOD is the FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS! Ah, He is not the Father of your empty religious rituals and static creeds; He is not the Father of your denomination; He is not the Father of your flesh; He is not the Father of your carnal mind, your self-will, or your fleshly emotions. He is not the Father of those whose father is the devil. You can never meet God in any of those realms - He is not there. God is the God of your spirit, you must be in your spirit to be with God and touch God. Today I am sitting in my office in El Paso, Texas. If you go to Dallas you will miss me. If you go on any other street, you will miss me. If you stand outside my house on the street corner, you will miss me. You must come to the door and enter my dwelling to be where I am and know me. And you must enter in to where God is to know Him. God is the God of our spirits! We all need to turn to the spirit. From thence is the fountain of all life!

It is a blessed day for any man when he makes the amazing discovery that Christ Himself is the Bridegroom; that this Christ is in our spirit; that the Bridegroom is thus in our spirit; that the coming of the Bridegroom is W-I-T-H-I-N!

## **THE BRIDE WITHIN**

It should be obvious to every thinking mind that if the Bridegroom is within, the bride is likewise to be found within. Marriage is the conjunction of two into one. When these two enter into union, they are called one. There is, therefore, a part of our being which must be wooed by Christ in our spirit and brought into relationship and oneness in Him. Bride in Hebrew is KALLAH meaning "the completed one" or "the perfected one." It reveals the concept of a woman being completed once she is married to her husband - and, as Paul so beautifully expresses it, "YE are COMPLETE IN HIM!" In order to identify this bride within we must understand what part of us it is that must be perfected. The bride is a woman, a female. **THE BRIDE IS THE FEMALE PART OF YOU.** Your SOUL is the female part of your being; therefore your soul is the woman or the bride of Christ who is in your spirit. For a clear picture of this truth I call your attention to the awe-inspiring wonder of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.

The story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden is the greatest parable in the Bible. It is supremely important because it explains the real nature of our life here on earth. It tells us about ourselves, it portrays in vivid imagery our state of being, our fall and redemption, and our destiny in God. It is the blueprint of spiritual anatomy. If you thoroughly understand Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden you will understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the ground-plan for the outworking of the purposes of God through the ages. There is one thing about which God's people must be perfectly clear. The Bible is not primarily intended to teach history, or biography, or geography, or natural science. It is intended to teach **DIVINE PRINCIPLES AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES.**

When we come to the garden of Eden it is evident that this is more than merely a piece of real estate somewhere over in Mesopotamia! No such place has ever been found, neither the angel with the flaming sword to keep men out. The garden of God is not a geographical spot located on this or any other planet. It is a **STATE OF BEING.** It is the state of being that man was in when he was first brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed here upon earth. It represents man in the presence of God, man with the incorruptible life of God available to him, man with the potential as master and lord over all things, man with the capability of living above sin, sickness, pain and death. Blessed realities, one and all! And yet - the Garden also represents man together with all the factors and conditions, both internal and external, of being and environment, which ultimately were to lead to his ruin and alienation from God. In one sense, man **WAS** the Garden. And yet, man was **IN** the Garden. The Bible reveals it as a "Garden within a Garden." Man both in a state of being and an environment - the two corresponding. All the conditions that surrounded man were also obvious realities within the heart of man. The original man with his nature, characteristics, capabilities, propensities and potentials is what we see in the garden of Eden. The external conditions of man's environment corresponded precisely with man's inward nature for either good or evil, life or death. This was man in the Garden! It is a Garden within a Garden, a world within a world. "And the Lord planted a Garden eastward in Eden (a pleasant land.)"

In the garden of Eden many people seem to think that Eve symbolizes woman as a sex, and that Adam somehow stands for man as a sex. The truth far transcends this! Adam

and Eve represent one person. They represent the whole of humanity in the first Adam. They represent everyman. They represent you and me and every other man and woman on the globe. They stand for man as we know him, with all his capacities, propensities and potentials, under the gracious hand of God, guided from innocence to sin, from sin to salvation, and from salvation to THE IMAGE OF GOD.

On a day in the long ago an apostle by the name of Paul penned these telling words: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent BEGUILED EVE through his subtlety, so YOUR MINDS should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:2-3). In this significant passage Eve in the garden of Eden is contrasted with two things: the bride of Christ and the mind. The mind is a function of the soul. The vision of the bride of Christ pervades the whole of scripture, from Eden onward, with ever-increasing clearness. Eve, the mother of the human race, is the first type of this great mystery. Let us not underestimate this remarkable woman from whom the whole human race has sprung!

In that ancient shadow Adam stands as a type of the spirit, Eve is a type of the soul, and the garden of Eden is a type of the body, which Adam was to "dress and keep." Thus we see our tripartite being symbolically portrayed in the Adam-Eve-Garden story. The Garden was the earth, the land, the locale; and Adam and Eve were its inhabitants, in the same way that our spirit and soul are the inhabitants of the physical body. It is through our "Eve," our soulical desires, will and emotions, that we who have been espoused to Christ the Bridegroom in our spirit, can be "beguiled" and turned from our single and pure devotion to Christ, entering into intimate associations with the flesh, the world, the spirit of Babylon, and the devil, thus disqualifying ourselves from being presented to Christ as a chaste virgin. Paul shows that just as Eve was beguiled from her singleness to God, so those espoused to Christ can be corrupted IN OUR MINDS from singleness to Christ.

Ray Prinzing has written: "The 'spirit of man', leaving the eternal realms of HIS SPIRIT to become encased in a tabernacle of flesh became 'a living soul', literally A BREATHING ONE on this earth plane. The MIND is the connecting link between the spirit within and the flesh realm without. 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded (that is, minding of the flesh) is death; but to be spiritually minded (minding of the Spirit) is life and peace' (Rom. 8:5-6). As one living and breathing on this earth plane, we will either mind the flesh, or the Spirit. When we take the word 'soul' over into the Greek of the New Testament, we find it expressed in the word PSUCHE, which literally bespeaks of the mind. One is not always conscious of their inner spirit, nor are we always conscious of our flesh body - for we live in the realm of THE MIND, and it is active twenty-four hours of the day, whether we wake or sleep. The soul, mind realm, bespeaks of the mental power to reason, of those mental forces that urge us into action, of the exercise of the will. If this is directed towards the things of the flesh, it means death - for all this flesh realm shall pass away and come to nothing. If our mind is directed towards the things of the Spirit, it means life and peace, for in Him alone are the eternal realities" -end quote.

Let us meditate deeply upon the soul-bride that Eve reveals to us. I must remind every reader of these lines that there is an essential and radical distinction between the spirit and the soul. God is the Father of spirits, but He is the Former of souls. I know not why this has been forgotten by the church world, and I know not why men claiming to be Christian scholars have never told you that the soul is not the spirit, and the spirit is not

the soul. It seems to me a remarkable thing, that that which God has so clearly revealed, the distinction between the soul and the spirit, men have, through their ignorance and devotion to a false platonic philosophy, been unable to see. If you read your Bible carefully, starting with the first chapter of Genesis, you will find that what the apostle says in the epistle to the Hebrews is true; that the Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder, separating soul and spirit. It is not the philosophy of Socrates or Plato that does this. It is not the philosophy of Kant or Hegel or Strauss that does this. It is not the philosophy of the Hindu or the Buddhist or the Transcendentalist that does this, but it is the Word of God that separates. In the same way that God separated Eve from Adam, the Spirit of God separates between the soul and the spirit of man.

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

Romans chapter eight speaks of the spirit and gives us a wonderful clue. In verse two the apostle refers to "the spirit of life." In verse six he says, "to be spiritually minded is life." In verse ten he adds, "the spirit is life..." In these three statements he shows us that the spirit is the spirit of life, the spirit is related to life, contains life and belongs to life. When a man's spirit is quickened by the Holy Spirit, God enters into man by His Spirit, so that man may have the life of God inwardly. At this time He enters into us as the Spirit of life, the Spirit of the life of God. Notice! He enters into us with the life of God as the SPIRIT OF LIFE. When He enters, He enters into OUR SPIRIT, not into our soul - our mind, emotion, or will. He enters into our SPIRIT, puts the life of God in our SPIRIT, and dwells in our SPIRIT; thus the Spirit of life is joined together with our spirit so that God and us are joined as one and never be separated.

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

The soul is our individual personality, our ego; therefore the soul is our self. That which is included in the soul, analytically speaking, is the mind, the emotion and the will - these three parts. The mind is the organ of man's thinking. It is what we usually speak of as the brain; physiologically it is the brain, but psychologically it is the mind. It is the dominant part of the soul. Man's thinking, reasoning, memorizing are all functions of the mind in the soul. The emotion in the soul is the organ of man in love, hatred, sorrow, joy, etc. Man rejoices, mourns, is excited or depressed; these are all functions of the emotion in man's soul. There are many people who are emotional, easily stirred to be ecstatic or sad, animated or depressed. They often deal with matters by their emotion rather than by

careful deliberation. The will of the soul is the organ of man's decision making, deliberation and determination. Man decides judges, chooses, accepts, rejects - these are all functions of the will in man's soul. These three parts are present in every man, for every man has the quality of soul.

Regardless of whether a man is in the mind, the emotion, or the will, he is soulish. Every man that lives by these senses apart from the mind, will and emotion of the spirit, is a soulish man. Therefore it is very easy to discern whether a man is soulish. I would be remiss if I did not point out that the soul can be moved upon to act religiously - and what a fine act it is able to perform! But forget not for one moment, precious friend of mine, that in spite of its "religious" appearance, it is still the soul! The soul can be taken into a meeting where a religious atmosphere is created by a man at the pulpit; with a suave and dynamic personality he tells you to stand up, clap your hands, sing, raise your hands, praise the Lord, say Amen, etc. The emotion of your soul is stirred and takes on the appearance of spirituality. Now, there is nothing wrong with standing, clapping, singing, raising the hands and praising the Lord. There is nothing wrong with religious activities, good works, good behavior, etc. The real issue, however, is the SOURCE of these things. Are they a spontaneous outflow of HIS LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, or are they merely contrived actions of the soul? Ah, better that the soul behaves than that it misbehaves! Better that it sings the songs of Zion, than the perverted music of the world! Better that it praises the Lord than that it utters vulgarities! But we do not want to mistake that which is soulish for that which is spiritual. If none of these "good" things are motivated from within by the spirit, it is still naught but the vanity of the flesh.

If we can recognize what kind of person is soulish, it is not difficult to realize what kind of person is spiritual. Since a soulish person lives by the mind, emotion, or will, a spiritual person is one who does not live by these. A spiritual person must live in the spirit, act by the spirit, speak out of the spirit and not the soul. They allow the spirit to be the master and source of all their action and behavior. The spirit in them occupies the pre-eminent position; it is the source of their behavior and the starting point of their action. The soul in them is in the position of submission under the government of the spirit and dominated by the spirit. They are not like soulish persons, who let the soul be the master in everything; they deny the pre-eminence of their own mind, will and emotion. Thus they allow the spirit to BE LORD in them; they allow the spirit to direct their whole being so that they become the expression of the spirit. Whenever they encounter a situation they do not draw from their mind, will or emotion to deal with it; rather they draw from their spirit first to understand and comprehend it, seeking first in the spirit for the Lord's mind and purpose in the matter. These are spiritual, living by the life of the spirit, and the soul is but a vehicle of expression for the spirit. Praise God! it is the ONE SPIRIT that becomes the Bridegroom that ultimately is fully joined to the soul - receives the soul into itself.

## **THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB**

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour unto Him: for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

When God created man in His own image he was ONE, not separated in the beginning into two persons. Thus he remained until the Lord separated the feminine from the masculine, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, to exist separately. Within the one man's nature were both masculine and feminine elements, all the possibilities of male and female, all the potential of fruit and of power, wisdom and love, strength and nurture.

This spiritual man, being a son of God, possessed that perfect chaste virgin WITHIN HIMSELF and could have replenished the whole earth with his kind in God's image by a word of power.

We shall not in this article consider the process by which God separated the female from the male, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, but we should carefully point out that following this separation, though existing in two bodies, and two personalities, inspiration declares in both the Old Testament and in the New that the man and his wife were ONE FLESH. Husbands and wives, according to the ordinance of Almighty God, are ONE FLESH, ONE UNIT, yea, ONE PERSON. The "thus saith the Lord" concerning the matter is simply stated in these inspired words: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and the TWO shall become ONE FLESH, so that they are NO LONGER TWO, but ONE FLESH. What therefore God has united - joined together - let not man separate or divide" (Mk. 10:6-9, KJV & Amplified).

It was not the burning self-desire of Adam that caused Eve to come forth, but the purpose of God. It was God Himself who initiated the whole process, for the record states, "And the LORD GOD said, It is NOT GOOD for the man to be alone; I WILL MAKE him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). "Meet" is an old English word meaning "suitable, fit, proper." The whole flavor of the word "meet" is to fit, join, combine, agree, be in union, be together. No hostility here! No war between the sexes. And no division. God made a help to fit, join, combine, agree, be in union, yes, to be ONE with Adam!

When Eve had been built by the skillful hand of the Creator we read that He "brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:22). I cannot conceive of anything more explicit and meaningful than that wonderful type. I say to every soul reading these lines, Have you been brought to Christ where Christ is? If you do not know union with the Christ in your spirit, you will never know union with Him in the sky nor in any heaven anywhere in all of God's great universe. And know this, oh man, you cannot be spiritual by effort. Many seek to be spiritual by prayer, reading the Word, devotedness, attending meetings; but the only pathway to it is to be brought by the Spirit to realize union with Christ. You are spiritual by union. What was Eve's thought when her eyes first rested upon Adam? I doubt not that she was completely overwhelmed and immediately drawn by irresistible cords of love and passionate desire to find union with him.

The allegory of lover and beloved, bride and groom, union of marriage, gives to us one of the best examples of the ONENESS which we desire to share with Christ, which we desire within our own selves, the union of soul and spirit. We are weary of the realm of duality and separation. We are tired of speaking in tongues one minute and flying off the handle the next. From the time when Christ came into our lives we have battled this dualness - our mind often pulled to the direction of the flesh, our spirit yearning for that life from above which alone would satisfy. Thank God! the Spirit of Christ within is gaining the ascendancy as the soul becomes more and more subdued. But the prayer remains, "that they all may be ONE..."

Long millenniums ago the aged prophet-king of Israel articulated the deepest cry of the soul-bride for her beloved, saying, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth MY SOUL after THEE, O God. My SOUL thirsteth for GOD, for the living God..." (Ps. 42:1-2). As a woman yearns for union with her husband, so the soul longs for reunion with Christ. We cannot comprehend what fearful loss befell the man in Eden when the

woman was severed from him. All the female qualities such as tenderness, patience, longsuffering, intuition, nurture, gentleness, submissiveness, and succour were to a large degree taken from him and embodied in Eve. But consider also what the woman lost in strength, wisdom, courage, bravery, energy, stamina, and much more. Nature has created the fundamental urge of every human being for re-union with its counterpart - to find itself again in WHOLENESS. Just as there is the natural drive for union with the opposite sex, there is also within the soul the intense thirsting for union with God. But this urge exists not only within the soul - it is just as powerful in the spirit! This is the meaning of the mystery that every human being goes through a "mating season." In the natural, it is the man who courts the woman and is the aggressor. It is the boy who chases the girl. The bride of Christ has now entered a great "mating season" of reunion with God. In His appointed times the spirit within does the courting in his own way as He woos the soul and draws our desires and affections unto Himself. There is to be a unification within, so that all our soul realm is swallowed up into the life of the spirit dwelling in us, and brings us into the personal experience of THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

When in the distant mists of Eden the Creator presented Eve to Adam, he had an immediate name for what Eve obviously was. Not her given name, Eve, as we term it in English, but what KIND of creature she was. Hebrew is simpler than English, and more plainly explains exactly what a woman is. ISH is the Hebrew word for "man" and ISHA is the feminine form of ISH or "man." You merely add a single letter to the word which stands for man, making it feminine, to define the quality of difference: sex. ISH is masculine, ISHA is feminine, but both mean "man." So Adam said, "Now here is bone exactly like my bone, and flesh exactly like my flesh; because she was built from what was taken from me, I will call her ISHA - a FEMALE MAN! And God confirmed Adam's understanding that they were both EXACTLY ALIKE despite the obvious outward differences: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called THEIR name ADAM, in the day when they were created" (Gen. 5:1-2). To both God and Adam it was ONE CREATION "in the image of God."

There was no inequality even considered. No superiority or inferiority alluded to. No hint of Eve's being a second-class creation. Differences, yes. But differences do not make for an inferior or superior individual, they only make him a different individual. Women can have babies, men can't. That's a difference. Men generally have a stronger musculature than women - that's a difference. Trying to prove equality between the sexes by playing the other fellow's game is not wise or logical, does not make sense - and proves nothing. It is not necessary for women to become mechanics or soldiers for them to prove their equality. It is not necessary for men to become homemakers or to bear children and give suck for them to prove equality with women. When God made Eve - here now was a creature EQUAL WITH ADAM, another PERSON, a SHE-MAN with whom he could share everything!

"God created man in His own image ... male and female created He THEM. And God blessed THEM, and God said unto THEM, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and SUBDUE IT; and HAVE DOMINION over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28). My reader will observe the change from "him" to "them." We are not presented with the actual fact of the formation of the woman until chapter two; but even here we find God blessing "them," and giving "them" JOINTLY THE PLACE OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT. All the inferior orders of creation were set under their JOINT DOMINION. Eve received all her blessings in Adam: in him, too, she got her

dignity and position and power. Though not yet called into her individual identity, she was, in the purpose of God, looked at as part of the man. Universal dominion was not given to Adam alone; it was not said, "Let HIM have dominion," but "Let THEM have dominion." There was no other creature so near to Adam as Eve, because no other creature was part of himself. What affection Eve had for Adam! What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in his thoughts! In all his dignity, and in all his glory, wisdom and power, she was entirely ONE. He did not rule OVER her, but WITH her. He was lord of the whole creation, and she was ONE WITH HIM! THEY were the king and queen of the universe!

There is neither time nor space to consider the myriad ghastly consequences of the fall of man, but I would draw your attention to one disastrous result. The curses reaped CAUSED THE INEQUALITIES BETWEEN THE SEXES so prominent in the history of the human family. Life became a burden and a struggle. The beauty and equality of man and woman in the garden of Eden disappeared. Strife, guilt, shame, discord, competition and pain took over - the way of the flesh held sway!

While the loss of oneness and equality between "ish" and "isha" was tragic indeed, this was but the sad fruit of DISUNITY WITH GOD which had already invaded their lives. There is a most enlightening statement by the apostle Paul, quoted earlier, wherein he admonishes, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). The whole purpose of the serpent's beguilement was to CORRUPT THE MIND FROM THE SINGLENESSE THAT EXISTS IN UNION WITH THE SPIRIT. The word "simplicity" actually is the Greek word for "singleness," from the same root as used in the verse, "When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light" (Lk. 11:34). We are beguiled when the spirit of the flesh, the world, or the devil draws our soul away from its unity and union with the spirit.

The dreadful fruit of disunity with God is disunity in every other realm, for "HE is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). The awful reality of this fact became apparent to Eve as the voice of God announced the dreadful judgment, the terrifying sentence, which swept like a frightening nightmare over her being, proclaiming, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ... and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE" (Gen. 3:16). "Thy desire shall be to thy husband" would be better translated, "Thy desire shall be SUBJECT to thy husband," that is, thy desire shall be subjected to the will and pleasure of thy husband. One ancient translation reads, "The direction of thee shall be with thy husband." "...and he shall RULE OVER thee." Another version says, "...and he will DOMINATE you!"

Can we not see by this that the headship of man over woman CAME AS A RESULT OF THE FALL AND AS A PART OF THE CURSE? It is my long considered opinion that there is actually no particle of evidence anywhere in the whole Bible to support the notion that Adam had the headship over Eve before the fall. The dreadful sentence laid upon Eve that fateful day in Eden is if I err not, the announcement of a condition that should occur with respect to the vast majority of women through succeeding ages and dispensations - but NOT ONE THAT SHOULD HOLD PERPETUALLY, for God purposed that the day would surely come when "there shall be no more curse!" (Rev. 22:3).

The same seeds of confusion and duplicity which brought disunity with God, swiftly brought disunity in the human family, beginning with Adam and Eve, in view of which the

Lord established a LAW to maintain order in the home, pronouncing to the woman, "Thy desire shall be SUBJECT to thy husband, and HE SHALL RULE OVER THEE." God allowed women to be brought down into such a place of servitude and subjection to men that at the period in which Jesus came into the world, women were held in such a low place of subjection and bondage that in many cases they were not allowed to walk down the streets beside their husbands or to sit in the same room with their husbands when their husbands had company. They had been brought into many forms of bondage. In Eastern lands, even today, we see women the slaves of men, shut away in harems and purdahs. They have no rights, no privileges. The man is able to marry other women and to divorce his wives at will, to beat and cruelly misuse them. We see how the rule of man has brought women into a state of utter misuse and bondage.

That this arrangement was not God's original arrangement nor His eternal order, is evidenced by the fact that man's domination over woman is strictly enforced by the law of Moses, of which law Paul by inspiration wrote, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, T-I-L-L THE SEED SHOULD COME TO WHOM THE PROMISE WAS MADE" (Gal. 3:19). Ah - when the promised seed comes, when the Christ comes, when the Bridegroom comes the law is no longer of effect! The New Testament has something to say of the headship of man over woman, but we must never forget for one moment that man's headship over woman is a mere temporary arrangement prescribed for this imperfect state while yet we walk subjected to the frailties of the flesh, and the weakness and travail of this carnal, corruptible realm, all of which is the product of the fall and part of the curse. Harken to me, my brother, my sister! Man's headship over the woman was never part of God's original order, was not in any way related to the high and holy and eternal purposes of God, and it does not bespeak, by any stretch of the imagination, the glistening glory of the heavenly realm of the Kingdom of God in Eden where man and woman walked and REIGNED TOGETHER in the mind of Christ. Man's headship over woman pertains, rather, to the tragic, sorrowful, and sordid ORDER OF THE CURSE.

The order of things under the fall is not man's normal state. Eve in Eden was not like the women of today; her state was far better and more excellent; she and her husband were completely ONE - one flesh, one body, one soul, one spirit, one will, one mind, one desire, one hope, one purpose, one power and one position. How can one person rule over the other when the TWO ARE ONE in every way? It is high time for a people to begin to move out of the "in-part" realm of the church world today, to rise up and possess that true and eternal and divine order of THE KINGDOM OF GOD. There is a place, even in this physical dimension, where husband and wife can so become ONE in the mind of Christ until no headship or dominion of one over the other is necessary or appropriate.

Ah, hear the word of the Lord and take heed, all husbands and wives who hope to attain to God's high calling, for I declare to you that there is a HIGHER ORDER of the Kingdom of God revealed in Eden's blest Garden! This higher order of perfection and sonship requires the TWO to be so transformed by the spirit that in the pure nature and holy mind of Christ they BECOME ONE. When this union of mind, will, emotion, and spirit takes place between husband and wife there is nothing left to be "submitted," for duplicity is overcome, all variance flees away like the chaff driven with the wind out of the floor, and every disunity is swallowed up in the ONENESS OF HIS LIFE. Blessed unity! The "two" are "set at one again." Eden has been reentered. This is the glory and majesty of the Kingdom of God! "The Kingdom of God is PEACE ... in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

Kingdom peace isn't when one subdues the other, forcing an agreement which submission only brought about.

Having said all this, let us now apply this beautiful truth spiritually and internally, to Christ the Bridegroom in our spirit, and to us the bride in our soul. Spiritually, this means that as long as we walk in imperfection and duplicity THE SPIRIT IS GIVEN HEADSHIP OVER THE SOUL. The soul is commanded to be under obedience and is to be subjected under the authority of the spirit. Ah, but the headship of the man over the woman was never part of God's original order in the heavenly realm of the Kingdom of God where man and woman walked and reigned together in the precious mind of Christ. In God's grand and glorious plan, when redemption has finished its work within us, man and woman, male and female, SPIRIT AND SOUL shall both be so quickened in the pure nature and holy mind of Christ that the two shall again be one. SUBMISSION shall be swallowed up into UNITY! Glory!

The wonderful goal is not just our will, our mind, and our emotions SUBMITTED to His will and way, but ONLY HIS WILL! In the marriage union of spirit and soul there is one new creature, Christ, with one mind, one will, one emotion - HIS made OURS. Blessed union! It is not His mind controlling our mind, but it is our possessing HIS mind. This is CHRIST IN YOU the hope of glory. It is more than just a "fill me" with more of God, but a being swallowed up into Him, that henceforth it is "no longer I, but CHRIST liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). This is what we are yearning for - that we might have a constant outflow of our true inner nature. As Paul wrote, "Stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being..." (Rom. 12:2, Wuest).

Prefigured by Adam and Eve in Eden, this is the perfect man, man in the image of God, male and female, spirit and soul dwelling in the Garden of the body, united in one, given dominion over all things. These are rising from the far country of sin and self, and from the confusion and limitation of religious Babylon, to be united again as one in the Spirit of God. These shall rule and reign gloriously, first over the domain of their own individual "earth," then over that earth out there, and in due time over all the endless vastnesses of infinity forever! Dearly beloved brethren, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us and, forsaking all else, cleave only unto HIM. Then shall we hear, down the corridors of our own soul, the celestial cry of jubilation THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY!

# *Chapter 29*

## *The Coming Of The Bridegroom*

### *(continued)*

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

In our last study we shared the precious truth of what it means to personally experience Jesus Christ as the Spiritual Husband of the individual soul. In our consideration of the Bridegroom and the bride we need to remember that first of all these beautiful realities are fulfilled in us personally. Christ is not just in some far-off heaven somewhere; for us He is our hope of glory, and it is CHRIST IN YOU. The body of Christ is now multiplied by thousands, and it is not just one little girl that Christ will receive but a corporate bride composed of a vast multitude of individual members. The point is just this: all that happens to the corporate body must be experienced by each member - it is first and foremost the experience of each member that finally constitutes the experience of the whole. If I do not know Christ PERSONALLY as my Bridegroom, it is impossible for me to be a part of that corporate body which is joined into union with Him.

In this study we will write not of the individual, but of the relationship to Christ of the whole - the many-membered, corporate bride. Let us by all means remember that we are to be perfected in ONE; and in union with all who are joined to the Lord we become the bride-body of Christ.

Back in the Old Testament the nation of Israel is called the wife of Yahweh. In that Old Testament dispensation known as the Law age, during which time God's Kingdom work in the world was executed by the nation of Israel, that nation sustained the relationship to God that a wife sustains to her husband. You will find it in Isa. 54:5 in these endearing words, "For thy Maker is thine husband; Yahweh of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel." Again, "...which My covenant they broke, although I was an HUSBAND unto them, saith Yahweh" (Jer. 31:32).

As a brother has written, It is always hard to tell what is the deciding factor in the choice of a marriage partner, for love is indefinable, and this is no less true in the choice that Yahweh made of the people who were to institute His national bride. He chose them, not because they were a great or a powerful people, nor even because they were a rich and prosperous people, not even because they were a particularly good or righteous people. In fact, the scripture expresses it this way: "The Lord did not set His love upon you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers..." (Deut. 7:7-8).

The account of the ceremony whereby Yahweh took Israel to be His wife is distinctly portrayed in Exodus, chapter 19. The ceremony was concluded when the Israelites, having observed a period of cleansing and sanctification, beheld Yahweh come down

upon mount Sinai in a display of awe-inspiring splendor. The conditions of the marriage contract are clearly stated: "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Ex. 19: 5-6). Just as the modern bride endorses the marriage contract with the simple words, "I do," so the people of Israel responded to their divine Bridegroom: "All the people answered together and said, All that Yahweh hath spoken WE WILL DO" (Ex. 19:8). For a brief season after their conquest of the promised land of Canaan the children of Israel were faithful as the wife of Yahweh. But after a time we find the unmistakable signs of infidelity showing up. Their heads were turned and their hearts allured by the gods and goddesses of the heathen nations round about, Baal, Milcom, Chemosh and Ashtaroah, the Queen of Heaven. The behavior of Israel became that of an unfaithful wife committing adultery with many lovers. As she spurned the love of her Husband, being joined unto the idols and demon gods of the heathen, her affairs led her deeper and deeper into spiritual adultery and religious whoredoms. Yahweh pleaded with Israel to return unto Him. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith Yahweh, for I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jer. 3:14).

With words graphic and impassioned Yahweh warned Israel that her treacheries could result in only one thing - divorce - the dissolution of the marriage contract entered into at Sinai. Consider carefully these words of the prophet: "Yahweh said to me in the days of Josiah the king of Judah, have you seen what that faithless and backsliding Israel has done, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the harlot? And I saw, even though Judah knew that for this very cause of committing adultery (idolatry) I, Yahweh, had put faithless Israel away and given her a bill of divorcement; yet her faithless and treacherous sister Judah was not afraid, but she also went and played the harlot ... committing adultery with idols of stones and trees. Surely, as a wife treacherously and faithlessly departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously and faithlessly with Me, O house of Israel, says Yahweh" (Jer. 3: 6-9, 20, Amplified) .

When the Lord came and walked among them, He called them an ADULTEROUS generation, for they had not returned in faithfulness to Yahweh. What a striking thought - Almighty Yahweh God D-I-V-O-R-C-E-D HIS WIFE! He "put her away" and gave her "a bill of divorcement." Through the prophet Hosea He sent her this word: "Plead with your mother, plead, for she is not (no longer) My wife, neither am I her husband" (Hos. 2:20). So it was that God divorced Israel, and in 721 B.C. and A.D. 70 the Lord cast her out of His house - the Land of Palestine - to return no more for long millenniums.

In the New Testament we come to one of the grandest titles given the Lord's people throughout all generations - the BRIDE OF CHRIST. The question follows: Are the Old Testament "wife of Yahweh" and the New Testament "bride of Christ" one and the same? In the New Testament we see one of the most remarkable things. According to the Eastern customs, if a young man had acquired sufficient means to make it possible for him to provide a marriage dowry, then the father called in a man who was a close and trusted friend of the family to act as a deputy or go-between for him and his son. This go-between was called "The Friend of the Bridegroom." This man was fully informed as to the dowry the young man was willing to pay for his bride. He then went to the home of the young woman and negotiated with a deputy of the bride's family. There must be consent for the hand of the young woman and agreement on the dowry. When these were agreed upon, the deputies arose and their congratulations were exchanged, and they all drank

together as a seal of the covenant thus entered into. Then this "Friend of the Bridegroom" continued to act on behalf of the bridegroom until the wedding was completed. When finally the bridegroom had "taken" his bride and escorted her into his own home for the marriage feast, THEN was the joy of the "Friend of the Bridegroom" fulfilled (Jn. 3:29).

In John 3:28-29 we find John the Baptist making it very clear that he was not a member of the bride of Christ. Consider carefully and reverently his words: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but THE FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: THIS MY JOY THEREFORE IS FULFILLED." Now John the Baptist, an Old Testament prophet, who, according to our Lord's own estimation was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets, walks out of the Old Testament and delivers the last message of that dispensation, and he says this: "I'm not the Bridegroom; and not only that, I'm not part of the bride - I'm just a 'friend,' the 'Friend of the Bridegroom' " - that's the best that this man, who was the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, could say concerning himself. It is perfectly clear that he never thought of himself as part of the bride at all.

It was to the church which is His body that Paul wrote, "I have ESPOUSED YOU TO ONE HUSBAND, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). I am confident that anyone who is of sane mind and sound judgment will agree that there is a vast universe of difference between an UNFAITHFUL, DIVORCED WIFE and a CHASTE, ESPOUSED VIRGIN. And Israel was an unfaithful wife, while in the New Testament the church is presented as a chaste virgin to be the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was to the members of the church that Paul addressed these meaningful words: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved THE CHURCH, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it (as a bride) to Himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing...for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto HIS WIFE, and they two shall be ONE FLESH. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" (Eph. 5:25-27, 31-32).

Under the law of Yahweh, Israel, once divorced and having been joined unto the heathen gods, it was impossible to return to her first husband, Yahweh, again. This law is stated in the simplest of terms. "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and when she departs out of his house, she goes and marries another man, and if the latter (second) husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house; or if the last husband dies, who took her as his wife, then the former husband, who sent her away, MAY NOT TAKE HER AGAIN TO BE HIS WIFE ... for that is an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. 4:1-4, Amplified). Israel was indeed married to another husband after Yahweh put her away. Of the ten-tribed house of Israel the Lord said, "Ephraim is JOINED to idols" (Hos. 4:17), in the same sense that Paul spoke of when he said, "He that is JOINED unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). And of both Israel and Judah it was said, "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in ISREAL and in JERUSALEM; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF A STRANGE GOD" (Mal. 2:11). Thus, under the terms of the law, it was not possible for her to return and be married again to her first husband - Yahweh.

Strange - in spite of this law - the Lord still loved the children of Israel dearly, and still wanted them for His wife, and promised to bring her back into a marriage relationship with Him. "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi (my husband); and shalt call Me no more Baali... and I will BETROTH THEE UNTO ME FOREVER; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in FAITHFULNESS: and thou shalt know Yahweh" (Hos. 2:14-16, 19-20).

Let us not look at these statements as mere facts or reading matter, but diligently search the scripture and seek God in humility and reverence for understanding. It is a strange saying - but considering Yahweh's own law concerning divorce and remarriage to the same woman that was divorced after she was joined to another the only way Israel could be married again to her first husband was FOR THAT FIRST HUSBAND TO DIE! "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" (Rom. 7:2). It thus becomes crystal clear that the restoration of Israel as the wife of Yahweh, spoken of by Hosea, could only come about by the death of Him who wrote her the bill of divorcement! If the husband should die, then the wife was free to marry whosoever she pleased.

May God anoint the minds of all who read these words and give understanding of the sublime and awe-inspiring truth I now write. May your heart grasp the wonder and magnitude of the fact that the great and eternal Yahweh of the Old Testament covenanted to embody and manifest Himself on earth in the person of His Son, thus to walk among men as God in human flesh, with the express purpose to live and DIE THROUGH THIS SON. Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it! This brings us to Calvary, the greatest love story the world has ever witnessed, for there upon that cursed tree, the Saviour, the Redeemer of Israel, the Saviour of the world, Jesus, YAHWEH-SAVIOUR perfect Almighty Yahweh, yet perfect man, clothed in human flesh, poured out His life-blood, to die and rise again a new creation man, that He might as a new creation man, the last Adam, be married even to her whom He had put away! We feel helpless before a truth so great and eternal. God must teach us these things. Ah, my friend, you find it difficult to believe that it was the mighty God who came and lived and died in Jesus Christ? Hear now but a couple testimonies to this great truth which pours forth from the pages of God's blessed book from the first book of Genesis to the last book of the Revelation. "And ... He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto HIM which died for them, and rose again ... to wit, that G-O-D WAS IN CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:15,19). "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: G-O-D WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16). Jesus said, "It is not I that doeth the works; but My Father who dwelleth in Me."

Let me make one thing very clear. Israel alone does not constitute the bride of Christ. Those who would separate between Israel and the church do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. The New Testament is unmistakably plain that the TRUE CHURCH I-S the bride of Christ. Each and every statement in the pages of the New Testament concerning the bride of Christ was written to, directed to, addressed to,

and sent to THE CHURCH. That is a simple and undeniable fact. When Jesus died and rose again, not only was He lawfully able to take back estranged Israel to be His wife - He was likewise free TO MARRY WHOSOEVER HE WILLED. The mystery of the bride of Christ was revealed to the apostle Paul and he revealed it unto the saints in the church in these words: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the GENTILES (nations) should be FELLOW HEIRS, and of the SAME BODY, and PARTAKERS OF HIS PROMISE IN CHRIST by the gospel" (Eph. 3:1-6).

Harken attentively to these words of inspiration: "Now the promises (covenants, agreements) were decreed and made to Abraham and his Seed (his Offspring, his Heir). He (God) does not say, And to s-e-e-d-s (descendants, heirs), as if referring to many persons; but, And to your Seed (your Descendant, your Heir), obviously referring to ONE INDIVIDUAL, WHO IS NONE OTHER THAN CHRIST, the Messiah ... for IN CHRIST JESUS you are ALL sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ - into a spiritual union and communion with Christ - have put on Christ. There is now no distinction, neither JEW nor GREEK, there is neither SLAVE nor FREE, there is not MALE and FEMALE; for you are ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. And if you belong to CHRIST (are in Him, Who is Abraham's one and only SEED), then YOU ARE ABRAHAM'S OFFSPRING and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:16, 26-29, Amplified) - Men of any nation, who believe in Christ Jesus, become Abraham's seed through faith, and thus become a vital member of the Israel of God. It is furthermore true that all such who by faith are born of the Spirit of God are constituted members of CHRIST'S CHURCH. To be in union with Christ is to be Abraham's seed. To be in union with Christ is to be a member of His church. To be in Christ is to be an Israelite. None can deny it! And it is in union with Christ that both Israelite and Gentile, Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female are joined together in one body. Can we not see by this that it is IN THE CHURCH that Israel, along with the chosen from every nation under heaven, is again constituted the wife of Yahweh - the BRIDE OF CHRIST. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a NEW CREATURE" (Gal. 6:15). "Therefore if any man be in Christ He is a NEW CREATURE" (II Cor. 5:17).

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead He redeemed man from his unregenerate state and by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost makes him an entirely NEW CREATURE in Christ Jesus. The man or woman in Christ is dead, and his or her life is hid with Christ in God. This clearly explains how it is that the UNFAITHFUL WIFE of the Old Testament is empowered to become the CHASTE VIRGIN of the New, for she is no more the unregenerated seed of Abraham after the flesh, but the REGENERATED SEED OF ABRAHAM IN CHRIST JESUS. And thus it is that the heathen who were without Christ, being ALIENS from the commonwealth of Israel, and STRANGERS from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, are now in Christ Jesus MADE NIGH by the blood of Christ, for He is our peace who has made both ONE, having reconciled BOTH UNTO GOD IN ONE BODY by the cross; now therefore ye are no more STRANGERS and FOREIGNERS, but FELLOW CITIZENS with the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD OF GOD (Eph. 2:11-19).

## THE GREAT PRETENDER

The apostle John was one of the three mighty ones who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh; he was with Him in the Mount, he lay in His bosom and, above all others, has received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved." It was fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart should become the depository of His most intimate thought in respect to the course of the church in this age. And such is the case. To him the Lord gave a graphic picture of the development of the bride of Christ over the past two millenniums.

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the lonely isle of Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, gave him a communication concerning the church, commanding him to write it in a scroll and send it to the seven churches in Asia. With wondering eyes John stood transfixed as there came to him one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven plagues and talked with him, saying, "COME HITHER; I will show unto thee the judgment of THE GREAT WHORE that sitteth upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1). As John beheld and pondered the scene abruptly changed and he saw an even greater wonder as the same angel came to him again, and said, "COME HITHER, I will show thee THE BRIDE, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9).

These words take on new depth of meaning when we understand that in the book of Revelation the word "come" always signifies AN INVITATION TO REVELATION; the whore and the bride are two women; the invitation goes forth to come and see by the Spirit what they mean; and I do not hesitate to tell you that it requires a revelation from God to see either. Of the harlot it is written, "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy" (Rev. 17:3). Of the Bride it is written, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:10). Of the harlot it was said, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 11:4-5). In contrast of which it was said of the bride: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8). The bride is described as, "...the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious" (Rev. 21:10-11).

The church of Christ is called a MYSTERY. She is presented as a virgin. She is called a bride. Finally, she is presented as a city, the New Jerusalem, the city of peace and righteousness and divine order. This scarlet clad woman is called a MYSTERY. She is not a virgin, she is a harlot. She is not a wife, she is the paramour and mistress of the kings of the earth. Finally, she is that great city which is called Babylon, the city of confusion and filthiness and the denial of divine order. As to Babylon, John adds, "When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I WILL TELL THEE THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN ... the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues...and the woman which thou sawest is that great city (a corporate people), which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:7).

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

The two women are contrasted in every particular that is mentioned about them; the one is pure as purity itself, "made ready," clothed in heaven's unsullied holiness: the other, foul as corruption could make her, fit only for the burning fires of judgment. The one belongs to the Lamb, who loves her as the bridegroom loves the bride; the other is associated with a wild beast, and with the kings of the earth, who ultimately hate and destroy her. The one is clothed in fine linen, and in another place is said to be clothed with the sun, and crowned with a coronet of stars; that is, robed in divine righteousness, and resplendent with heavenly glory; the other is attired in scarlet and gold, in jewels and pearls, gorgeous indeed but with earthly splendor only, who, being increased with this world's goods and having need of nothing has made herself drunk with the blood of saints and thrust Christ Himself outside her doors. The one is represented as a chaste virgin, espoused to Christ; the other is mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. The one goes in with the Lamb to the marriage supper, amid the glad hallelujahs of celestial realms; the other is stripped, insulted, torn, destroyed, and burned by her illicit lovers. We lose sight of the bride amid the effulgence of heavenly glory and joy, and of the harlot amid the gloom and darkness of the smoke that "rose up to the ages of ages."

It is impossible to find in scripture, a contrast more marked; and the conclusion is irresistible, that whatever the one may represent, the other must prefigure ITS OPPOSITE. They are not two disconnected visions, but a pair - a pair associated, not by likeness, but by contrast. Now the Word of God leaves us in no doubt as to the signification of the emblematic bride, the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem. We read, "For the husband is the head of the wife, EVEN AS Christ is the Head of the CHURCH: and He is the saviour of the body. Husbands, love your wives, EVEN AS Christ also loved the CHURCH, and gave Himself for it; that He might present it to Himself a glorious CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. This is a great mystery: but I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH" (Eph. 5:23-32). The bride of Christ is not old Israel after the flesh, but the church which He is building up of living stones as an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Armed with this understanding, what then must the contrasted symbol, the Babylonian harlot represent? SURELY SOME FALSE AND APOSTATE CHURCH, some church which, while professing to belong to Christ, is in reality given up to fellowship with the world, and linked in closest union with the rulers of the earth realm; a worldly church,

which has left her first love, forgotten her heavenly calling, sunk into carnality and sin, and proved shamelessly and glaringly faithless to her Lord. If Babylon is indeed the FALSE CHURCH, then the New Jerusalem bride of Christ must be the TRUE CHURCH; the law of the contrast demands it! Be it observed, that these symbols, a woman and a city, symbolize definite systems, corporate bodies, not merely a multitude of similar, but disconnected individuals. The true church of Christ is a body; its members are united in the closest union to their Head; one life animates them: "Because I live, ye shall live also;" one spirit dwells in them, they are one habitation of God. The link that unites them is, however, a SPIRITUAL one; the body, is consequently invisible AS SUCH. A false church can have no such spiritual link. The bond that unites IT must therefore be carnal, outward, visible; the church represented by Babylon dwells in the earthlies, must be A VISIBLE CHURCH, an earthly organization, and as such capable of being discerned and recognized.

George Hawtin has aptly written: "To see what I am saying you will have to go far beyond the edge of the crowd. You will need to go beyond the circle of that tired old thing men call THE CHURCH. The word 'church' has become sorely desecrated, so much so that the picture of what THE TRUE CHURCH really is has faded away until men can see in the church nothing but million dollar temples standing on street corners or multitudes of people who dwell behind the high walls which they call denominations. But this, my friend, is NOT THE CHURCH. This has nothing to do with His ... body. These denominations are only man made things, little self-appointed Christs who believe that they have the truth and that wisdom will die with them. I do not believe that they are divisions in the church or divisions in the body of Christ. They are something altogether aside from the true church and something different from the body of Christ. The church which Jesus called 'My church' has never had a division in it. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is that wonderful habitation Jesus spoke of as 'My Father's house,' saying, 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' The house which the Father is building is the true church, the... body of Christ. This building IS RISING upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ, the first Son, is the corner stone or the cap stone of it. He is the Head of the body, the church, the head stone of the corner. All other stones are living stones, built up into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus" -end quote.

The New Jerusalem and Babylon are, to use common language, rivals to each other. In the one there is nothing of man, it is all Christ; in the other there is nothing of Christ, it is all man. The one is the expression and the exhibition of the beauty seen in Christ Jesus; it is His fullness. The great lesson for us is that in the TRUE CHURCH there is nothing that is not Christ. This comes home very practically to us for we may decide as to everything by the question: Is it Babylon, or is it the New Jerusalem? Which is it of? Which is it for? Is it for man's interests or Christ's? Babylon is the aggregation or collection, the bringing together of everything that suits and appeals to man, while the New Jerusalem is the exhibition of the divine beauty that was seen in Christ on earth.

What dreadful thoughts and feelings are awakened in the soul by the very sound of the name MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT. It is a terrible name. Babylon is called "the great city," Babylon, "that mighty city." Yes, man always wants something "great," but God does not call His church great. No, another adjective suits her better - "holy." Beware when Christians, especially preachers, tell you of their "great" churches, their "great" programs, their "great" pastors and evangelists, their "great" congregations, their

"great" meetings and revivals. Babylon loves greatness, but we read of "the HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." Oh that God's people could realize once and for all that it is "NOT by MIGHT nor by POWER, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). The might and power here spoken of refer to man's might and power - not to God's. To the natural and not to the supernatural. There are two sources of power. Many "great" church organizations today boast of their "power," "influence," or "popularity" in the world. Their power and influence are derived from the magnificence of their huge church plants, their immense bank accounts, their numerical strength, their grandiose programs to entertain the people and, supposedly, to convert and change the world, and their connection with the "right" people - those with wealth and influence in this present world. Their fine talent, and soothing worship services, their beautiful forms and cherished traditions, all help to make them popular - to give them prestige and power in a world of "religious," "respectable" sinners. It is from such as these that Paul by inspiration has warned us that we must separate ourselves. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:5).

I share the following paragraph from the works of George Hawtin, which I feel are of true and anointed confirmation to what I am saying. "By her (Babylon) men and women are being brought to spiritual ruin and desolation as they sit with eyes glued to a screen and their ears tuned to the trash that is presented by sermon and song while their hearts are turned away from the truth. Several times each month I receive at least three computerized letters from the 700 Club... urging me to give more to this great cause. The truth is that never once in all my life have I ever given so much as one cent, and furthermore, I never will. They are part and parcel of the Babylon system; and this I believe is true of practically every T.V. preacher in America and elsewhere. I will not make crowds love me when I set forth these things, but that matters not to me. I care not a straw if every man on earth forsakes me just so long as I proclaim that which God has made clear to be the truth. Listen to them preach and you will soon see that it is a professional show from start to finish, often times engaging professional and unregenerate talent and, if I am not mistaken, unregenerate preachers as well. COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE! Well is she named a HARLOT. She sits as a queen, and says, 'I am no widow.' She is decked in scarlet and purple and precious stones and pearls. In her hand is a 'golden cup' full of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Whenever people are found sitting and watching these actors and performers on T.V. with their idolatrous doctrines of prosperity, their psychology and professionalism by which they hold captive millions who are more interested in a show and prosperity than in walking with Christ, then we may know that these are not the elect of the Lord. These are the foolish virgins who have let the oil of the Spirit drain out of their lives and will be found wanting when Jesus comes. Cut yourself off from this harlot lest her wiles destroy you" - end quote.

The wanton harlot calls herself Christianity, but she is not. She is a corrupt mysterious mixture, a spiritual malformation, the masterpiece of Satan, the corrupter of the truth of God, the destroyer of the souls of men, a trap, a snare, a stumbling block, the darkest blot in the universe of God. It is the corruption of the very best thing, and therefore the very worst of corruptions. It is THE GREAT PRETENDER, the counterfeit and usurper of the holy and glorious bride of Christ. It is worse by far than Judaism; worse by far than all the darkest forms of paganism, because it has higher light and richer privileges, makes the very highest profession, and occupies the very loftiest platform. Finally, it is that awful apostasy for which is reserved the very heaviest judgments of God - the most bitter dregs

in the cup of His righteous wrath. True it is, blessed be God! there are a few names even in this harlot system who, through grace, have not defiled their garments. There are some brilliant embers amid the smoldering ashes - precious stones amid the terrible debris. But as to the mass of Christian profession to which the term "the church" applies, nothing can be more appalling, whether we think of its present condition or its future destiny. I doubt that one Christian in a million has anything like an adequate sense of the true character and inevitable doom of that system which surrounds them. If they had it would solemnize their minds, and cause them to feel the urgent need of standing apart in holy separation, from the ways of the harlot system, and in distinct testimony against its spirit and principles. The "thus saith the Lord" to God's people is unmistakably clear: "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. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev. 18:4-8).

### **GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM**

We are told that in this, our day, shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins. Virgins are pure and undefiled: not the common run of Christians who have defiled themselves with every lover-idol they can find and have departed from a walk in the Spirit of God and slithered off into the ditch, there to slop and flounder around in error and deception and ignorance and fleshly religious activities of every kind. Virgins are not defiled with women - with organized church systems. They follow the Lamb whithersoever HE GOES, and not human leaders who have set themselves up between Christ and His saints (Rev. 14:4).

These ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Not very many people who name the name of Christ are doing that! Not very many know who or what the Bridegroom is, and therefore do not know where or how to meet Him. Not very many Bible students even suspect that the coming of the Bridegroom is different than the coming of the King or the coming of Christ in other dimensions. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go "UP" to meet the Bridegroom. All their fuss and stir will be in vain. For no one will ever go "UP" to meet Him! There is not one scripture in the entire Bible that speaks of being "caught up" to meet the Bridegroom or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom, and His coming in many other ways and forms. To their unenlightened minds there is but one single coming of Christ where He crashes down through the clouds of earth's atmosphere. Most saints today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be all ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. But not so with the virgins. They are in the right place at the right time, and all looking for a very blessed event - the coming of Christ as the Bridegroom. And they are spiritually intelligent enough to know that no one will ever go "up" to meet the Bridegroom. But in order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go "out." "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him" (Mat. 25:6). And the only way one may go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is to "come out" from among the world and the flesh and the harlot churches with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union.

One of the marvels of God's condescending love and mercy is that He comes to us and meets us on our level, right where we are. "He came to His own," John writes (Jn. 1:11). "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:10). Jesus also invites the weary and heavy laden to "come unto Me, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28). To the spiritually thirsty He calls, "Come unto Me and drink..." (Jn. 7:37). But there also comes a time when those who have been the recipients of God's love and mercy MUST THEN COME TO JESUS - not for bread and fishes, but in order that His will may be done in us and that we may be identified in union with Him.

The reason we must go "out" to meet the Bridegroom is because He is Himself "out." The message of the Gospels is very clear - all things related to Christ took place OUTSIDE of religion. In that day Judaism was the religious system of God's people. But when Jesus came everything concerning Him took place outside of that system. In plain language, Christ had nothing to do with religion - not even that religion which was purportedly based upon the Holy Scriptures. The birth of Christ was apart from the religion of the Lord's people. God did not send the angel Gabriel to king Herod's palace, nor to the company of priests, nor to the members of the Sanhedrin, nor to the leaders of the Pharisees or Sadducees. God sent His messenger to a dusty little town in a despised Province, Nazareth of Galilee. Everything related to His birth was outside Jerusalem, outside the temple, outside the priesthood, outside the scribes and elders and all the religious sects; it had nothing to do with the organized religion of the day, although that religion had originally been founded according to God's Holy Word.

When the Christ child was found He was found outside of religion. He was not found by any priest, nor by any Levite, nor by any scribe, nor by any Pharisee, nor any holy people. We are all familiar with the account of the heavenly star appearing in a pagan country to people who were not even worshippers of Yahweh. But they found the Christ by the star. We know also how the band of heavenly angels appeared to lowly shepherds attending their flocks at night, and how startled and wondering they hurried into Bethlehem to find the new-born Saviour. When the hour arrived many years thence for Jesus' ministry to begin, He was introduced to Israel outside of religion. John the Baptist, as we have mentioned, was the one who announced Christ to the people. This John, though born a priest, departed from the organized priesthood and took up residence in the wilderness. He lived in a wild place and appeared to the cultured as a wild man wearing camel's hair and eating wild honey and locusts. He was not in the temple, he had no altar to offer sacrifices, his ministry was entirely apart from the religious system of the priesthood. This was the pioneer, the forerunner of Christ. Christ was followed outside of religion. Who were those who surrounded Him, who made up the multitudes that thronged the valleys and the mountains? The high priests? The scribes? The Pharisees? The Sadducees? The Essenes? The elders of Israel? NO! They were fishermen, tax gatherers, sinners, unlearned people, the poor and sick and needy, the common people who heard Him gladly and were transformed in mind and heart and body by the wisdom and power of the gracious words which flowed from His anointed lips.

"Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Thy disciples fast not?" (Mat. 9:14). The disciples of John came to Jesus and asked such a question because they saw something - they saw Jesus sitting at a feast, not just an ordinary meal, but a feast (Lk. 5:29). Furthermore, they saw Him feasting not with the high priest, the Pharisees, or the scribes, but with the sinners, the publicans. Jesus was feasting with the corrupt tax-gatherers, of all people! This really bothered the religious ones. "Why do we fast and Your disciples FEAST?" they asked. The Lord Jesus

did not argue nor reply to John's disciples with a doctrinal dissertation. He said to them, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them?" He answered not with a doctrine, but with a person. He referred to Himself as the Bridegroom! Let all who prize the hope of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus know the difference between religion and the Bridegroom! Like the Pharisees and the disciples of John we have all been so religious. Many of us are still to some extent under religion's influence. We are talking about fasting, baptism, communion, this religious activity and that, while the Lord Jesus is saying, "Can the children of the bride chamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them?" The Lord is not speaking about doctrines or religious rituals, but pointing to Himself as the Bridegroom.

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this our day, and said, "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom" (Mat. 25:1). It is not our purpose to discuss who was the bride, or who were the five foolish virgins, or the five wise virgins. May our hearts be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion - to detach ourselves from religion, from present things, from self, from the world, from ALL - to go forth, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply SPIRITUAL. It is the out-going of the heart to be joined in union with our Head and Lord. It means such a detachment from the world that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM. We are going out and away from our own preconceived ideas and religious understanding! Out and away from the kingdoms of men! Out from self-will! Out from the traditions of men, and the elders! Out from man's organizations and promotions! Out from the prophets who preach for hire! Out from the shepherds who deceive and fleece the sheep! Out from the healers who heal for gain! Out from the hiring ministry that incessantly cries, "Money, money, money, money!" Out from bondage to the merchandisers, the dove-sellers, the book-vendors, the tape-peddlers (for a price), the religious profiteers, who masquerade as prophets of God! Out from the confusion of Babylon, from man's laws, man's rules, man's heresies, which have no power to set you free! To those blessed ones quickened by the Spirit in this hour THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM COMETH! Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!

No man will ever go out to meet the Bridegroom until the ears of his spirit have been opened to hear the joyful cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" I would point out that it is in the original, "Behold, the Bridegroom," not, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Many scholars agree that the word "cometh" is an interpolation - an insertion into the manuscript by the scribes. If I tell you the Lord is coming, I am putting all upon that coming, not upon HIMSELF. "The Bridegroom is here!" that is the cry. And it is a very solemn and yet blessed thing, and I am sure I seek to awaken my own soul to the reality of that cry - "He is here!" Suppose someone came to the door and cried, "He is here, go ye out to meet Him;" would we not drop all and go? It means an appointed place of rendezvous. We have no word in our language to express it properly. Let me assure you, precious friend of mine, that that place of appointment with the Bridegroom has to do with an attitude, a mind, a condition, a state of being. Some speak of the Lord's coming because everything here is confusion and trouble. When the Lord comes, say they, He will settle all and solve everything. But I want to settle myself - to here and now be divested of everything that is unsuited to Him, that I may know Him in His coming. The apostle says, "That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ ... I am jealous over you ... for I have espoused

you to one husband." I covet that preparation, to be washed and cleansed and presented to Christ, a part of that glorious church which is without spot or wrinkle or blemish.

I say to all as far as our message can reach: Listen! Do you not hear the cry which rings over the land? Listen! Soon it will swell to a mighty chorus. Listen! High above the cry of battle; high above the deafening roar of the grinding wheels of business; high above the clamorous voices of a pleasure-crazed world; high above the rantings and ravings of the hucksters of religion. Listen! It is the Voice which cries: "Behold the Bridegroom!" The Voice of the Spirit of God is calling you to lift up your eyes to the heavenly hills to behold the Bridegroom who sits in the heavenly places of the glory of God, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, both in this age and that which is to come. Oh, my friend, forsake the bawdy harlot and let us arise and go forth unto the Bridegroom. May tens of thousands of voices re-echo the soul-stirring cry until it passes in its mighty power, from pole to pole, and from the river to the ends of the earth, rousing all the elect of God to abandon all and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

Once more I would quote the challenging words of George Hawtin. "With all my heart I believe that the days are few for the people of God to escape from the power of Babylon, but escape they must if they are to avoid being partakers of her sins and receiving of her plagues. There is only one way to escape Babylon's hypnotic power. It is in strict obedience to the command, 'COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE.' This obedience is not difficult. It is very simple, though it demands true consecration. All you have to do is walk out. Leave great Babylon behind, as Abram did in the long ago, and go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" -end quote. Have you done it? Can you say that you have gone out to meet the Bridegroom? During the past forty years a cry ever increasing in its intensity has been going forth to the true saints of these last days - and, thank God! untold thousands have heard the trumpet call and gone forth to meet Him. Many others think they have come out - perhaps they have physically, but often their mind is still in the clutches of the old traditions. So wrapped in the grave clothes of creed and doctrine and delusion, there is a long process of coming OUT, to where we truly enter into UNION with the Bridegroom, becoming ONE IN HIM; one in His mind, will, nature and purpose.

Each one who is truly virgin towards the Lord will cry with the Shulamite, "Draw me and we will run after Thee" (S. of S. 1:4). We know that we are helpless in ourselves, and He alone can do this. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee," saith the Lord. Each one of the virgins that make up the bride, must be drawn by God's personal dealing and working in the soul; and as each one yields to the Bridegroom's drawing, they will all find themselves in the company of those who go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The Word reads: "Draw ME and WE will run after Thee." The drawing of God is upon each elect member who will make up the bride; His hand is cutting and shaping each living stone for the habitation of the Spirit, which He is building for Himself. It is as each soul is drawn, that all run after Him; it is as He perfects each one, that all come forth in perfection; it is as each one is put into His purifying fires, that the gold in each life comes out pure and shining, and the glory of God shines out from the whole.

# *Chapter 30*

## *The Coming Of The Bridegroom*

### *(continued)*

When God created man male and female in His image, He revealed that He is Himself male and female in His attributes and nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in each of the facets of His nature. We may truly become the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father, and many other things as well. Can we not see by this that brideship bespeaks the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverent submission to Christ, whereas sonship embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength, authority, power and dominion to rule and reign over all things. Let us never become so over-balanced in our zeal to become SONS OF GOD that we despise the marvelous reality of BRIDESHIP! The simple but sublime truth is that THE WAY TO SONSHIP I-S BRIDESHIP! This is why the Spirit has given us in Revelation chapter twelve the example of a glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This graphic picture reveals that it is the relationship of brideship that births the realm of sonship. Jesus said, "I am the WAY, the truth and the life; no man COMETH UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." Your relationship to Christ as a bride will forerun your relationship to the Father as a son. Brideship is the harbinger of sonship. It is through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, made ONE IN HIM IN LOVE, that we are prepared for that illustrious glory and strength and dominion over all things as the sons of God. This is a true principle in God which I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss!

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this our day, and said, "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom" (Mat. 25:1). It is not our purpose to explore the identity of the bride, or who were the five foolish virgins, or the five wise ones. May our hearts be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion - to detach ourselves from religion, from present things, from self, from the world, from ALL - to go forth, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply SPIRITUAL. It is the out-going of the heart to be joined in union with our Head and Lord. It means such a detachment from THIS WORLD that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM.

It means "falling in love" with Jesus Christ our Head and Lord. It means being truly virgin in our desires towards the Lord; it means walking in the Spirit, keeping ourselves unto HIM and unto HIM ALONE; it means forsaking once and for all any partnership with the wanton harlot, Mystery Babylon; it means renouncing the schemes and plans and ambitions of the carnal mind and our love of the world and the desires of the flesh; it means to have no other love and no other god before Him, no master that rules our life, no lord that dictates our actions, no reserved areas of our being. To those apprehended ones quickened by the Spirit in this hour THE HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM COMETH!

Listen! Have not the ears of your spirit been opened to hear the joyful cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" Listen! Has not your heart been deeply stirred and moved within you to hasten to obey the urgent command: "Go ye O-U-T to meet Him!"

There are two voices abroad in the land today. Each of these voices purports to be the voice of the Spirit of God. One of these voices rings out loud and clear, "COME O-U-T OF HER MY PEOPLE! " The other voice issues forth from the mouths of men who profess to be Spirit-filled, tongues-speaking, Holy Ghost anointed leaders, teachers, apostles and prophets in the Charismatic Movement, exhorting the people, "S-T-A-Y I-N HER MY PEOPLE! Stay in your denomination, for, after all," they croon, "the Holy Spirit will make you a BETTER METHODIST, a BETTER BAPTIST, a BETTER PRESBYTERIAN, a BETTER CATHOLIC, a BETTER B-A-B-Y-L-O-N-I-A-N!" It requires but little of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to discern which of these voices is the voice of the Holy Spirit and which is the voice of the great antichrist. The voice that urges people to remain in Mystery Babylon is unmistakably the voice of rebellion and blasphemy against the clear Word of the Lord. I have no hesitation whatever in declaring to you that God is not today in the business of blessing, renewing, or perfecting Mystery Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. He IS in the business of calling OUT a people for His name. He IS in the business of gathering together unto HIM. He IS in the business of washing, cleansing and sanctifying the VIRGIN BRIDE OF CHRIST. He IS in the business of building and preparing and adorning the HOLY CITY, the NEW JERUSALEM.

There is a place in the Spirit where saints may dwell in union with Christ. There is a true temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavenlies. There is a church which is the TRUE CHURCH. It cannot be seen of men. There is a realm where Christ is all in all. There is a "place by Me" where we stand upon a rock and behold His glory (Ex. 33:21). There is a path that the vulture's eye hath not seen (Job 28:7). There is a church of the firstborn whose names are written only in heaven (Heb. 12:23). There is a church which is the BRIDE OF CHRIST. It has always been an enigma to me to find that a truth so plainly set forth in holy scripture should be so confused and misunderstood and misinterpreted by the people of God. That the church is not only the body of Christ in the symbology of a masculine body from the neck down to the toes, but is in truth also the feminine body of Christ as Eve was the body of Adam - his wife - is clear and obvious in the Word of God as is the sun blazing in the cloudless noonday sky.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the HEAD of the wife, EVEN AS Christ is the HEAD OF THE CHURCH: and He is the saviour (protector, nurturer) of the body. Therefore, AS the CHURCH is SUBJECT UNTO CHRIST, so let the wives be unto their own husbands in everything. So ought men to love their WIVES as their OWN BODIES. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his OWN FLESH; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, EVEN AS the Lord THE CHURCH: For WE are members of HIS BODY, of HIS FLESH, and of HIS BONES. FOR THIS CAUSE shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be JOINED UNTO HIS WIFE, and THEY TWO shall be ONE FLESH. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE C-H-U-R-C-H" (Eph. 5:22-32).

There is a place OUTSIDE THE CAMP of Babylon's vain worship and pseudo-church. "Let us GO FORTH therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13), and when you have departed from all these things and broken Babylon's idols

from off your neck and cast their image from before you, then you will see NO MAN BUT JESUS ONLY, and then you will understand what it means to be JOINED UNTO HIM. When this wisdom is sweet to your soul, then you will discover the secret place of the Most High, where the King brings you into His chambers, a hidden place of meeting with the Lord, that place within our own beings where our Lord ever dwells, where we go in and shut the door, where we meet Him alone in the most intimate fellowship and the most exquisite union of soul and spirit. This is a place which the world cannot invade. "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that WHERE I AM, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:3). Where is this place? Jesus said, "Where I am." That is sufficient! It is a place in the Spirit that no man can violate. A hidden place for those who are in the world, but not of it, in the very sanctuary of the Spirit of God. A place where we can SEE the countenance of the Bridegroom, and HEAR His voice.

Ah, we do not arrive at this secret and sacred place with one grand leap. It is a continual leaving, leaving, leaving, and the nearer and dearer HE becomes to us, the more rejoiced we are to leave everybody and everything for Him. But where are we to go? Outside the gate, outside the city which hath played the harlot. Do you think that we shall see Him if we stay inside the city? inside with all those who do not love Him enough to go out to meet Him? if we stay with those who hate Him and are half-hearted? NO! It is as we "go forth" that we behold Him, the King in His beauty, and discern His beauty as He sits upon the throne of our lives. Let us go outside the city wall that we may behold Him; let us leave everything which is in the city that our eyes may be anointed to behold Him who is altogether lovely, the Bridegroom of our soul. When the earth is in our eyes, we cannot behold Jesus; when Babylon is in our eyes, we cannot discern the Bridegroom; when anything else is before our eyes, we cannot see Him. Everything must be cleared away if we would see and hear Him.

### **THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB**

A number of weddings are described in the Bible. The first wedding was performed by a very special guest minister. Whatever ceremony He may have chosen, it did not include those familiar words, "If any man can show just cause why these two should not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else forever hold his peace." This phrase was unnecessary, for the minister was God Himself, and the couple was Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:18-25). Then there was a very unusual wedding in which the bridegroom found out the next morning, by light of day, that he had married the wrong girl (Gen. 29:21-25). One of the most beautiful wedding stories began in a barley field outside the little town of Bethlehem (Ruth 2). Perhaps the most tragic wedding was that between Ahab, king of Israel, and Jezebel, a godless Baal worshipper. This marriage would result in much sorrow and suffering for God's people (I Kings 16:29-31). Finally, the Saviour of men chose a wedding in the city of Cana of Galilee to perform His first miracle and show forth His glory (Jn. 2:1-11). However, the most fantastic and wonderful wedding of all time is revealed in the Word of God in these inspiring words: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7,9).

"And Jesus spake unto them again by parables, and said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding ... saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I

have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage" (Mat. 22:1-4).

There is neither time nor space to consider the various elements contained in the parable above - Who are the servants, who are the guests, etc. It is sufficient to know that at this wedding are present the two objects and star participators in the drama that unfolds - the Bridegroom and the bride. Much is said about the proceedings involved in the marriage of Christ and His bride, and it is rather natural that Bible students speculate as to what actually occurs in the marriage. Some men are prone to view the marriage of Christ somewhat after the pattern of a wedding in our modern day society, in which there is a ceremony with the bride being given away and nuptial vows taken. Of course this is absolutely foreign to the Scriptures. If we are to understand what the Bible means by a marriage or a wedding, we must view it as it is portrayed in the Bible itself. There are some Bible examples of marriage which will, to this writer's thinking, adequately depict the marriage of Christ to His bride, and will show us what constitutes that marriage.

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

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

Another beautiful example is presented in the book of Ruth. When Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, redeemed both Ruth and the estate of Naomi according to the law of the kinsman-redeemer, he redeemed Ruth to be his wife. When the marriage occurred, there was no ceremony. The record simply states, "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife..." (Ruth 4:13). The marriage consisted simply in the bridegroom taking his bride to himself. It is my deep conviction that, in keeping with these analogies, the marriage of Christ and His bride consists simply in CHRIST TAKING HIS BRIDE TO HIMSELF. The Word of God states it this way: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it ... that He might

PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF a glorious church..." (Eph. 5:27). The Emphatic Diaglott expresses the thought beautifully and correctly: "...that He might PLACE THE CONGREGATION BY HIS OWN SIDE, glorious..." He draws us unto Himself, to His side, into union, and that, my friend, IS THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!

The marriage of the Lamb is the revelation of the Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. You cannot understand the marriage of the Lamb until you know UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name of bride expresses until you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. When I know that I am united to the Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it. A wife is one who has reached full maturity, one who has given herself completely and unreservedly for her lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take His. She has left all to follow Him. In mind, will, desire, emotion, hope, plans and actions the two become one.

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

After receiving the bride from her parents with their blessing the bridegroom conducted the whole party back to his own house. The streets of Asiatic cities were dark, and it was necessary that anyone venturing forth at night should carry a lamp or torch, as did the virgins in the parable of Jesus. There were demonstrations of joy all along the road to the destination. On the way other friends of the bride and bridegroom joined the party and there was much music and dancing (Ps. 45:15). Upon arrival the feast began. There was food and wine in abundance and during the meal mirthfulness prevailed, and the guests were expected to exalt the bride. After the wedding feast was over, the bride's parents escorted her to the nuptial chamber, and the husband was escorted there by his friends. They were then left alone and the bridegroom took his bride and the marriage was consummated. At last, there was UNION!

Now, lest you get the idea from this typology that Christ is coming to take His bride away, to leave this earth and take a flight to some other planet for a big supper of pork chops, steaks, baked potatoes and apple pie a-la-mode, let me set things straight. For long centuries the church world has been telling us of a day in the sweet bye and bye. It would be a time when we would be "caught up" in the air and find ourselves feasting and dining

at a huge banqueting table in the sky. It would be a wonderful time indeed, this meeting in the air, and we would all feast lavishly on the richest dainties, while all the poor souls on earth who didn't make the rapture would be suffering the hellish torments of the Great Tribulation.

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

Great harm is done to God's children in teaching the coming of the Bridegroom and the marriage supper according to the wisdom of men. There are not words in the English language adequate to express how important it is to make the proper preparation for the right event. Suppose that I am invited to a special work day at a church and am instructed to wear old clothes and bring along a broom, a mop, a bucket, some rags and cleaners. Let us further suppose that I get the date confused, and upon arrival at the church discover that a very formal wedding is in progress, and many of my friends are in attendance. How unspeakably embarrassed I would be standing there before my well dressed friends at this lavish event attired in ragged clothes, with mop and bucket in hand! Ah, one must be very certain about where he is going, what the nature of the event is, and precisely how to prepare for it. And should someone find my illustration too crude or inappropriate, let me hastily add that it is a great fact that one does not prepare in the same way for going UP as he does for going OUT! Is it not a delusion that men are preparing themselves for a trip through the air to feast on some kind of natural food in these last days?

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

Since they were giving out wedding garments at the door, we can only assume that when this fellow Jesus told about came to the door, and the servant inquired, "What size are you - small, medium, or large - you look like a medium," the man replied, "I don't need one." "Well," the servant insisted, "the King expects you to use this." "I don't have to do that, don't worry about it," and with his heart full of rebellion he entered into the hall. Soon the King entered into the wedding chamber to welcome his guests. But immediately He noticed a man who was not wearing the wedding garment. "Friend," he said, "how did

you come in here without putting on the appropriate wedding garment?" The King was simply inquiring whether he had an excuse, if there was a reason why he had no garment. "Did we run out of garments at the door? Did we have no garment that would fit? Did the garment not look good on you? Did you not like our color schemes? Friend, give account of your conduct!" The scripture says he was speechless - not because he could not speak, but because he was without excuse.

Hearken! Are we not told by the preachers that the marriage supper is celebrated someplace far away in-the sky, and sometime after the rapture of the church? Were we not fervently taught that we are going to be in the air for seven years and have a wedding feast with the Lord? The question follows - If the wedding feast is the rapture, HOW DID THIS MAN WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT GET IN THERE? WAS HE "RAPTURED" BY MISTAKE? Did the Lord Jesus Christ commit a terrible error and accidentally "translate" a man who was not adequately prepared or properly invested for the marriage supper in the sky? How preposterous! This parable proves beyond any possibility of contradiction that a so-called "rapture" has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the marriage of the Lamb. This parable clearly shows that the wedding feast takes place right down here on this earth, and that there are people who are feasting on the riches of present truth and the depth of God's revelatory Word just as you are, but they have not had a change of garment; they have not been clothed in the transforming righteousness of Jesus Christ; they have not put on that precious mind that was in Christ Jesus; they have not put off the old man with his works and put on the new; they have not died to sin and self and religion. These have presumptuously "jumped on the bandwagon" of the message of the hour; with unsanctified minds and fleshly zeal they grasp after the deep things of God; they are along for the ride; they mingle with those elect saints who have been apprehended of God to the high calling in Christ Jesus. They show up at every meeting and at every convention; with unwashed hands they eat from the table so bountifully prepared by the Holy Spirit for those who forsake all to follow the Lamb; they parrot all the right words, and mouth the sacred secrets revealed by the Holy Spirit, and may, with feigned piety appear as one of the choice vessels of the Kingdom; but beneath the cloak of pretense there is no true consecration in their lives, no inworking of the holiness of God, no conformation to the image of Christ, no transformation of mind or heart or nature; they are clearly imposters, deceivers, usurpers, pretenders, hypocrites and cheats. They have no wedding garment! And now, exposed to the penetrating gaze of the King's presence, the man of nice words and spiritual-sounding expressions no longer could conceal his true condition.

In due time, prior to the event of the marriage of His son, the King dealt swiftly and effectively with the usurper. "Then the King said to the attendants Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into the darkness outside; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth" (Mat. 22:13, Amplified). The King James version reads, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Among the many symbols connected with the Bridegroom and the bride, none is more meaningful than the wedding garment, whether of guest, of bride, or of groom. Throughout the scriptures garments are spoken of in connection with character. There is some kind of intrinsic connection between the character of the people and the clothing they wear. The garment we wear in our marriage to Christ is being woven NOW, stitch by stitch. The righteousness this glistening garment portrays is not the imputed righteousness received by grace when our sins are first forgiven, but the ACTUAL

RIGHTEOUSNESS, wrought out in the nitty-gritty of the dealings, testings, purgings, processings and victories of this present travail. The garments of the Lord's people correspond to their STATE OF BEING. When seen by the eye of the spirit in the spiritual realm, some glitter like the snows of Mount Hermon in the noonday sun; some shine as with flame; and those of others are resplendent as with light; others are of various colors, dazzling like the scintillating brilliance of precious stones, and some opaque. It is because garments represent states of being and character that they are so much spoken of in the Word. Thus in Isa. 53:1, "Awake, put on strength, O Zion; put on thy BEAUTIFUL GARMENTS, O Jerusalem." And in Eze. 15:10 the Lord says of His people, "I girded thee about with fine linen, and covered thee with silk." And in Rev. 3:4-5, it is said, "They who have not defiled their GARMENTS, shall walk with Me in WHITE, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in WHITE RAIMENT." And of the bride of Christ it is written: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8). What a depth of meaning appears in these passages when we remember the signification of garments!

The wedding garment speaks of character and fitness. The man without the wedding garment had no fitness or adequate degree of spiritual understanding or fellowship or relationship to move in the sphere of the wedding feast and all that this type represents. He had no garment - qualifying attributes to adapt him to the order of life suggested.

And note, too, the poor fellow is not cast into hellfire, Hades, Sheol, Gehenna, the pit, or eternal damnation. "Outer darkness," is the word. Some may ask, What is the outer darkness? You will find Jesus using the same term in Mat. 8:12. Here it does not refer to hellfire or eternal damnation. He is speaking of the lack of faith and appreciation on the part of the Jews. And because of their refusal to accept and move into the Kingdom of Heaven, they are cast into "outer darkness." Any one knows that those Jews were not sentenced to everlasting hellfire, for Paul speaks of a glorious day when "all Israel shall be saved." Those Jews were turned into "outer darkness" where they are yet today. As far as Christ is concerned, and the blessings of the gospel, and the Kingdom Christ came to set up in the hearts of men, they are in outer darkness, devoid of understanding or revelation. They are cut off, denied the privilege and fellowship of the Kingdom of the Spirit.

So from the teaching of our Lord, "outer darkness" does not mean hell or the lake of fire, but rather the LOSS or denial of a great privilege. The Jews are alive today, and God is directing their steps, not in a pit, but in the "outer darkness" of spiritual blindness, the veil that hangs like a pall over mind and heart. The glory and joy of the marriage feast is LIGHT - understanding, revelation, reality and relationship. The man without the wedding garment, the one unprepared for this realm, is cast out EXCLUDED and REJECTED from the joy and fellowship and life experienced by those who are called to the marriage. He is cast into outer darkness and bound. His hands are bound and his feet are bound. The hands bespeak of service, the feet of the walk. He is not QUALIFIED to serve in that blessed realm. He may know service in the carnal religious life and service in the sphere of the flesh, good works, etc., but he does not know that SPIRITUAL MINISTRY which springs from intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ - so he is bound. The feet represent the walk. He may have traveled thousands of miles in the energy and power of the natural life, and fairly exhausted himself in religious works, programs, activities, etc. But he does not know how to WALK IN THE SPIRIT. That was always too demanding and restricting for him. He may have walked all around the Lord, but not with Him. So his

feet are bound. He has no power to enter into such life in the Spirit, such fullness, such glory, such wisdom and power as is pictured by the marriage of the Lamb..

What constitutes the marriage supper of the Lamb? When we think of a feast we are prone to think in natural terms and picture a banquet of rich foods and an evening of entertainment. There was a day when Jesus and His disciples came to Samaria. The day was long and the disciples of Jesus were weary and hungry. The disciples went to buy food and tried to get Jesus to eat. He refused, and said to them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." This statement troubled the disciples, they wondered whether someone had brought food to Jesus. Then Jesus explained plainly: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." To do God's will! That is what Jesus lived for; but it is also what He lived ON. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of God" (Mat. 4:4). Nothing could satisfy Jesus' appetite but this: He hungered to do the Father's will. And nothing else could fill Him. The truth of these words is simply this: the strength of life for the firstborn Son of God was to do the Father's will. Now this is a great and surprising revelation to many. When we have thought of eating and drinking and feasting with Christ we have entertained such carnal concepts. Roast beef and potatoes - indeed! That is not what the Christ feasted upon, and it is not what those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb feed upon.

How precious the knowledge that we have a God who hungers, thirsts, deeply desires, to feast with His people - a God who from the beginning has tried to show us that His greatest delight is not in showing His authority, but in enjoying intimate and close fellowship with His own. He set a feast of fruits before Adam and Eve, the like of which man has never been able to reproduce, and He communed with them face to face. He ate with Abraham in his tent at noonday. He spread a table in the wilderness for the entire nation of His chosen, and He gave them the very bread of heaven. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding feast. He fed five thousand on a hillside. He did not hesitate to attend feasts, nor to celebrate the Feasts of Yahweh. And He has established the New Covenant with a feast, the great spiritual feast, wherein He has given the redeemed His own body for their meat and His own blood for their drink, that death might be swallowed up of life. He has promised through the prophet Isaiah that in the latter days He will make a great feast of spiritual blessings and benefits for ALL NATIONS, upon His holy Mount (Isa. 25:6). And the greatest feast of all - the marriage supper of the Lamb - ushers a people into the most intimate relationship with their Lord!

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

The fact is that the imagery of the marriage supper was quite familiar to those who heard our Lord employ it. It was often used in the popular religious speech of the time to denote the Messianic Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, which every pious Jew believed to be near

at hand. Blessed are they that are called to this feast, to dine at His table and partake with Him and of Him! The Lord is come! The table is spread! Arise and eat!

We must never forget that the marriage supper is spread at the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB. Notice that it does not say the "Marriage of the Bride," but the "Marriage of the LAMB." That grand event is not so much the consummation of the hopes of the bride, as it is the consummation of the hopes and plans and purposes of the Bridegroom. The Shulamite in the Song of Solomon expresses it beautifully, "While the King sat at His table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance" (S. of S. 1:12). Having been wooed by the King, the Shulamite maiden suddenly finds herself beside His tent. She sees a table spread before her, and sees her King sitting at His table; she finds herself sitting with Him in sweet fellowship and communion. As is always true of the faithful persevering one, she finds He has given her more than she asked. At last she has attained the object of her prayers and search, and He has brought her into His presence, even His own table. He does not come and sit with her at HER table, but invites her to come to HIS table; He invites her to listen to His voice and follow and obey it until she finds the table of continual communion and close fellowship. He has spread a table before her in green pastures, He has revealed to her fountains of living water; He has brought her to rest beside the cool, still streams; and He, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, is there beside her. The table is in the presence of all her enemies (not up in the sky), and her cup is overflowing with His loving kindness and goodness. She has entered a place of communion with Him such as she has never had before; communion that is deep and full of peace and joy and righteousness. A fellowship that abides, and where He sits with her; not a fleeting communion on Sunday morning that does not abide or satisfy, but a fellowship where she both feeds and rests in His presence. An intimacy in which He sets before her the HIDDEN MANNA of incorruptible life and fills her cup (body and soul) to overflowing with living water. A holy familiarity, which floods her soul with peace and joy and righteousness and life that flows like a river and passes all understanding.

We are commanded to feed upon Christ, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, "for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (Jn. 6:55). No longer are we to feed off the husks of man's sustenance, no more are we to feed off the putridness spread upon Babylon's polluted tables, but we are invited to feast on the bounties of the fullness of Christ in an exceedingly rich and intimate manner, thereby drawing our sustenance from Him. "As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (Jn. 6:57). "I am the bread of life..." (Jn. 6:35).

Jesus promised that when He returned He would "gird" Himself and make His servants to sit down to meat, and that He would "come forth and serve them ... meat in due season" (Lk. 12:35-44). In these days at the ending of the age we have in a unique way and in an abundant measure experienced the fulfillment of this promise. The Bridegroom is here! He has come and has served "meat in due season" to the elect household of faith. Rich indeed, faith strengthening and spiritually nourishing has been the fare made available by Christ, as He has spread upon His table profound truths of the Kingdom of God reserved for this hour. Only those who are prepared to enter into a MATURE RELATIONSHIP with Christ are bidden to come and sit with Him at this reserved table at the feast of HIS TABLE. In the natural, babies do not have teeth, neither do babes in the Lord have mighty faith to feed upon His deep truths and rich word; but God metes out to them milk, the food that is prepared for babes. He sends them His Word and promises, presented in such a way and on such a level that they are able to take them; and He gives more than they can ask or think, not according to their faith, but according to His grace and mercy.

But - BLESSED ARE THEY THAT ARE CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!

I would be remiss if I failed to point out in clear and unmistakable words the fact that the "marriage of the Lamb" is not exclusively a future event as the preachers are wont to proclaim. Let me make it quite clear before we go any farther that what our Lord is speaking about under the figure of the marriage feast is an actual personal experience which every soul may have, something intensely real and precious, not in the sweet bye and bye, but here in our today. What it is, is a past event, a present event, as well as a future one. It is an on-going reality in the same sense that initial salvation is past for some, present for some, and future for others. Millions of souls have through the centuries experienced the Lord as Saviour, some are now receiving Him, and others will accept Him in the future. The "Marriage of the Lamb" is a relationship of union with Christ entered into as a result of spiritual growth and participation with the Lord. The marriage of the Lamb has already happened for many precious saints who have responded to the gracious appeal, "If any man hear My voice, I will come in to him, and SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME" (Rev. 3:20). To sup with Christ is to commune vitally with Him; it is to fellowship intimately with Him and freely partake of all that is proffered by His Spirit. He comes in to dine. It is there, deep within - in the inner union of soul and spirit as nowhere else, privately and alone, that spiritual edification and the understanding and participation in heavenly things begins and continues and consummates. Numerous yielded souls have attained this glorious experience, it is now happening for others, and it shall yet happen for others. It is, first and foremost, an individual experience for believers. It occurs for the individual when he reaches a condition of being ready for marriage - to fulfill the responsibilities and privileges of truly BEING A WIFE. Not many of the teeming millions of earth who profess to know the Lord are ready at this time for this high and holy calling, but those who do make themselves ready will be married to the Lord here in this life. It is a blessed fact that the marriage of the Lamb is taking place now, but only those with spiritual understanding know it. The rest are "star gazing" - watching the clouds - waiting to go to a banquet in the sky. While they wait, snug and smug in their denominational beds, the Lord is taking a bride! The Lord stands knocking at their door - but they sleep on.

The awesome scene is portrayed in the Song of Solomon 5:2-6. The believer (Shulamite) speaks first and says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." The word "voice" means "sound." It is the sound of her Beloved that knocks at the door. The Bridegroom knocks, not only once, but He continues to knock; He calls her to arise and shake off the slumber that locks her in its embrace.

The sleeping believer replies, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" How often when our Lord is bringing to us a deeper revelation of Himself, He finds us asleep! We have washed our feet of all the dust of the day, we have cleansed our walk in all those areas He has dealt with previously, we have put off our garment, we have prepared a soft bed of ease, and we have said to our souls, "A little sleep, a little slumber, no need to press on any further at this time, let us rest in the experiences we have had and the truths we have learned." She was not only His love and His dove, but she was still His "undefiled." This shows that her greatest sin was in lying down to rest and not watching with wide-open eyes for His coming and the further revelation of Himself. And when He came, she was slow to rise and let Him in, she had

kept Him waiting throughout the night. She had not gone off into spiritual fornication, she had not mingled with the world, she had committed gross sins of the flesh, she had not been flirting with those who hated Him, as many who are called by His name are doing in these days; she had not lost her chastity. She had been indolent, she simply did not seem to have the stamina to go further. She had thought to lie down and rest, but not to go to sleep; but she was soon lulled into a half-slumber.

In desperate ardor the Bridegroom endeavors to enter the chamber, but the door is locked. She had not only closed, but had locked and bolted the door. When she locked the door, she did not mean to lock HIM out; she only desired that her rest might be undisturbed. She did not deliberately prepare herself to sleep, determining not to get up and let HIM in; she did not deliberately lock the door so that HE could not get in. This is always the way slumber steals in upon those who have received the call to follow the Lamb! Those who hear the call, but fall short of following on - it is not their set purpose to reach the place where at last they find themselves, nor to settle down in the place of sleep and stagnation where they finally arrive. They forget that it is through the avenue of sleep, indifference, and stagnation, that spiritual poverty comes and robs them of the glory of the Bridegroom of their soul; that it is in this way Want and Need come upon them, as an armed man with whom they cannot cope. Slumber does not prepare us for great attainment, it only paves the way for us to be defeated and robbed.

"My Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him. I rose up to open to my Beloved ... but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone: my soul failed when He spake: I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him but He gave me no answer." When she was sleeping, He had knocked; while she was refusing, He had called; but when He had aroused her from this beginning of deadly slumber, He had withdrawn. She little realized what she was doing when she refused to open to Him. She thought He would wait until she had opened the door. He had continued calling and knocking through the night, though she had treated Him as a stranger; though she had lain still in her bed of ease, and left Him out in the darkness until His head was wet with night dew, and His locks with night drops.

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

waits to disclose to us, but not until a more propitious moment when we have finished what we are doing.

Ah, the Christian so accurately portrayed in this moving drama had closed the door and locked it. In her snug bed of religious fairy tales and personal indifference she had disrobed and gone to sleep. Her Lover was up and had come to commune with her and ravish her heart with His love, revealing Himself to her on yet a higher plane. He came knocking and calling. When she, at her own time, opened the door, lo! He was gone. She had waited too long!

In this dark hour the lukewarm church of Laodicea has no room for Christ and His glory and has their door closed against Him (Rev. 3:20). He is standing outside and knocking at the door. He is not within, as He should be, but on the outside. Behind the door that is locked against Him they are loudly preaching about Him, and ardently singing about Him, and earnestly working for Him, but He Himself they have left outside. The whole church system of our day is built on the programs and efforts of the flesh rather than the life and glory of the Spirit. But within that harlot system are locked many of the Lord's people. If this were not so, the cry would not sound forth, "Come out of her, MY PEOPLE!" I assure you that the Bridegroom will not remain in the place of a thwarted husband and a beggar at the door of His Beloved forever! His voice will cease and you will be left in your bed of fairy tales and dreams and delusions! You can go on dreaming about a banquet above the stars, and continue to ignore His knocking and calling at the door of your heart for entrance and love and union today. But one day you will awaken!

One day you will hear the call, but He will be gone and you will be left with the dry dust of your cherished traditions and the vanity of your fleshly pursuits. He is knocking as your husband. I exhort all God's saints in this lukewarm age of Laodicea to open wide the door that Jesus may enter in to fill our beings with light and understanding, with wisdom and glory, with power and victory. The answer is up to you. What will your answer be?

In these studies on the coming of the Bridegroom, the Spirit of God has given us a strain from the heavenly choir, the theme of which is CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE. Has this divine music sounded upon your heart until your spirit has been caught away to the Mount of the Lord? Have you received a deeper revelation of your high calling in Him, and the processes by which we may attain? Has the Spirit revealed clearer visions of those things that mortal eye cannot see nor ear hear, neither can the human heart contain, even the things that God has prepared for you and me? If you will draw close to God, He will anoint your eyes with heavenly eye salve: He will give you an eternal perspective; He will cause you to behold the things that are unseen and eternal as you lose sight of the things that are seen and temporal. He will bring you into His banqueting house and your soul will be ravished with the revelation of His love. The noise and glitter of Mystery Babylon the Great will fade from mind and heart until it seems but a dream dreamed in the long ago.

There is a remnant of God's people over the whole earth that has heard the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom!" This remnant has arisen, trimmed their lamps, and with vessels full of oil and lamps shining have fixed their eyes upon Jesus, they are looking away from earth, from people, from everything to the Everlasting Hills of God.

# *Chapter 31*

## *Coming As A Refiner's Fire*

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3).

The Lord, whom ye seek, SHALL COME! Such was the promise of the inspired prophet. He who will come is the Lord, "the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire," the long expected, oft-promised Redeemer. The Messiah had been long called HE THAT SHOULD COME, NOW SHORTLY HE WILL COME. He will come in a personal way and will reveal Himself to His people in His holy temple.

The book of Malachi comes to us as the closing message of the Old Testament. It is the connecting link between the Old and the New, and in its contents it looks back over the centuries to the messages of such prophets as Moses and Isaiah, and it also looks forward to the coming of Him who was to be greater than either of these, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Lord. He is the messenger of the New Covenant, whom they desired. Of this messenger and of this covenant the prophets had spoken. With one voice they had predicted and promised His coming to redeem Israel and to bring about a righteous judgment upon Israel's enemies. Always the Coming One was represented as a divine messenger, frequently as God Himself; and we do not hesitate a moment in seeing the fulfillment of the prediction-promise in Yahweh-Jesus. For as Peter said to the Jews on Pentecost, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

### **COMING TO HIS TEMPLE**

"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE..." (Mal. 3:1). 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. 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. Silently it seemed to grow out of the top of Mount Moriah, as if drawn from the very mountain by some huge hand. There was no sound of hammer or chisel or saw, but only the soft blowing of the wind, for all of the stones and every part had been carefully made and cut far away, down in Solomon's quarry. And now this magnificent temple with its mammoth stones was rising into the sky. The pillars reflected the light of the Judean hills; the great Corinthian brass door shown in the sunlight. Inside was the huge thick blue, crimson and purple veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. And within the Holy of Holies was the gold covered mercy seat with the cherubim facing each other on either side. In the center over that mercy seat when the temple was completed and prayer was offered, suddenly

there appeared right there in the presence of men the visible evidence of God's presence: the Shekinah Glory...and God dwelt among His people in His temple. The brilliant blinding light of His Shekinah Glory dwelt in the Most Holy Place. So wonderful was it that the Queen of Sheba stood transfixed at the sight. But the temple built by Solomon was only a fleeting foreshadow of the living temple which Christ would build by the Spirit - a temple not made with hands.

When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587 B.C., the great temple of Solomon along with the rest of the city was destroyed and its valuable contents carried to Babylon. Seventy years later a remnant of Israel returned from the Babylonian exile and soon thereafter, the community began to rebuild the temple under the leadership of Zerubbabel. When the foundation was laid, the old men, who had seen the "first house" (Solomon's temple), wept for sorrow (Hag. 2:3), but the young men, who had been born in exile shouted for joy (Ezra 3:12). Like most of the reconstruction in that era immediately following the exile, the temple of Zerubbabel must have been modest indeed. Five long centuries further down the spectrum of time king Herod the Great, who was a usurper, an Idumean prince who had usurped the throne in Jerusalem, announced to the people assembled at the Passover, just twenty years before the birth of Jesus, his intention of restoring the temple which was quite dilapidated by that time. Herod was an indefatigable builder. Many cities and heathen temples had been rebuilt by him and it was natural that he should wish to show his own grandeur by making the modest restoration temple larger, more complex, and much more beautiful. Other motives also moved him, especially his desire to ingratiate himself with the more religious Jews, who resented his Idumean origin and friendliness with the Romans. Herod's temple in some respects exceeded both the temple of Solomon and the temple of Zerubbabel. It is minutely described by the historian Josephus, and the New Testament has made us familiar with the pride of the Jews in its magnificence during the days of Jesus and His apostles.

When Jesus came to earth in the long ago, He did not come to His temple except in figure and shadow. The beautiful temple in Jerusalem was but a fading type which was to be left "with not one stone upon another that would not be thrown down." Prophetically, and in beautiful symbol Jesus did appear suddenly in Herod's temple in old Jerusalem. The disciples watched their Master with curiosity and astonishment. They had never seen the kind and compassionate Jesus like this before. He had come over the hill from Bethany, and on the way to the city He saw its fair towers and palaces from the top of Mount Olivet; and pausing as He looked at it, He wept, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Jesus descended into the Kidron valley and climbed the steep paths of Mount Moriah with His disciples in great anticipation. They approached the house of God, the temple of the Most High, and the Spirit of God that rested upon Him quickened His pulse as they came near to this great symbolic structure. As Jesus strode into the temple, suddenly something in Him erupted. Profound disappointment smote Him mercilessly in His breast as He surveyed the scene of confusion that rose before His astonished eyes. Oxen were bawling, sheep were bleating, doves were flying wildly through the temple, and the stench of manure was nauseating. Men were arguing violently over money, tempers flared, and coarse words were flying back and forth. Here and there pious pilgrims vainly sought a quiet place in which to pray. The temple priests, oblivious to the confusion, were making a great show of religious form in their long robes and broad phylacteries. Proud

Pharisees stood where they could be easily seen and loudly prayed their long and eloquent prayers. To the undiscerning eye, it looked almost like a religious revival; the bustling crowds were there; it was a scene of feverish religious activity; the prosperous multitudes were flocking to the tables - they were buying and selling. The baskets were bulging with money; the ministers of the temple were exuberant; never had God been so popular - never had religion been more acceptable!

The Rabbis had passed a law that no money could be received in payment of tithes or in offerings to God unless it was Jewish money. If it was money that had the Roman eagle upon it, or money that bore any heathen emblem, they would not take it, and these scoundrels of Rabbis were behind the money-changers, who paid them large sums of money to exchange the money from Athens, from Rome, from Ephesus, from Corinth, from Egypt, and from all parts of the world. They had a fore-court, a court of the Gentiles where the Gentiles could worship if they liked, and it was in that very fore-court of the temple that they had put their money-changers' tables, and their sellers of doves, and their merchandise sellers, and their traffickers. Who could worship amidst that braying of asses and lowing of oxen, and overwhelmed by the stench of dung?

That was the trouble. These miserable, narrow-minded bigots had divided the temple! God had never made a temple of that kind. He had made a temple where "all the nations" should come and worship before Him, and they put Gentiles in the outer court amid the asses and the oxen, and all the other animals; then there was an inner court, which they had divided again so that the women should be just a little lower than these sainted hypocrites. There they were! They had divided up the temple of the Almighty, and Jesus reminded them that God had established that temple and that it should be A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS; but they had made it a den of robbers. Jesus beheld that sordid scene. He saw the money changers and the thieves who were stealing from the poor people who came to give their tithes and offerings. He saw the religious pretenders, the vain hypocrites who had turned the forecourt of the temple into a house of merchandise; from a place which had been a place of prayer into a continuous noisy, wrangling mart for thieves, money-changers, and merchants.

He stood in the great door of the temple, feet spread apart, with furrowed brow and set jaw, anger flashing from His countenance, drops of sweat standing out on His forehead, fire blazing in His eyes. Nearby He saw a pile of small cords that had been used with the dove crates. Picking them up, He began to braid them into a whip until He had a good sized scourge. He made a loop on the end of the scourge and fastened it around His wrist, took a firm grip on it and stepped forward. Into that robbers den Jesus strode - like a rushing stream, driven by the wind of God! What a commotion! The whip cracked - the tables were overturned, and piles of coins, both foreign and Jewish, scattered across the temple floor; the doves were squawking, the lambs were loosed from their pens, the oxen trampled over the money boxes, and wielding the scourge Jesus drove the merchants toward the main entrance of the temple. "Out! Out! Enough! This is My Father's house! This is a house of prayer for all the nations! You robbers! You thieves! Get out! Don't come back!" That whip did not stop crackling until the last sheep was gone, the last ox, the last dove, and all the merchants, and all the religious thugs. The temple had never before seen such a day as this.

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth Jesus proclaimed? It was not many days thence that we read, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of

the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mat. 24:1-2). The King had come to His own, and they had not received Him. After three and one half years of ministry among the people to whom He had been sent, Jesus had now closed His last public discourse (Mat. 23), and had left the temple for the last time. "Jesus went out, and departed from the temple," never again to re-enter or open His mouth in public teaching. With this act ended His public ministry. The last supper and Calvary were to follow immediately.

But the disciples, still concerned with the natural, had other thoughts. The Master had just made the statement, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Mat. 23:38). But these men, in their then unspiritual state, could not be expected to understand that declaration fully. That the Christ had come to completely destroy and bring to an end an old order and would establish in the earth an entirely new order was yet foreign to their minds. They were more concerned about the passing than the permanent. But the Master was now completing the work He had been given to do. The time had come for the greatest event of the ages to be enacted. So He had little interest now in that which represented a fallen order devoid of God's presence and power and majesty. And while our Authorized version reads, "See ye not all these things?" yet it is apparent that this is a mistranslation. The Greek really says, "And the Jesus said to them; Not you regard (or look to, or take heed to) all these." Most certainly He was saying in essence, "Now we are through with all that is natural. This has all been only a type and shadow of the greater reality and glory to come. DON'T CLING TO T-H-I-S! We have matters of much greater import to attend to. So, get your eyes off this which is passing, for, verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The account in Lk. 21:6 reads, "As for these things which ye behold." "Behold" here carries the meaning of earnest and continued inspection: that is, they were prone to continue looking in fondness on the natural magnificence. "As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

This was a new revelation, a shocking blow to the inborn hope which still held a prominent place in the hearts of these men. They had been brought up to believe that their Messiah was to come and restore Israel to her lost heritage of world dominion. But little by little they had come to know that other events must transpire first: that the King whom they had truly found and followed was not to reign immediately, but must die. Now they learn that the grandeur of the edifice which was the idol of every Jewish heart is to be destroyed instead of being preserved to remain the abode of the God of Israel. And now they are commanded to no longer cherish or cling to this earthly and material temple, but to turn away from it once and for all in order to lay hold upon a far greater glory!

And my earnest prayer to God is for all who read these words, that God may help us, as sons of God in these momentous days, to look not, as do those in the church system, for the re-establishing of that which God has forever destroyed and abolished. Many sincere but yet carnal Christians are looking for an earthly temple to be built by the Jews in Israel in this end time. But in spite of all teachings to the contrary, no temple made with hands will ever again be built in Jerusalem, and, should those unbelieving Jews who now possess the land stretch forth their hands to build a temple for the Lord, He will neither own it, accept it, nor dwell in it. It is my firm conviction, and I believe that I have the Spirit of God, that God in His wisdom and immutable purpose will never permit such a temple

to be built. The temple of stone was only the SHADOW of better things to come; merely the natural type of the SPIRITUAL REALITY which Moses saw in the mount.

The temple in Jerusalem never did constitute the TRUE TEMPLE of God. This is made plain in Heb. 8:1-2, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the TRUE TABERNACLE which the LORD PITCHED, and not man!" Jesus is now a minister of the TRUE TABERNACLE. Concerning the old tabernacle and temple with its priestly ministry the apostle says, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of HEAVENLY THINGS, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, saith He, See that thou make all things according to the PATTERN showed thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

The tabernacle of old was made as a physical, material COPY of the TRUE TABERNACLE which Moses saw in the mount. And what Moses saw in the mount was heavenly, or spiritual. This truth is further amplified in Heb. 9:8-11 in these graphic words, "By this the Holy Spirit points out that the way into the true Holy of Holies is not yet thrown open as long as the former tabernacle remains a recognized institution and is still standing. Seeing that first tabernacle was a parable - a visible symbol or type or picture of the present age. In it gifts or sacrifices are offered, and yet are incapable of perfecting the conscience or of cleansing or renewing the inner man of the worshipper. For the ceremonies deal only with clean and unclean meats and drinks and different washings, mere external rules and regulations for the body imposed to tide the worshippers over until the time of SETTING THINGS STRAIGHT - of reformation, of the complete new order when Christ, the Messiah, shall establish the REALITY of what these things foreshadow, a better covenant" (Amplified Bible).

All types and shadows are forever done away when Christ, the reality, comes. The Lord dwells not in temples made with hands. They are but shadowy figures of the true. "What temple will ye build Me," saith the Lord. So wherever we see a reference to a temple of the present or the future, it MUST refer to "the true sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2). Furthermore, there is only one such tabernacle, or temple. The Word nowhere tells 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 one composed of living stones. There is but ONE temple, ONE great High Priest, and ONE royal priesthood. So when the priests of old served it unto the example and shadow of heavenly (spiritual) things, those heavenly things were the same that Moses saw in the mount, and the same heavenly and spiritual things to which we have now come, for, We "ARE COME unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM" (Heb. 12:22). None of these are a future reality to be entered into after we die, or after Jesus returns. We ARE COME. Let us never forget that fact!

Now let us identify this heavenly temple unto which we are come. 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. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a CHIEF CORNER STONE, elect, precious: and he that believeth in Him shall not be confounded" (I Pet. 2:3-6). The apostle Peter draws a

striking metaphor of the construction by God of a remarkable spiritual house of which Jesus Christ is the most remarkable corner stone. He is remarkable as the corner stone because not only is Christ the sure foundation in the midst of a world where the pillars are trembling and the foundations are shaken, but He remains ever sure and ever stable and gives His stability to the entire structure. More than that, He is the living stone that communicates that stability to all the other stones that are joined to Him. Praise God that in the midst of all the pressures and testings there is that INNER STABILITY of the Christ! So, we see painted before our eyes a magnificent structure, the living cathedral of Christ rising up into the sky, made of living stones. 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 on redemption. Not fashioned with glittering, precious stones, but with the eternal jewels of His own nature, glory, and power! 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). And, hear it! my beloved, this spiritual temple which YOU ARE is that same spiritual temple in which Christ sits at the right hand of God and ministers as the High Priest of the sanctuary.

This human heavenly temple is the one not made with (men's) hands. The true temple is the body of Christ. The temple of the Lord is that vast family of God's sons who are coming to maturity in the image of Christ. This is the temple to which our blessed Lord and Christ SUDDENLY COMES. It distresses me to hear preachers constantly proclaiming as fact the old wives' fables that the temple of God must be rebuilt in Jerusalem by the Jews. I repeat again the truth that God's temple is the body of Christ and no temple of God, made from stones and mortar and ornamented with silver and gold, will ever be rebuilt in Jerusalem. The notion of a rebuilt temple is a lie that would be humorous were it not so ridiculous and blasphemous. The temple that God builds is the temple of which Jesus spoke to the poor, sinful woman at the well of Sychar. She was quibbling, and He said, "Neither in this mountain, NOR IN JERUSALEM, shall ye worship the Father... the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit (in their own spirits) and in truth" (Jn. 4:21-24).

## **PURIFYING THE TEMPLE**

In the cleansing of the temple of old, our Lord Jesus Christ made it perfectly plain that He was cleansing the temple to show them that He, who in the Temple of His own Body had come to redeem them, was so mighty that He would cleanse the whole Temple of Humanity. He would cleanse the Earthly Temples of the sorrowing and the sick and the poor and the sinful and the dying who came to Him; as He would, because of His purity, raise that same Earthly Sanctuary which He wore, that Temple of His Body, in three days when His three and one half years of ministry was fulfilled. That was clearly the thing as you can plainly see by considering the scripture passages in Jn. 2:13-22.

Sometimes I have tried to get it clear in my soul that God is in me. I have meditated upon the indwelling influence and power of that pure, sweet, living Spirit of the eternal God. I have come to continually live in the conscious awareness of His presence in my spirit, in my soul, in my body, in my person, in my being - the habitation of God, God preparing me to minister to the world, equipping my spirit, soul and body to live forever in harmony with the mind of God. All the God-like qualities of your life are due to the fact that God by His

Spirit dwells in you. You are the temple of God! This is the wonder of the indwelling Spirit. It is not a work of grace; it is God possessing you. Oh, your heart may have been as sinful as the heart of man was ever sinful. But Christ comes to your spirit. That spirit of darkness that possessed you goes and in its stead, a new spirit comes to your spirit, your spirit is quickened by HIS SPIRIT, and Christ LIVES IN YOU! The knowledge of this sublime truth will make you holy. No one can ever thus see his place in God and yet remain in carnality. Should one claim to see these truths and yet remain as he was before, then he has not seen by the Spirit, but by the natural mind only.

For two thousand years this temple has been rising upon the only foundation that can be laid, which is Jesus the Christ, 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, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Praise God!

We are members of His bones and of His flesh. We are His temple. This is the visitation of the Lord to His body, to His church, to His people, to the overcomers, to His sons, to those who are looking for Him, to those who are seeking His face! Do we want the Lord to come to our temple in mighty power? Do we really want Him to invade us through and through, to thoroughly touch every area of our lives until we cry, Away with all sin and pride! Away with all self-seeking, self-indulgence, and self-promotion! Away with every vestige of the carnal mind, and every claim of the fleshly nature! Away with all the foolishness of religion! Away with the MAN OF SIN who usurps the place of Christ in the temple of God! For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap! When you know His coming in this manner you are thrust into the Day of the Lord and your world will be set on fire; all that is wood, hay and stubble will be burned up. He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. Where? In His temple. Everything that is in the Kingdom of Heaven that offends will be consumed (Mat. 13:41). Where is the Kingdom of Heaven, my beloved? Is it not within you? Everything that defiles in the Kingdom of Heaven, He comes to burn. He comes to purify the sons of Levi, that they might offer unto Him an offering in righteousness.

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave perhaps the greatest parable of His ministry when He cleansed the temple and then spoke to the people about the temple of His body. He said what He meant: His body was a pure body, and He stood there to let them know that the fore-court of the temple was a symbol of the body of the believer. There were three courts in the temple: the fore-court, the inner court, and the Holy of Holies. The Lord meant them to understand by that purification that the outer court of man's temple, the body, had to be cleansed. There are three courts in this temple of man's being. Your bodies, as the apostle Paul declares, are the temple of God. He also said, "The temple of God is holy." "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." The man who defiles his body is a sinner; you cannot sin with impunity; when you defile your body you defile the temple of God just as surely as did Antiochus when he offered a pig upon the altar of the temple in Jerusalem.

Redemption demands that a man shall be restored SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY to that sphere of life and purity and incorruptibleness and glory which was his in that first blessed moment when he came forth from the bosom of God. There are three courts in

the temple which constitutes a man. The first is the outer court of the body; the next is the inner court of the soul; and the next is the innermost court of all, the spirit, which God Himself has given. But God demands that every part of the temple shall be cleansed and restored and imbued with the incorruptible nature of God. There is the true temple. And the purification of the temple begins in the spirit. Would you worship God?

Oh, not in circling depth, nor height, But in the conscious breast,  
Present by faith, though veiled from sight, There doth His Spirit rest:  
Oh, come, thou Presence infinite! And make Thy creature blest.

If you are to worship God in a holy temple, let Him cleanse your spirit, let Him cleanse your soul, let Him cleanse your body, and worship God in the temple of your own Being. God wants that. Therefore it is that God sent His Son, not merely to cleanse the outer court, but through His death, through His resurrection, through His life, and in the power of His Spirit, to cleanse man FROM THE CENTER TO THE CIRCUMFERENCE. Hence it is that the purification of the Temple of Humanity must begin in your spirit and mine. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the FLESH AND SPIRIT, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1).

I know no definition of God more sublime, outside of the scripture, than this definition of a philosopher of France, who said, "I conceive God to be Him whose CENTER IS EVERYWHERE, and whose CIRCUMFERENCE IS NOWHERE." The spirit, soul and body of a purified being is a center of omnipotent God. That God in whom we live, and move, and have our being, and who by His mercy sustains our being, I want you to know, my brother, my sister, no matter how carnal you may have been, desires to make your spirit a CENTER WHICH SHALL HAVE NO CIRCUMFERENCE. He wants to make your spirit pure, to make your soul pure, to make your body pure, and to cause the River of all Purity to flow out to all around you, and into unborn generations before you, and unto the vast multitudes of hopeless men and women who came before you; so that you shall be a CENTER for an omnipotent and omnipresent and a holy God; that is the object of the purification of the temple.

You will see then that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He purified the fore-court of the temple, determined to show His people that even this temple of the body which God has given man should no longer be the prey of foul disease, and of filthy, sensual passion, and of putrefying death. He showed them that the body should be purified, that the soul should be purified, that the spirit should be purified, and that He had come to pour out His Spirit, not only upon the spirits and souls of men, but upon all FLESH, and that all FLESH should rejoice in the advent of One who was not only the Saviour, but the Healer of mankind, the Cleanser of the outer court of the temple, the body, the giver of immortality so that even this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, and even this vile body shall be changed, to be fashioned like unto His body of glory.

## **THE REFINING FIRE**

"He is like a REFINER'S FIRE ... and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver..." (Mal. 3:2-3).

One of God's promises concerning the Lord who comes to His temple to sit as a refiner's fire is that He shall "purify the sons of Levi." The "sons of Levi" in the days when the prophecy was written, were the priests and ministers of God. The "sons of Levi" in these

days of the spiritual temple of living stones are likewise the priests and ministers of God. Prophetically speaking, "the sons of Levi" refer to all who have received the call to the Royal Priesthood of Christ after the Order of Melchizedek. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house (temple), an HOLY PRIESTHOOD, to offer up SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:5,9).

Even the word "sons" is significant. Becoming a son is the result of intense discipline, as we read in Heb. 12:5-11. The Lord comes to those who long to be His Priesthood, not with visible blessings and manifestations which inflate the ego, but as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap to purify and refine them, even as gold and silver are refined. In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely consumed. Not until he could see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with us. The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, consuming all that is alien and opposed to God's nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something greater and better. He sets us apart, like the sons of Levi, and subjects us to an intense discipline of inner and outer sanctification that we might become HIS ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

To be HIS PRIESTS we must be changed from our carnality and selfhood into HIS DIVINE NATURE. No divine change can be wrought on God's elect, saving by "passing through the waters and through the fires" which are appointed for us, waters and fires as real, though not of this world, as those which moved in the laver of the temple, or burnt on the altar of old. Our Lord can no more spare our nature than the ram was spared by Moses. This is that "spirit of judgment and burning" promised by the prophet, with which the Lord shall "purify the sons of Levi, as gold and silver are purged."

The sons have to be cleansed and purified of the carnal mind that is contrary to God and is an enemy of His, filled with all unrighteousness and evil and is not subject to the will of God and never can be. As William Law said, "SELF is the whole root, branch and tree of sin." So for us to be His Priesthood, showing forth His virtues, His life and light and love, His righteousness and glory and power, this thing, that stands in the way of the priestly nature and ministry, must be destroyed and taken out of the way. We must be emptied of self and everything that pertains to the earthly nature so that we can put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. All carnality must go through the fire. None can escape it. There is no detour around this lake of fire if you wish to arrive finally at the safe harbor of perfection in God. The sons of Levi of this day have felt that purifying fire. Its burning has roused them from their lethargic ease as they have drifted along the stream of peace with the world, its clear flame has lit up the dark recesses of their own carnal minds and the deceitfulness of the heart of man, revealing in stark reality the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, and its blasting flame has separated them from the fleshly follies of the religious systems and the so-called church. In many of them the fire is effectually doing its purifying work. They have begun to fulfill the prophecy and to "offer unto the Lord offerings in righteousness," praise His name!

Do you think God does not love you When you're passing 'neath the rod?  
 Do you grow a bit discouraged; Think the road is most too hard?  
 Oh, my brother, do you not know That our Father has a plan  
 By which to purge and purify And perfect this race of man?  
 "Think it not strange," said brother Peter, When comes the fiery trial;  
 It may come in fierce temptations That will call forth self-denial.  
 It may be in deepest sorrow Sad bereavement, or in pain.  
 Your friends may all forsake you; God will work it for your gain.  
 The trial of your faith, said he, Is of value more than gold.  
 His fire is burning out the dross From His chosen and His called.  
 Let us stay right in the furnace Though the flames seem hard to take;  
 God ordained their raging fury That He a perfect vessel make.  
 He is calling out His remnant, Seed with which to plant again;  
 He must test and try each vessel, Those to find who will remain.  
 Would you like for Him to use you? Would you like to add your voice  
 To this new day trumpet sounding? Then the fire must be your choice.  
 Should any dross or stain remain, Then the gold cannot be pure.  
 It will not reflect His image And you never will endure.  
 Go through, as faithful Abraham, For he proved his love by test;  
 Climbing up old Mount Moriah, On God's altar laid His best.  
 Think of those three Hebrew children; They loved God with all their hearts;  
 Yet each was tested by the fire, Nor from its pain refused a part.  
 God saw He could count them faithful In what'er their lot might be.  
 He wants to prove the same of you, So from His testing do not flee!  
 - Reba McMurry.

Words penned by another inspired writer, our dear friend and brother, Elwin Roach, are so pertinent at this point that I must share a portion with my reader. He writes: "When we receive a pure word of God, we should never think that this is the end of the matter, and that all we have to do after hearing a wonderful truth is to just bask in its glory. Listen to what has been recorded in the Psalms: 'The words of the Lord are PURE words: AS SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES' (Ps. 12:6). We know now why things get so hot when we begin to truly hear from the Lord - HIS WORDS HAVE TO BE PURIFIED in us! The dross of false doctrine and our own thoughts have to be removed. We have all kinds of words coming into our minds, and whether they are the pure words of God or nonsensical trash, we can count on them being tested sooner or later in the 'FURNACE OF EARTH' that we are. If we are of a submissive spirit, and have been called to be vessels of honor, then the testing fires will come early. It is at this time that the redemptive silver of God will be purified, while that of no worth is consumed or removed. But for those who are called to be the vessels of dishonor, the fires are held back until the purpose of their dishonor has been fulfilled. (See I Cor. 11:19 concerning the necessity of heresies).

'And He shall sit as a REFINER and PURIFIER of SILVER: and He shall PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI, and purge them as GOLD and SILVER, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness' (Mal. 3:1-3). The sons of Levi, the ones called to offer the bread of the Lord, are the GOLD and SILVER that is being FIRED IN THE FURNACE OF EARTH. It is not just the words that they have heard, but now it is THEMSELVES who are being consumed - they are the WORD PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES! And then, when the purging has done its work, they are the PURIFIED GOLD and SILVER to be brought into the storehouse of God, which is the OFFERING UNTO THE LORD.

"The fire that comes to the Firstfruits, the House of God, is one of the most essential ingredients with which we can possibly be afflicted (blessed). John the Baptist said not in vain that there would be One coming after him, who should baptize us in the Holy Ghost and (even) FIRE. When the Holy Spirit and Word first comes to us, it comes as a cool, refreshing RAIN - we are 'born of water.' But there will be a time when His Spirit will be a purging fire. It is then that His Word will be in our hearts as a FIREBRAND SHUT UP IN OUR BONES, even as it was with Jeremiah (Jer. 20:9). Oh, but praise God! For when that HOLY FLAME is fanned by His hand, not only are we delivered from our wicked ways, but as we are consumed by the fire of God - we then BECOME THAT FLAME OF FIRE! Do you think not? Think again; for it is recorded in Ps. 104:1-4, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty ... who walketh upon the wings of the wind: who maketh His angels spirits; HIS MINISTERS A F-L-A-M-E F-I-R-E.' Yes, 'GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE' (Heb. 12:29), and '...AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD' (I Jn. 4:17). And as we go forth from God, AS HE IS, AS HIS WORD, not only will He make HIS WORDS IN OUR MOUTHS F-I-R-E that will devour rebellion (Jer. 5:14), but WE WILL BE THE WORDS OF FIRE THAT GOD SPEAKS INTO THE WORLD OF WOOD, HAY AND STUBBLE" end quote.

A remarkable prophecy given in the year 1619 contains some wonderful truths and predictions of the raising up of a firstfruits people, among whom "certain head powers" shall bear "the first office" and will be among the first to be commissioned as priests the glory of an endless life; but only after the order of Melchizedek, to partake of after being refined and purified by the most intense "spirit of burning." We quote only a portion of that prophecy:

"A prophet, and the most prophetic generation, will the Most High raise up who shall deliver His people by a force of spiritual arms; for which there must be raised certain head powers to bear the first office, who are to be persons in favor with God, whose dread and fear shall fall on all nations, visible and invisible, because of the mighty acting power of the Holy Spirit which shall rest upon them; for CHRIST WILL APPEAR IN SOME CHOSEN VEGSELS to bring into the Promised Land, the new creation state. None shall stand under God but those who have become 'tried' stones after the pattern and similitude of Christ. This will be a fiery trial through which a very few will be able to pass or bear up in it; whereby the waiters for this visible breaking forth are strictly charged to hold fast, and wait together in the unity of Pure Love. This trial will be of absolute necessity to all for the clearing away of all remaining infirmities of the natural mind, and the burning of all hay, wood, and stubble, for nothing must remain in the fire, for as a refiner shall He purify the sons of the Kingdom. There will be some who will be fully redeemed, being clothed upon with a priestly garment after the Melchizedek order. This will qualify them for governing authority. Therefore, it is required on their part to suffer the SPIRIT OF BURNING, and the fanning of the FIERY BREATH SEARCHING EVERY PART WITHIN THEM UNTIL THEY ARRIVE A FIXED BODY from whence the wonders are to flow out. Therefore, there should be a holy emulation and ambition stirred up among the bands of believers that they may be of the firstfruits unto Him that is risen from the dead, and so be made principal agents for Him and with Him, that they may be, if possible, of the number of the First-born, of the New Jerusalem mother. All true waiters of His Kingdom in Spirit, under whatsoever profession they may be, ought to be numbered among the VIRGIN SPIRITS, to whom this message appertains. Be watchful and quicken your pace..." -end quote. What a burning, what a burning, As all goes up in smoke and flame; Everything of Adam's nature Must bow the knee to Jesus' name.

# *Chapter 32*

## *Coming As A Refiner's Fire*

### *(continued)*

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3).

Our blessed Lord and Christ is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. Fire and soap. The Lord Jesus Christ is like fire! The Lord Jesus Christ is like soap: What can this strange, cryptic language mean? You know what fire and soap will do. Fire will purify.

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 churches. 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.

And, of course, soap is also a purifier, a cleanser. The Bible mentions several times the profession of the fuller and fuller's soap. The trade of the fuller consisted chiefly in cleansing garments and whitening. The process of fulling or cleansing clothes consisted in treading or stamping on the garments with the feet or with paddles in vats of water in which a strong alkali soap had been dissolved. So when the prophet says that the Lord comes like fire and like soap he is telling us in language that we can understand that He is the great cleanser; He is the great purifier. The two figures, fire and soap, are used because fire purifies inwardly, and soap purifies outwardly (garments and flesh). The

Lord Jesus Christ is like fire and soap, He not only does a purifying job on the outside, but He also does a far grander and more thorough purifying work on the inside.

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, the scriptures affirm. I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden's gate, why do we always try to get out of the fire? Why do we evade the fire? Why expend such energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire? Fire, in the scriptures, 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 towards the purging that will lead to restoration. His fire cleanses the believer that he may qualify for God's highest. His action of fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, penitently receiving the gracious gift of life. The fire does not save him, but it removes the hindrance that separates him from the kind mercy of the Lord.

The crude idea that a wise and loving and righteous Creator would decree endless torment in undying flame for His creatures who are the work of His hands does dishonor to the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, 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. The consuming fire is eternal as God Himself; it is, because He is; it is that which was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Oh, if there be one thing for which we ought to rejoice and praise God without ceasing it is that eternal fire which will burn up all the foulness and 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 satan, but Christ!

Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. When of old God came down on Sinai, its upper peaks were veiled with impenetrable folds of smoke, like the smoke of a furnace. And in the heart of the smoke there was the appearance of devouring fire. There is dread here! Bounds had been set to keep the people back; but a special message must be sent to warn them against breaking through to gaze, lest the fire should break forth upon them. But there was no harm as long as they kept without the barriers; and when Moses entered into the very heart of it, it did not singe a hair of his head, and injured him no more than when it played around the fragile acacia bush, which burned with fire without being consumed - not a leaf shriveled, nor a twig scorched. Yes,

our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings.

When Moses, before His death, blessed the tribes of Israel, in blessing the tribe of Joseph he said, "Blessed of the Lord be his land ... BY THE GOODWILL OF HIM THAT DWELT IN THE BUSH" (Deut. 33:13,16). Is not this a strange thing to place among the catalog of human blessings? We can understand why Moses should have desired that his people might be blessed by God with "the precious things of heaven," with "the dew and the deep that coucheth beneath," with "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun and the precious things put forth by the moon." But why should he ask for them such a blessing as this? - the goodwill that God manifested when He dwelt in the unquenchable fire! Was not that aspect of Israel's God an aspect of deepest terror? did it not reveal Him in those attributes which do NOT suggest goodwill? Nay, my brother, it is not so. It is not only in the calm that the goodwill of God appears, it is not only under the cloudless sky and bright sunlight that the blessing of our Father is seen. The heart of the Father beats for you beneath every cloud and in the raging storm as well as in every sunbeam; the blessing of the Father is in our night as well as in our day. To every man He dwells betimes in the burning bush of a wilderness; but the fire chariot is HIS chariot, the burning bush is HIS dwelling-place. The fire of God is love; its burning is the burning of love. The fire that comes to you from the bush is that which consumes the barrier between your heart and the heart of God, and between your heart and the heart of your brother. This fire transformed Moses into a man of might, an instrument of deliverance. The mandate to deliver came out of the fire. Judgment and mercy came forth from the fire! Oh, my beloved, may you assuredly, and blessedly, and fully know the goodwill of Him that dwells in the unquenchable fire!

### **PURIFYING THE SONS OF LEVI**

Not only must we be saved from the penalty of sin, but we must also be delivered from the power and nature of sin. The Bible says that I have been saved from the penalty of sin; that same Bible declares that I must be saved from the power and nature of sin. As surely as God has delivered me from the penalty of sin, just so surely shall He deliver me from the power of sin, blessed be His name! He is fire and He is soap. With the sweet psalmist of Israel I will sing of mercy and of judgment.

You will recall to memory that memorable night, that tremendous occasion of the Passover when the angel of the Lord passed through the land of Egypt at midnight. Wherever there was blood he passed over, wherever there was no blood he drew his avenging sword. In the morning there was a great cry raised throughout the whole land of Egypt, a bitter, heart-broken cry. It is an undeniable fact that God is awful in His wrath. It is a wonderful thing to be saved from the penalty of sin as the Israelites were. When they came out of their places in the morning unscathed, no deaths in any of the Israelitish homes where the blood was sprinkled, they came out praising the Lord and worshipping the God of Israel. The blood had saved them from the penalty of sin, while the bloodless Egyptians paid the uttermost farthing.

As the children of Israel traveled across the Red Sea and journeyed toward their destination, in the wilderness they made a startling discovery - the God who had saved

them from the penalty of sin DEMANDED HOLINESS! And the record states that with many of those Israelites God was NOT WELL PLEASED. The vast majority of those who escaped the slaughter of the Passover finally died in the desert, never having attained to the high and holy promises of God in the land of Canaan. They didn't die a judgmental death, they were not condemned to eternal hell and damnation, but they died prematurely, being chastised as a father will chastise his children. They failed to enter in and possess their inheritance in God. But God continued to deal with Israel in the wilderness, for He determined to have a people purified unto His purpose. God is like fire! He is like soap! And cleanse and purify His people He will!

That the coming of the Lord as refining fire does not relate to His coming in the flesh two thousand years ago is clearly seen by the fact that there was no purifying of the priesthood then, and the term "the sons of Levi" cannot refer to the old Levitical priesthood but to the new order of the Melchizedekian priesthood, for the old Aaronic priesthood has passed away and the new order has come into being, the order of Melchizedek. The Lord has nothing to do with the Levitical priesthood, for He was not of the tribe of Levi but of the tribe of Judah. He couldn't be a priest after the old order because He was not of Levi nor of the descendents of Aaron. This is made perfectly clear in Hebrews chapter seven. Malachi used this word in reference to the priesthood because there was no other order in existence then, and as the old was a type of that which was to come, the reference must be to the new order of priesthood. Christ Jesus is the High Priest of the new order, the Melchizedekian priesthood, the priesthood that is being formed now, and THIS IS THE PRIESTHOOD THAT HE CLEANSSES AND PURIFIES WHEN HE RETURNS TO HIS TEMPLE.

Many students who enter college are required to take an entrance exam. As with every test, the entrance exam is given to determine, and prove, those who qualify, and eliminate those who don't. Those who pass the test will remain and continue with their studies; those who fail are rejected. Every test and trial has within it the element of elimination. Those who do not stand and pass the test are eliminated - not killed or tortured - but cast off, excluded, rejected, prevented from entering in to the new realm. That this possibility exists in the callings of God is clearly seen by the earnest exhortation of Paul when he writes to the saints at Corinth, "So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:24-27). The Revised Standard Version reads, "I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air (a shadow boxer), but I pummel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." Paul realized that the thing that could disqualify him from the priesthood was his old body, his flesh. He fought against it, he pummeled it, he beat it down, as some translations say, not yielding to the desires of the flesh, but bringing his body into subjection to the spirit, lest after a wonderful and successful preaching ministry, he himself would be cast away, rejected from the High Calling of God. Being a preacher, even a great preacher, even a preacher of sonship and kingdom truths, is not sufficient to qualify one for sonship in the Kingdom or the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. And I can assure you that there are vast numbers of preachers who will be eliminated in that day; those who have not been able to pass the test.

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" The great desire of Paul's heart was to qualify and not be a castaway, and to help others to attain also. He wanted to attain and apprehend that for which Christ had apprehended him and to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3). "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:28-29). This is the great cry and longing of my heart also, that with Paul I may be counted worthy of the Kingdom and a place in the Royal Priesthood, and to help you, my reader, to attain also. It is wonderful to hear preachers describe the glories of sonship, the priesthood, and the kingdom. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, we shout aloud and praise God when we hear, but are we going to be partakers of the glory? That is the question. Not all who imagine themselves to be sons, not all who speak passionately of their place in God, not all who boast of their position in the Kingdom are going to make it - only a few, methinks. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Mat. 20:16). "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat.7:14). There is a price to pay to follow on to know the Lord; a test to pass. Will I pass the test? Will you?

"And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and PURGE them as gold and silver." In the refining and purifying process there is a purging taking place. 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. These 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 is a change of leadership in the Soviet Union there is a purge of the high officials. Many are demoted to a lesser office, some are retired altogether, while others are promoted to higher positions and power. This is what is called a purge. The Lord, when He comes to His temple, PURGES THE SONS OF LEVI. Only the ones who have completely surrendered to His will, and have walked in His ways, who have clean hands and pure hearts, will remain to reign with Him. How can any one be put in a place of authority in the Kingdom who has not come to the place of complete SUBORDINATION TO THE KING? He will purge the sons of Levi, the priests, removing those He cannot trust to do His will and cooperate completely in the administration of His Kingdom. The ways of Babylon must be purged, the attributes of the carnal mind must be cleansed, all self-hood must be purified. The ones who will abide the day of His coming are those He is refining and purifying now. The whole object of this refining is that the priesthood "may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." And methinks that the priests themselves ARE THE OFFERING!

God wants outward holiness and He wants inward holiness. Soap for the outside, fire for the inside. But God does not want outward holiness apart from inward holiness. That's what the Pharisees had, you know. Outwardly they looked marvelous, outwardly they were so religious it knocked your eye out, but the Lord who can see through a thick cloud and whose eyes penetrate the depths of darkness could see that inwardly they were full of dead men's bones - the skeletal form of their father's religion, but void of the life and substance thereof. Outwardly bright white-washed sepulchers, but inwardly full of death and corruption - form without essence, works without life, revelation without reality!

## **THE REFINING FIRE**

"And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."

In this wonderful process the miner mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner. I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. It's the refiner 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 may appear today very beautiful and all gift-wrapped and glorious in the grace of God, but I'm not deceived, and heaven is not deceived, and I sincerely hope that you are not deceived. It is not my intention to either affront or insult those who read these lines, but I must remind every child of God that any man or woman saved by God's grace is nothing but a decorated mud ball. You are ore brought up from the depths, 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 salvation, we became His property, purchased by His blood.

"Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). "The Father has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13, Amplified).

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. 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. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing that is called REFINING. Our lives, dear ones, are like that. There is so much that is worthwhile in us, but so much that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. So much that is of the Spirit, and so much that is of the flesh. So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has a mixture. And that is why there has to be the furnace of fire. The ore which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fulfill any useful purpose in His plans. Of these He says, "With them I am not well pleased."

Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees us, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure precious metal content, but it is disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use us in that condition of mixture, so He comes to us as a refiner's fire. And immediately we wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and I might add, He is showing up in a FORM that we did not expect. Yes, 'tis the same Jesus, the lovely Saviour who so graciously saved us by His grace, but He comes now, not to forgive and bless and coddle and wink at all our 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.

## THE FIERY TRIAL

One aspect of God's fire is affliction, reverses, calamities, heartbreak, disappointment, trouble, suffering - all this and more besides, everything that breaks and processes and moulds the character of God into our lives. People say, "I don't know why God has allowed all of this to happen to me!" Ah - that's an easy thing to solve - He lets it happen because you need it! Since we are now HIS, His ore, we ought not be surprised at any of the processings which He brings our way, but rather we see the hand of our Father in all these things, knowing that in His own mystical and divine way He is working it all for our good and unto His glory.

The apostle Peter expressed the truth of it this way: "Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered by the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange - unusual and alien to you and your position - were befalling you" (I Pet. 4:12, Amplified). "THINK IT NOT STRANGE," the King James version says - do not be amazed and bewildered, do not be astonished, do not be alarmed as though the experience is foreign, unexpected, abnormal, a surprise. It is not an accident - it was PLANNED. It is not a surprise - it was PURPOSED.

If we love the Lord and long to see His purpose realized in our lives, we must be willing to accept Him as a refiner's fire. We accepted Him as Saviour, now we must accept Him as Fire. We must be willing to embrace the means He uses to sanctify us. He sanctifies us in the crucible of adversities. The trials, afflictions, sufferings He sends us are not punishments for past sins but divine tools to conform us to His image. Paul's thorn in the flesh, Job's loss of all his possessions, family and health, Joseph's betrayal by his brethren, his being sold as a slave, and later his being falsely accused and thrown in prison, were all for a divine purpose. Taken to the isle of Patmos, John was made to see a great multitude of saints from every nation standing before the Lamb of God. Each was clothed in white robes and held a palm branch in his hand. The WHITE robes speaks of purity; the palm branch denotes victory. Being made pure by the inwrought righteousness of Christ also brings victory over self. Asked by one of the elders, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" John answered, "Sir, you know." He was then told, "These are they who have come out of GREAT TRIBULATION; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Each of these white-robed saints had to experience GREAT tribulation. But as the result of their going THROUGH that great tribulation, God's purpose was accomplished in their lives. Cleansed and purified by the Lamb, they were also transformed into His very likeness.

It is necessary that testings come. It is necessary that God's elect be tried. It is the fierce heat of THIS OVEN OF EARTH that separates the gold from the dross. It is the sevenfold heat that purifies the gold, and we must not be amazed or troubled by it. The fiery trial that is to try us is for our transformation. The fire of God consumes without destroying. A good illustration of this truth can be found in one of the physical laws in science which states that matter can never be destroyed, only transformed or changed. Ice, for example, when subjected to heat first becomes a liquid (water), then a gas (water vapor). It disappears, but it is not destroyed, only changed into a higher form. So too the fire of God's glory destroys the flesh by transforming it. His sanctifying fire destroys that which corrupts the flesh (sin) in order to render the flesh holy. The sanctifying power of the Spirit places us on holy ground where the flesh (self-life) must put off its shoes if we are to walk as God wills. I find it impossible to believe that the saints will be raptured OUT OF THE TRIBULATION. Noah was not saved from the flood, but IN THE MIDST of its awful

torrents. Daniel was not saved FROM the Lion's den, but IN IT. Neither were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saved FROM the fiery furnace, but by WALKING IN THE MIDST OF IT WITH THE SON OF GOD. We are not saved FROM the cross, but by it.

Ray Prinzing has written, "God is spirit - that is His substance. God is love that is His nature. God is also light and fire - they are His manifestations. We speak of fiery trials, HE IS IN EVERY ONE OF THEM. May we go even farther? He is the source of the fire in our fiery trial, 'HE' is the fire thereof. You say that God's hand is resting upon you - you say that He has filled with His Spirit and His anointing is upon your life, guiding you into all truth. Then don't be amazed at the fiery testing that is yours also, for with every advancing step into new truth, there needs to be a purging out of error and past traditions which are contrary to pure truth. The fire to burn out the dross is the Holy Spirit God has placed within, your GOD is your fire. The reason you are conscious of the fire is because there remains something in resistance to the move of God, but after all is brought into submission, it doesn't matter if the circumstances don't change, for by then you have been so changed you no longer consider them as a fire in your life. The Lord places you into a situation which almost 'burns' you up, and by your unyieldedness to God you are completely miserable. But when you at last begin to yield to His will, you find that all of the situation has become a haven, and learning to be content in whatever state you are in, you are no more adversely affected by the fire, you delight in it.

"Kenneth Wuest, in his translation, calls the fiery trial 'the smelting process.' A fiery ordeal, a smelting process - why? because it will both purify us, as well as reveal what degree of quality has been attained within. We become so involved with the exterior happenings of the trial, how our flesh hurts, etc., that we forget the actual purpose is for the INNER PROCESSING, until we are of a PURE SPIRIT before Him. When suddenly we become aware of 'what spirit we are of' in some of these happenings, it sends us back to our knees in repentance and beseeching God to purge out these unholy traits. HE already knows what is in us, but the fires certainly expose us to ourselves. Sometimes we bow low in praise because we see what He has wrought, and are amazed at our own reaction to a situation - of the calm, the peace, the rest we have in it all. Then we also have those other times when the agitation of our spirit reveals that there are vast areas within that still need to be dealt with, purified and cleansed, until 'ALL that is within me (can) bless His holy name' (Ps. 103:1). Yet in all of this working, praise God, we find in Him NO CONDEMNATION - just that continual drawing upward and onward, being assured that HE who hath begun in us this good work, will also bring it to a successful conclusion in His own time" - end quote. What a word!

"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 or accomplished in one grand sweep of His hand. To us it becomes very monotonous, for it seems the process will never end. He SITS! From the moment you were sovereignly apprehended by the Spirit of God to be a part of His specific workings in this day, the Lord Jesus Christ has been obsessively preoccupied with purifying and refining what you are 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 you go.

People enter into this walk of sonship and I hear them saying, "I've never had trouble like I've had since I came into this walk!" Of course you haven't. That's the way it's supposed

to be! "I had it better back in the church system," they moan. I wouldn't doubt that one little bit, because God is not at this time interested in either Babylon or the world. His purposes lie with those whom He has selected, drawing them out and beyond the course of this world's religion, and placing within them a divine call, a sense of destiny which must be fulfilled. You wonder why things are so difficult, why all hell breaks loose, why as soon as one door opens another door closes, you wonder why you have all the troubles, trials, and tribulations, while the way of the religious is not so. Brother, you're in the furnace - Jesus is being to you what He promised He would be - FIRE! You are in the crucible of His purpose.

How long will this continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. Ps. 12:6 says, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES." Seven is the number of perfection. It reveals the truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold - ah, it is HIM. The silver - 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). 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 mould. This is a parable of what God will do for us. 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.

A brother has shared his interesting and informative experience at a silver smelter. He says, "I once visited a silver refinery. As one looked in through the door of the furnace you could observe a beautiful sea of molten silver. The flames were reflected mirror-like in the melted metal and one doubts whether anything could be more pure. Then the operator of the furnace added a chemical reagent and within minutes none of that beautiful silver was visible. The material that was added reacted with the impurities in the silver and these impurities rose to the top. The beauty was completely obscured. The operator then used a long handled tool to rake all these impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver returned to its original beauty. Another reagent was then added and the same thing happened. This process went on for about a week and by then the silver was over ninety-nine percent pure." What a beautiful picture of the work of the fire 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.

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, but I have the most marvelous news for you - something good is NOT going to happen to you! I wonder how many people would appreciate us singing on

television, "Something AWFUL is going to happen to you ... Jesus of Nazareth is passing this way!" Everybody wants to hear about the good, the gifts, the blessings and glory all around. But let me assure you that none of that will bring you to perfection. Only the consuming 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. 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. "TAKE AWAY the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer" (Prov. 25:4).

## **RESPONDING TO THE FIRE**

You can do one of two things when the pressures come. You can either REACT or you can RESPOND. What is the difference? To react is: "Why did this happen to me? Why didn't it happen to somebody else? I'm so fed up with so-and-so and such-and-such." That is reaction - plain and simple. We can talk of how good God is, of the great revelations He has given, of marvelous truths revealed, of glorious experiences received, of the high realm to which we are called - but how do you do when the fire starts burning? The accurate test of the quality of what is built into our spiritual lives is: How do we act when put under pressure? Do we react, or do we respond? How do you do, precious friend of mine, when the heat is turned up? Do you go to pieces? Do you wring your hands in dismay? Do you moan and cry? Does your brow furrow with worry and frustration? Is your heart seized with fear? Do you ask, "Where are you, God? What did I do to deserve this?"

The question is just this - How do you do when you're in a test? What do you do when sickness strikes...financial crisis ... trouble in the family ... problems at work... car breaks down ... when the heavens seem like brass and God appears to be a trillion miles away. Our God is a God who hides Himself, who draws the curtain, who veils His presence and withdraws His hand, that those who are growing up into His image may be tested. There come seasons of drought in every soul, as well as times of rain. There are times of storm as well as periods of fair weather. There are seasons of difficulties as well as days of blessing. There are the times when God is building a fire under your pot, because He plans to bring some changes in you.

But RESPONDING when testing comes is like this: "Lord, you have permitted this to come upon me; it couldn't happen if You didn't allow it, You're my Father. What are you trying to tell me? What are you working at getting rid of? What scum is there down there? What thing is there in me that is alien to your purpose, a hindrance to the revelation of Yourself through me? Why are You turning up the fire again, Lord; what are you wanting to teach me? I commit myself into Your hands, Father; I commit all my way unto you. I trust you with all I have and all I am. Do with me as You see fit, what you know is best. I say Yes to Your will, Yes to Your ways, Yes to Your word, my God!" That is RESPONDING. The fires will go out and the testings will end when they have accomplished the purpose for which the fire was kindled in the first place - when you've gotten the message, when you've learned the lesson, when you've been completely purged, purified and transformed, when everything that is not of Christ is out of your mind, out of your nature, out of your character, out of your disposition, out of your emotions, and out of your life!

Who may abide - endure - wait for - the day of HIS COMING? So many are content in that spiritual place where they are. The vast majority of Christians are satisfied with the forgiveness realm, the blessing realm, the gift realm where all is received by free grace through faith. Everything in those 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 ye 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 children receiving gifts from their parents is a blessed world indeed!

The question follows - Who will wait for the day of HIS COMING? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. Ah, beloved, this is not the blessing realm, it is something beyond the gifts and benefits obtained by grace through faith. This is the PURGING, CLEANSING AND PURIFYING REALM! It is the realm of qualifying for sonship, of preparation for the Kingdom, of readiness to rule and reign with Christ as a King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. And who shall stand - or who can withstand, who can stand against it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refiner's fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth!

Even so, Come Lord Jesus!

#### THE REFINER'S FIRE

He sat by a furnace of seven-fold heat As He watched by the precious ore,  
And closer He bent with a searching gaze As He heated it more and more.  
He knew He had ore that could stand the test And He wanted the finest gold,  
To mold as a crown for the King to wear, Set with gems of price untold.  
So He laid our gold in the burning fire, Tho' we fain would say Him, "Nay";  
And watched the dross that we had not seen, As it melted and passed away.  
And the gold grew brighter and yet more bright, But our eyes were dim with tears,  
We saw but the fire - not the Master's hand, And questioned with anxious fears.  
Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow As it mirrored a Form above,  
That bent o're the fire, tho' unseen by us, With a look of ineffable love.  
Can we think it pleases His Loving heart To cause us a moment's pain?  
Ah no! but He sees thro' the present cross The bliss of eternal gain.  
So He waited there with a watchful eye, With a love that is strong and sure,  
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat Than was needed to make it pure.

#### FIRES FOR GLORY

In the Fires of our affliction, All predestined for our good,  
We can see the fourth man walking, Forming now a son of God.  
Lest our souls fall in that furnace, Be consumed by sorrow sore,  
He has sent the Holy Spirit, Our deliverance to insure.  
He knows what will purify us, Knows the way, has gone before,  
And He planned this fiery furnace, Not an end - but as the DOOR.  
For our body, soul, and spirit, As a substance to refine,  
From these fiery trials and sorrows, Shall emerge, with glory shine.  
Not a golden, evil image, As some heathen king did mold,  
But a precious Holy Image, A reflected son of God.  
So wait my soul, wait on His workings, Wait my spirit, patiently,

Wait my body, for the changing, Rising up triumphantly.  
In the ages yet unrolling, We shall still His glories share,  
For the plan of God is ceaseless, His salvation making bare.  
Mortal minds cannot receive it, This supernal plan so great,  
One that covers all the ages, Ending sin, and fear, and hate.  
So we give Him all the glory, Knowing fiery trials now,  
Will present us in His likeness, All is well, that He allows.

- Irene Lindsay

# *Chapter 33*

## *Coming In Resurrection Power*

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

"Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen... Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (I Cor. 15:12,13,51).

Of all the dreams the heart of man has ever entertained, none has been more desirable, precious, and worthy of attainment, regardless of the cost, than the dream of immortality. Let's be honest; if there was an elixir that was invented guaranteed to give immortality to our physical bodies, we would all buy it and drink it! Kings and emperors who have conquered the world would gladly have exchanged all they had gained for immortality. But all the wealth of all the nations that lay prostrate before their victorious swords, even combined with all the riches amassed in their vast treasure houses, could not buy them so much as one single second's extension of time.

"It is appointed unto man once to die," says the Word of God. And, short of the coming of Jesus Christ, nothing would ever have changed that. It is as inevitable as God Himself can make it. Millionaires may offer their doctors vast fortunes to prolong their lives a month ... a day... at least an hour...or even a few minutes. But there comes a time when all the money in the world cannot stay the hand of death. The word "death" has many meanings to many people. To some it means the final and futile end of all their efforts - the leaving behind of all that they have striven for all their lives. There were no pockets in the ancient burial shroud, for those departing this world take with them only what they have in their hearts. All other treasures - no matter how valuable, or what the cost to the individual accumulating them - are left behind. Then, too, there is the sorrow of departing with loved ones. This is death's most devastating blow - the absence of someone we love so dearly. And, if this were the end, we would be most miserable indeed. **BUT IT DOES NOT END THERE!**

The resurrection from the dead is indeed a thing which seems incredible to the mind of the natural man. Yet almost two millenniums ago Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed by the Spirit of God these startling words: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (Jn. 11:25-26). This, of course, is the greatest thing anybody could ever know and this assurance centers in Jesus Christ and in His resurrection. This is the hope and the only hope of all mankind. Until Christ came into the world men had no hope. We do not realize that today. We think that people have always had hope. But that is not so. Except for those few people who clung to the promises of God given in the Old Testament, most of the world dwelt in absolute hopelessness. There was no substantial promise; there was no concrete evidence; there was nothing but the vain wish which was

so often the father of the thought that perhaps people who died lived still in another world, or should come back and live again. Everywhere, people watched with great despair as their loved ones were lowered into the grave. "If a man die, shall he live again?" was the burning question left unanswered. There were nothing but shadowy unsubstantial wishes that filled the hearts of men. And in the night watches, those cold doubts came swirling into the heart and mind, chilling the soul; thoughts that came right out of the sepulcher and the tomb.

But then...Jesus came and all was changed! Life and immortality were brought to light by Christ and His resurrection from the dead. The dark door of death was broken down, and One stepped back into this world from that dread realm. This was no vain speculation; this was a CERTAINTY! Hundreds of credible witnesses saw Him, talked with Him, touched Him, held Him. This was no mere argument but a resurrected Christ! This was nothing like the pale hopes of the Egyptians who thought that their people would come back and through some transmigration of the soul would go into one sort of animal after another until finally they made it back into human form again. This was nothing like the foolish hopes of the Eastern religions and so-called Metaphysics who trusted in the reincarnation of their souls into mortal human bodies again and again throughout long ages, to bring them ultimately to perfection and oneness with God. Instead of reincarnation the Bible teaches resurrection. This was nothing like the early Greeks described by Homer in the Odyssey, where Odysseus and Achilles go into the nether world and see these miserable shades, the ghosts of people who had died. What a terrible picture they paint, where all alike are miserable. Ghosts flit aimlessly about, some more tormented than the rest, but none finding joy or satisfaction, until Achilles says, "I would rather be a poor paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than be king of kings among the dead."

Jesus Christ came and offered no vain speculation or philosophical argument, but offered His living body as the One that had risen from the dead. Christ arose from the dead and that was the greatest moment in the history of this world. He declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jn. 14:19). What a wonderful thing that is, to live forevermore! To live forevermore in a new body with no more pain, no more aches, no more arthritis, no more back trouble, no more gout, no more cancer, no more weakness, ageing, nor death! All of that is gone. We shall have a new body, fashioned after His own body of glory and power, a body of immortality and incorruption, where the sting and the dark victory of death shall be forever abolished. Praise His name!

## **THE RESURRECTION BODY OF JESUS**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a certainty beyond all question. Our faith as Christians has no basis if the Christ who was born at Bethlehem, and died on Calvary, is still within a Palestinian tomb; if He did not reanimate that body by the Holy Ghost and rise in a bloodless body from that sepulcher of stone. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (I Cor. 15:14-18).

The Word of God bears immutable testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ arose triumphant over death, hell and the grave. Jesus' humanity was "swallowed up"

completely by divinity and spirit. In the days of His flesh He made Himself subject to the law of the earth, earthly. He who knew no limitations became subject to the limitations of His own creation. At His birth He entered this earth realm as a normal human baby boy. There was no halo, nor did He wave at the shepherds as they entered the stable that starlit night in Bethlehem, announcing from the manger, "Hi, fellows, I was expecting you!" He was born and He grew up as any other person. He showed His humanity continually; He hungered, He thirsted, He grew weary, He wept, He slept and lived as a man. However, in His resurrection His humanity was made subject unto the law of spirit and divinity. The risen, glorified Christ will never again suffer in the flesh; neither shall He hunger, sleep, weep, thirst, grow weary, older, or weaker, or be controlled by the fleshly realm of the world system or the laws thereof. He is forever the resurrected and glorified Christ of glory! He completely and forever transcends all laws of cohesion, adhesion, gravity, inertia, interference and resistance. During the time He was on earth after His resurrection, He wrapped Himself in His majesty in such a way, that awe and reverence filled the hearts of His disciples. Suddenly, He appeared right in the midst of them, with the doors closed and bolted. How did He get in? Did someone leave the window open? No, He didn't slip in through the window or a hole in the wall. He walked through the spirit world and out of it right into the physical world. He possessed the ability to supersede all physical laws and limitations. He had a spiritual body, a celestial body - a house from heaven. When His disciples would have entered into closer intimacy, or would have constrained Him to be to them as He was before His death, He vanished out of their sight.

## **THE TWO GLORIES**

One of the most significant statements ever uttered by Jesus was made in prayer on that dark and sorrowful night before the crucifixion. He said, "I have GLORIFIED Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self WITH THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS" (Jn. 17:4-5). Who can begin to comprehend this? Generally, when people think of the glory of Christ they think of the glory He had while on earth: His holiness of life, the miracles, the teachings, the love, humility, meekness and mercy that flowed so graciously from His life and ministry. Those things indeed characterize a great glory. Jesus spoke of it. "I have glorified Thee on the earth" - on the earth plane. But now the blessed Son speaks of another glory as high above the glory He revealed on earth as are the heavens high above the earth. With the most intense desire He petitions the Father, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS!" Come and hearken to what this divine message has to tell us of the eternal glory of the Son, in whom the Father speaks to us. Come and see how truly He is one with God, and dwells in a glory beyond that which can be either seen or known in the earth realm! To be glorified WITH THINE OWN SELF is to be ONE IN THE FATHER; to be not merely the Son, but God. The deeper our insight into the true Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, the more confident shall we be that He will, by His divine power, make us partakers of His very own glory.

We find arrayed before us here TWO GLORIES. Both glories are uniquely the glory of Christ. The one, the lesser, is His glory as He walked upon earth as a man revealing the Father on the earth plane, in a body of flesh; the other, the greater, is the glory which He had before the world was, and which, having passed through death and into resurrection, He now possesses once more. What is the difference between these two glories, and what do these mean for those apprehended unto sonship to God?

## THE GLORY OF THE SON IN FLESH

I would draw your reverent attention to these significant words of inspiration found in Phil. 2:5-9. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him..." The Amplified Bible is so expressive here: "Let this same attitude and purpose and mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus - Who, although being ... one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant, in that lie became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself still further and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! Therefore God has highly exalted Him..."

In this wonderful passage we have a summary of all the most precious truths that cluster about the person of the Son of God. There is first His wonderful divinity: "in the form of God," "equal with God." Then comes the mystery of Him laying aside that glory in that phrase of deep and inexhaustible meaning: "He stripped Himself," "He emptied Himself." The humiliation follows: "The form of a servant," "made in the likeness of men," "found in fashion as a man." Then comes the crushing and mortification of suffering and death: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And all is crowned by His glorious exaltation: "God hath highly exalted Him!" Christ as God, Christ becoming man, Christ as man in humiliation revealing the glory of the Father in a body of flesh, and Christ in glory as Lord of all: such are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge this passage contains.

The two glories of sonship are here: firstly, the glory He had with the Father before the world was; secondly, the glory He had on earth. Then follows the glory to which He has now been exalted which is one with that glory that He had from eternity.

The great truth we want to grasp here is that Christ dwelt from eternity in the form, the essence, the nature and the being of God. In that divine nature He was eternal, untemptable and incorruptible. But when He laid aside that glory, emptying Himself of it, taking upon Him the form and nature of man, He, the ETERNAL ONE, subjected Himself to the dread power of DEATH, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. When the Christ laid aside His eternal heavenly glory, the UNTEMPTABLE ONE took upon Himself all the frailties and weaknesses of human nature so that the One who CANNOT be tempted was found in a nature that COULD be tempted and indeed He was in all points TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE. James says that "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust (desire), and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" (James 1:14-15). Was Jesus truly tempted in all points like as we are, or did He have some advantage over us, some inherent quality of divinity, some unique spiritual power which enabled Him to be oblivious to the cravings and demands of the flesh? May God in His great mercy give us a true insight into the glory of what is offered us in this truth - that our High Priest, whom we have in the heavenlies, is One who is able to sympathize with us in each and every circumstance, because He knows, from personal experience, exactly what we feel and face. Yes, that God might give us courage to draw nigh unto Him, He has placed upon the throne of heaven One out of our midst, of whom

we can be certain that, because He Himself lived on earth as a man, He understands us perfectly, is prepared to have patience with our weakness, and give us just the help we need to enter into His glory.

The point I want to make crystal clear is that when Christ left the eternal glory of the Father-realm to take upon Himself the glory of the Son in human flesh, He EMPTIED HIMSELF of all His prerogatives as Deity and willfully, yea, deliberately subjected Himself to the finite restrictions and debilitating limitations of this physical, material world. As God He had been infinitely rich, while as man He became inconceivably poor. As God He had been the Omnipotent One, but as man He could do absolutely nothing more than any mortal man except as the Father worked through Him. As God He had been eternal and incorruptible, but as man He grew tired and weary, weak and faint, and died an ignominious death upon a cross. As God He could not be tempted with any evil, but as man He was tempted in every point as is common to men. As God He was Omniscient, possessing all wisdom and knowledge, while as man He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk. 2:52). As God He had been the Omnipresent One who filled all things, but as man He lay a helpless infant in a manger and throughout His life could never be in more than one place at a time. As God He had been pure spirit essence, but as man He was a physical flesh and blood human being.

Christ's glory as the Son of man was thus A FAR LESSER GLORY than the glory He had in the Father realm before the foundation of the world. He had faithfully glorified the Father on the earth plane, making Him visible through a body of flesh, as a life lived out, yet, when He prayed that He might be glorified with the glory which He had before the world was, He was asking to be released from the earthly, material, physical form He had assumed, with its human nature and limitations and restrictions, back into the untemptable, eternal and incorruptible realm of divine spirit life. His yearning was to be forever freed from the whole dreadful realm of physical weakness, limitation and confinement. This was to shortly take place through His RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

### **THE GLORY OF THE SON IN RESURRECTION**

When we speak of the resurrection of Christ, we enter a new and glorious realm entirely, for no man other than Christ Jesus our Lord has until now experienced the glory of such a resurrection. In the glory of this resurrection is seen not only the glory which Christ now has in His exaltation, but also that marvelous glory which was His before the world was. Let us consider this glory.

When Christ our Lord rose from the dead, He was raised not in corruption but in INCORRUPTION. That which is incorruptible is forever beyond the power of corruption, decay, or death. God Himself is said to be incorruptible and we are said to be born again of incorruptible seed by the Word of God that liveth forever. This incorruptible life now resides in our inner man, but has not been manifested in our outer bodies. Death has no power over the incorruptible. Thus of the resurrection body it is written: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42-44). Paul declares that this corruptible MUST PUT ON INCORRUPTION. The body of the corruptible man is the body of death, but the body of the incorruptible man is the body of the resurrection, a body beyond the power of death. When Jesus rose from the dead, He arose incorruptible. He had no blood as we know blood. He had forever laid

aside that blood which had been the life of his mortal flesh and was now quickened in His flesh by the life of God, life immortal, incorruptible and eternal.

Many precious saints have claimed that they have already put on immortality, that they have here and now by-passed the grave and will never die. I would overthrow the faith of none, for it is my deep conviction that we are living in the generation that shall see the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God; but I do say that the body of glory and incorruption is the body of the RESURRECTION. When the Kingdom of God unfolds in its next stage of power and glory in the earth, the sons of God will be manifest to the world and to every nation, tribe, tongue and people on the face of the whole earth in the full glory of their RESURRECTION. Being children of the resurrection, they will be seen as INCORRUPTIBLE BEINGS and they will rule the world and bless all the nations of earth as resurrected and incorruptible men. Just as Jesus had power after His resurrection to appear and disappear, to pass right through a wall or locked door, to disclose Himself or to hide His identity, taking various forms to ascend to heaven and return to the earth, to issue instructions concerning the Kingdom of God, even to eat and drink if He wished, so also shall the incorruptible and glorified sons of God have power. All that Jesus demonstrated and demonstrates in His resurrection and glorification the sons of God shall be in the fullness of their resurrection and glorification, for they are destined to share the totality of His glory.

## **MINISTERS OF INCORRUPTION**

Jesus was the firstfruit of the resurrection. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept ... for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end (of the resurrection)" (I Cor. 15:20-24). Paul tells us in Rom. 8:19-23 that the whole creation is in travail to know the power of the resurrection as it shall be unveiled in the sons of God. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. Because the creation itself SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION into the glorious liberty (from death) of the children of God. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (placement as sons), to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

This glorious realm of incorruption which lies beyond the power of temptation, sin, limitation, sickness, sorrow and death belongs to the children of God, but, blessed be God! it is likewise the hope of ALL CREATION. One of the fundamental laws of nature is that one cannot dispense what he does not himself possess; on the spiritual plane this means that one cannot minister that of which he has not himself been made partaker. I therefore declare to you that although the glory of the Son of God on earth throughout His three and a half years of ministry and manifestation was truly marvelous beyond words to describe, still it was a glory which was limited in the extreme. When the Christ took upon Him a body of flesh and the nature of man, He willfully subjected Himself to the limitations and restrictions of that which is material, earthly and mortal. Jesus did not walk among men as the incorruptible God, but as mortal man. It was as a natural, physical mortal earthling that He was tempted; He hungered; He thirsted; He was bound by time and space; He knew weakness; He wept; He slept; He suffered; He died. The life of God resided within His inner spirit, but that life was confined, restrained and restricted by the bounds of the material world which He had taken upon Himself. It is manifest that His body was not an incorruptible body, else He could not have died though nailed to a

thousand crosses! His own human nature was not of the incorruptible nature of God, else He could not have been TEMPTED in all points like as we are. Truly He emptied Himself, yea, stripped Himself of that incorruptible glory of the Father realm and, as man, as flesh, HE COULD NOT, though He were a Son, MINISTER THAT WHICH HE DID NOT HIMSELF POSSESS! If He laid it aside He did not have it. And if He did not have it, He could not give it. Oh! the mystery of it.

It is remarkable that during the few years of Jesus' earthly ministry He never performed one act, not even one miracle or wonder on the higher plane of incorruption. Every miracle Jesus did was in the realm of mortality. Jesus raised a number of folk from the dead, including Lazarus, the widow's son and the daughter of Jairus; but every person raised from the sleep of death was merely raised up again into the MORTAL LIFE to continue their lives for a season in the same old corruptible bodies. Each and every one of them DIED AGAIN! Think of it. Not one single person was raised up out of a corruptible body into an incorruptible body. It would be impossible for the world to even contain all the books that could be written about those astonishing signs and incredible wonders performed by the Son of God on earth; yet, all those works, mighty though they were, were restricted entirely to the plane of the physical, material and mortal. Jesus cleansed the lepers and healed every manner of sickness and disease among the people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that each and every one of those good people got sick again and eventually died! Those were miracles within the sphere of mortality, not ministrations of incorruptible life. Those wonderful deliverances were in all reality but short new leases on the corruptible existence of this body of death. Though Christ blessed men with healing and health and these were permitted to remain on earth for long series of years, yet He merely lengthened out the period of their mortal existence and NONE COULD AVOID THE FINAL CATASTROPHY.

Jesus did many other types of miracles. He began by turning water into wine. And it was very excellent wine, indeed. But just wine, nonetheless. It was composed of the same chemical elements as all fine wine. It was material, physical, earthly. It was consumed by flesh and blood bodies and a portion eliminated from those bodies as waste. Nothing incorruptible or celestial here! And yet it is written: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY; and His disciples believed on Him" (Jn. 2: 11). Ah - He manifested forth His glory, but this was not the glory He had with the Father before the world was, but the lesser glory of manifesting the Father on the earth plane, in the world of the physical, material and mortal.

On another occasion Jesus fed more than five thousand people from five little loaves and two small fish. How we stand in awe before the majesty of such a miracle! but remember, dear ones, that even a wonder so marvelous as this is but a wonder on the physical plane. Bread and fish. Nothing more. Multiplied! And what have you? More bread and fish! Material bread. Physical fish. Perishable, corruptible items, both. The multitude ate of it and their bodily hunger was satisfied momentarily, their mortal bodies strengthened for a few fleeting hours and then all the old hunger and weakness returned. Nothing of eternal value there, nothing of incorruptible substance! One time Jesus caused the boat in which He and His disciples were sailing to move from the middle of the sea to the shore with a speed swifter than any modern rocket. Wonderful! you say. Yes, wonderful indeed on the earth plane, wonderful to the fascinated eyes of poor finite mortals in their limitation and confinement to natural law, and their lack of understanding thereof. But still no ministration of the higher life of incorruption. The disciples who made this fantastic

voyage with Jesus remained but natural men with carnal minds, unchanged and untransformed by heaven's life. Following this miracle creation was still groaning as it had been groaning for long millenniums - to be DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION! Without doubt that same boat which made such a miraculous passage across the sea has long since decayed back into the earth or lies ruined on the bottom of the sea. And creation goes on groaning...

"For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known - waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship. For ... the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rom. 8:19,21). When Paul by inspiration penned these blessed words of hope he did not have in mind a manifestation of God's sons after the order of which Jesus was manifested while on earth. Jesus glorified the Father on the earth plane, and so do we; but this is not the glory yet to be revealed that we anticipate, neither is it the hope for which the whole creation is in travail. The creation is not groaning for another revival, nor for another evangelistic campaign, nor for another healing campaign, nor for more gifts of the Spirit, nor for more apostles and prophets and teachers, nor for more signs, wonders and miracles, nor yet for 144,000 flaming evangelists just like Jesus when He walked the shores of blue Galilee. For two millenniums we have had revival after revival, healing upon healing, signs and wonders and miracles in abundance, and none of them have ever brought forth the fullness of the Kingdom of God on earth, nor has even one of them or all of them put together ever delivered the creation from its bondage to corruption! The creation continues to groan in its bondage and we ourselves, groan within ourselves, as we wait for the disclosing of our sonship - the redemption of our bodies. It is not another "patch-up" job we want, but a full and complete and eternal deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of corruption in spirit, soul and body!

Jesus clearly understood that He could never deliver the creation from its bondage to corruption so long as He remained Himself subject to this realm of mortality. He simply could not minister to men that which He had abrogated in coming to earth. Though He should have walked on earth for a million years in His body of humiliation, gaining in favor with the people and power over the nations through all those years, He still would not have been able to raise even one poor mortal up out of corruption into incorruption. It was necessary that He be resurrected Himself by the power and glory of the Father that He might be able then to minister even that resurrection life to a firstfruit company; that they, in turn, apprehending all that pertains to that life might be able then to minister it to the rest of creation. For this creation waits expectantly.

Let us give ear to Peter as his lips speak of the resurrection life of Christ in his tremendous sermon on the day of Pentecost. Notice that his message did not center in the Christ of the manger, nor in the Christ of teaching, nor in the Christ of healing, nor in the Christ of signs and wonders, nor alone in the Christ crucified, but in CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD. "Ye men of Israel," he cries, "hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom GOD HATH RAISED UP, having loosed the pains of death... for David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not

leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to Me the ways of life" (Acts 2:22-25,31).

How we praise God and bless Him unceasingly for every temporal blessing so lavishly bestowed by His bountiful grace. We rejoice exceedingly in His provision of finances for our daily needs, for those healings which have preserved alive our bodies unto this day, for each sign and wonder which has quickened our faith and given assurance of His wonderful love, faithful care and gracious presence. We would not minimize the blessedness of any of these things, yet are aware that none of these are that for which creation, and we ourselves, are groaning. We cannot - dare not - be satisfied until we AWAKE IN HIS LIKENESS! The glory to which we are called as sons of God is not the glory Jesus had on earth, but the glory for which He prayed when His earth-walk was completed: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Paul wrote, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall YE also appear WITH HIM IN GLORY" (Col. 3:4). And Peter declared, "But the God of all grace ... hath called us unto HIS ETERNAL GLORY by Christ Jesus" (I Pet. 5:10).

I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that this resurrection glory, this eternal glory is the hope of all creation. We rejoice in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, in prophecies, visions, hearings, miracles, temporal blessings and provisions, but I must confess that I am saddened to see the Lord's people continually following after mere TEMPORAL SIGNS and PHYSICAL, MATERIAL, MORTAL BLESSINGS. I would not depreciate for one moment, nor in any measure, the manifold blessings and gracious provisions of God in this earthly realm of mortality and corruption. I, above all who read these lines, perhaps, can testify to God's absolute and unswerving faithfulness to miraculously supply every need in this earthly, temporal realm as He daily provides sustenance for my family and the wherewithal to mail out tens of thousands of articles and books to the elect of God each year. It is all the LORD'S DOING, and I can bear witness that never once in these more than forty years of publishing the Kingdom Bible Studies has His faithfulness failed, bless His name!

And yet it distresses my soul to see my sick brethren (as well as myself) healed by the power of God, only to behold them smitten again later by some other debilitating disease. What sorrow it brings to the human heart to see the precious men and women of God who have walked in the Spirit and have so mightily blessed God's people finally grow old and pass from our midst into the silence of the grave. I grow tired of healing the sick only to see them sick again. It is frustrating to pray for the same saints over, and over, and over again for the same problems and weaknesses. I am tired of seeing the dead raised (I personally know several people who have been raised from the dead) just to watch them ageing and weakening on their way into death again. I tire of signs and wonders which cater only to the flesh, and minister solely to the physical man on the level of mortality: food, raiment, money, jobs, and all the rest of the corruptible things of earth. I am deeply discontented with that which blesses men in the natural but then leaves them to carry on their lives in corruptible natures and bodies. How expressive the word which the Spirit selected when He inspired the apostle to write: "For in this (our earthly house) we groan, EARNESTLY DESIRING to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven... that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:1-5). Paul says that the whole creation GROANS. He says that WE ALSO GROAN ... that mortality might be swallowed up of life! "And He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us His pledge of the Spirit" (II Cor. 5:5).

Christ shall minister His eternal glory to a firstfruit company of sons who shall in turn minister that same eternal glory to the creation. Think not, dear saints, that the ministry of the manifested sons of God shall consist in holding great salvation-healing campaigns, of merely emptying out hospitals as the sick are healed, of supernaturally and miraculously feeding the world's hungry and starving multitudes, or raising some dead people back to life again as Jesus did. What Jesus WAS is not the pattern for the manifested sons of God. The pattern is WHAT HE IS IN HIS ETERNAL GLORY. He has planted within each and every son of God an incorruptible SEED which shall in due time produce an INCORRUPTIBLE PEOPLE. The ministry of the sons of God will be to impart INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE so that ALL THINGS and ALL MEN may be raised up out of the realm of limitation and death into the glorious liberty of the ETERNAL SPIRITUAL ORDER. Glory!

Therefore the Spirit saith, "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue ALL THINGS unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). Here we have the top of the ladder, reaching into the celestial realm - the blessed end to which Christ and life in Him is to lead. Beloved brethren! Let us lay aside all presumption and purge ourselves of every form of deception. I admonish you this day - do not allow any man to deceive you into believing that he can in some way minister immortality to your mortal body - unless He himself dwells in an incorruptible body! Some have professed to have already put on immortality, to have even now passed over the grave; but it should be obvious to any thinking mind that the wrinkles in their skin, the redness in their tired eyes, the gray in their hair, the daily need for food, water, air and sleep, and the unchecked ageing of their bodies give the lie to their confession. Some have tried to teach people into immortality, some have attempted to confess or meditate into it, others have concocted a scheme for baptizing people into it, while others have foolishly hoped to live forever by eating health food. I can tell you without any fear of contradiction that all the fruitarians and vegetarians and food faddists of all previous generations are now lying in their graves along with all who subscribed to any other method or technique devised by man for the putting on of immortality. The word cannot be broken: "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY..." How can corruption impart incorruption? How can any man lift either himself or others out of the pit of corruption by his own corruptible boot straps? "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD," saith the Lord. Let me present this Tree of Life: Christ, risen, glorified and exalted above all heavens! Christ enthroned in the glory He had with the Father before the world began. HE is the tree of life in the paradise of the Kingdom of God! The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. The church in its walk in this corruptible realm has claimed to do the "greater works" of which Jesus spoke, but this is not so. The greater works will appear when this corruptible has fully put on incorruption and the sons of God are put on display in the fullness of His divine life and glory. When we consider the transcendent majesty and power of the glory of the resurrection unto incorruption, it seems but little wonder that these mighty sons of God will bring to pass a world wherein ALL THINGS ARE MADE NEW.

With what anticipation do we wait for this glorious manifestation! Meantime we are taught to believe: "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body..." This is not meant merely for revelation, to be left for the future; for the full development of our life in sonship we must seek to enter into and appropriate it. We do

this as we learn to triumph over death on every level. We do it as we learn to look to Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here and now victory over the terrible dominion sin has had in the body. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). We do it as we allow the powers of the coming age to possess us, and to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our views, to anticipate, even here and now, the things which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Sons of God! Seek to know CHRIST as your redemption. Let this be the crown of your life in sonship. Do not seek immortality in the body realm first, or only, apart from the knowledge of Christ in all His other aspects. But seek it truly as that unto which they are meant to lead you. Nothing will fit you for incorruption but faithfulness in every step of the putting on of the MIND OF CHRIST.. Seek Him as your wisdom and the wisdom will lead you into the mysteries of complete redemption. Seek Him as your righteousness and dwell clothed upon with Him in that inner sanctuary of the Father's favor and presence. Seek Him as your sanctification; the experience of His power to make you holy, spirit, soul and body will quicken you to a power of holiness that shall not cease its work until the sin which causes death has been abolished in your being. Seek Him as your life, and live, even now, in the light of that glory. And as you seek to experience within yourself to the full, the power of HIS TRANSFORMING LIFE, your heart will be enlarged to see the position man has been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to him, and you shall for your part be fitted to live worthy of that high and heavenly calling!

## **THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION**

There is a great misunderstanding among many of the Lord's people about the nature of the resurrection body. Many have speculated concerning the glorified body or the body of glory, insisting that it would have to be a body appearing about thirty years of age, in the prime of life and at the zenith of its powers. We have imagined a race of men, all gods and goddesses of stunning beauty and unexcelled physical perfection, the ideal specimen of humanity, flawless and without any physical limitations. But such is not a scriptural nor a spiritually enlightened view of the resurrection body. In forthcoming issues I hope to deal in depth with this important thought, and in closing this message will but briefly touch upon it.

This brings us to a most wonderful and momentous statement of truth. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote, "The natural man RECEIVETH NOT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED" (I Cor. 2:14). Jesus stated the same truth in different words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Jn. 3:3). It cannot be said of the unregenerate man that he is living in contact with the spiritual world of God. Since that fateful day in Eden's garden when man was banished from the glories of the celestial realm the natural man has been dead, unresponsive to all spiritual things and has positively no communion on the plane of divine life. The natural man functions and knows in this present material world of corruption and death while being completely dead to the higher realm of God and spiritual realities. And so, until a man receives of God's Spirit - the Spirit of God is that which KNOWS - it is impossible for him to have any understanding, either of God, or His Word, or His ways.

The Holy Spirit who knoweth all things has taught us in the simplest and most beautiful words that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are TEMPORAL; but the things which are not seen are ETERNAL" (II Cor. 4:18). All the things which can be seen, heard, tasted, touched or smelled by the five physical senses or discerned by the psychological senses of the soul are TEMPORAL and are passing away. This was already a fact from the beginning, for where is the scripture, O man, that tells us that in that distant dawn the plants were immortal, or that the beasts of the field possessed eternal life, or that the roses never faded or dropped their petals, that the leaves of the trees withered not, or that no tool in the hand of man ever wore out? I declare to you that not only today are the things which are seen TEMPORAL, but the things which can be seen HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TEMPORAL since the day they came fresh from the hand of the Creator. The awe-inspiring wonder of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is that God held out to His creation the potential to be TRANSFORMED and TRANSFERRED out of the realm of the natural into the Kingdom of the Spiritual. I Jn. 2:17 has always been true: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God ABIDETH FOREVER." Can you think of any visible thing that is not passing away? Every form of life upon the earth is passing away, and the earth itself is passing away. The towering peaks of the majestic mountain ranges of earth's vast continents are slowly but surely, age after age, eroding and crumbling away. The visible universe of suns and planets and moons and stars and innumerable galaxies will one day be rolled together like a scroll and the magnitudes of time and space shall be no more.

We know that God is spirit, but what does that mean? Well, spirit is that which cannot be changed, destroyed, damaged, or hurt in any way. Spirit does not deteriorate. It cannot grow tired or old. It is the opposite of matter. Matter is always changing, deteriorating. While you read this page, on an infinitesimal scale the paper is actually wearing out. The clothes that adorn your body are wearing out. The building in which you dwell is weakening day by day. Your body, too, is wearing out - and some day all these things will be but dust. True, it will take a long time according to our ideas for some of these things to happen, but happen they will. There was a time when great cities filled with imposing buildings and splendid monuments flourished in Africa and Asia, cities of which every trace has now disappeared, for they have become one with the desert sands. This is inevitable because matter is always changing - wearing out! "Man who is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1-2).

This is really a splendid thing because it means that the world is constantly being renewed. It is splendid that old and imperfect things should disappear in order that newer and better things may take their place. If clothing did not wear out, many people would continue wearing it for many years until it became out of style and dingy with dirt, instead of which we get new clothes at frequent intervals. If automobiles did not wear out we might still be using the primitive models of sixty years ago. Who would want to eternally preserve something that is imperfect, soiled, ruined, or insufficient? Because every thing of the material realm IS IMPERFECT God has, in His great wisdom and goodness, arranged it so that all things of this realm ARE TEMPORAL and are passing away.

Material forms wear out, but the Spirit of God does not wear out because the Spirit is ETERNAL SUBSTANCE. Our fleshly bodies of humiliation are composed of matter, whereas our spirits are the offspring of God's divine Spirit. Herein lies the folly of those who presume to have already put on immortality in their physical bodies and cannot die. I

have known many precious and sincere brethren who believed that they had by-passed the grave, but I can tell you that today all of them are both dead and buried with the exception of a few who have not yet reached the age where death is a certainty. Harken, my brother! and hear, my sister! the words of wisdom and understanding from the Almighty: "The things which are seen ARE TEMPORAL; but the things which are not seen ARE ETERNAL." The Spirit here reveals the great truth that there simply is no such thing as INCORRUPTIBLE MATTER, or unchanging forms of physical substance. There are no IMMORTAL PHYSICAL BODIES walking around anywhere on God's green earth! If they are composed of matter and visible then they are not eternal and cannot endure. It is a contradiction of terms. Nothing that is seen by the mortal eyes of men or perceived by the natural senses can be eternal by the very nature of things. There must be a transformation, a transferral from one kingdom to another.

The incorruptible body of the resurrection is not a material body at all, it is a SPIRIT BODY. The words of Paul to the Corinthians must be made very real to our hearts: "There are celestial (heavenly) bodies, and bodies terrestrial (earthly): but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. So... is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in CORRUPTION; it is raised in INCORRUPTION: it is sown in DISHONOR; it is raised in GLORY: it is sown in WEAKNESS; it is raised in POWER: it is sown a NATURAL BODY; it is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY. There is a NATURAL BODY and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY" (I Cor. 15:40,42-44). It is plain to see that our present bodies are "natural bodies." The "spiritual body" supersedes the "natural body" and is called in the Greek simply a SPIRIT BODY. The natural body and the spirit body belong to two entirely different kingdoms. The former is visible; the latter is invisible. The former is temporal; the latter is eternal. The former is of the earth; the latter is from heaven - out of the realm of spirit. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building (body) of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon WITH OUR HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed (disembodied), but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:1-4).

Our "earthly house," our physical body, is characterized as a "tabernacle" or more correctly a "tent-house." The transient character of the earthly body is thus revealed by this symbol. This house is to be "dissolved." "Dissolved" is from a Greek word meaning "loosened down," as the ropes of a tent are loosened and the tent is taken down. The "spirit body," on the other hand, is described as a "building of God, eternal in the heavens." The metaphor changes, interestingly, from a "tent" to a "building," from that which can be "dissolved" to that which "abides." My beloved brethren! I have absolutely no desire whatever to have God imbue with any eternal qualities this poor, imperfect, limited, restricted, humiliating, earthly, animal body! My hope of sonship rests not in preserving for either a thousand years or forever a body that must be washed, clothed, fed, rested, groomed, manicured, powdered and deodorized. There is another body, thank God! formed of the incorruptible flesh of the resurrected and glorified Christ of God and this marvelous body is of heaven even as my present body is of earth. I proclaim to you this day that as a man PUTS ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST he puts on not only the spirit of Christ but also the RESURRECTION BODY of Christ, and this body IS our house from heaven. Even as our earth body has come to us from Adam, and is Adam's body, so our spirit body comes from the Christ and is the body of His resurrection. As the pure and holy life of the Son of God is formed within us God shall also give us bodies

worthy of such divine life, bodies capable of expressing all the wisdom and power and glory of that blessed realm beyond sin and death, yea, beyond time and space and matter!

# *Chapter 34*

## *Coming In Resurrection Power*

### *(continued)*

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

If you will in spirit stand "as in the beginning" with your all-wise heavenly Father, you will behold the unfolding of the mystery of His divine intention for man. Your heart will throb with unspeakable joy as you hear the words, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." "Garments" is one of the most interesting words to be found in use as a Semitic symbol in scripture. Since the greater part of the writings of most of the Old Testament prophets is couched in figurative language abounding with Hebrew sign-words it is not surprising that an adaptable term like "garments" or "coats" should find wide usage as a figure of speech. When the prophet sings by the Spirit: "The Lord God ... hath covered me with the GARMENTS of salvation," with the parallel phrase, "He hath covered me with a ROBE of righteousness," it is obvious that he is not speaking literally of material "garment" or "robe" to be worn upon the physical body. It is interesting, however, that the human body itself, and the glorified body of the resurrection, are both referred to as "clothing" which prevent our spirits from being found "naked". "For in this (body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be CLOTHED UPON with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being CLOTHED we shall not be found NAKED. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be UNCLOTHED, but CLOTHED UPON, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:2-4).

In the vast storehouse of truth contained in the Word of God no facet nor part thereof is in any way more outstanding or clear than the truth that man was designed by his Creator to possess a body. Man is not designed to have his spirit or soul flit about through eternity without a body. The apostle Paul echoes the sense of revulsion found in the heart of every man at the thought of being found "naked" or disembodied upon physical death. Speaking of the earthly residence of the body of flesh he writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). The desire of the man who is begotten of God, whose spirit is a living spirit born from above, is that he should be clothed with a body at all times, and after speaking of this desire to be clothed upon with a heavenly, eternal body the apostle hastily adds, "He that hath wrought us for this very thing IS GOD" (II Cor. 5:5).

Many times in the years of my ministry I have been asked, "Why should there be a BODILY resurrection? Why not simply pure SPIRIT?" When we consider that man was created and formed spirit, soul, and body, we realize that the body belongs to THE

ESSENCE OF MAN. The body is not a prison for the spirit and soul, but rather the HOUSE, the tabernacle in which spirit and soul live. Therefore without a body man is naked and homeless. The body is designed for the expression of our spirit-soul-mind. Even as God is three manifestations in one person of being, so are we three in one - body, soul, and spirit. When God said to Adam, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely DIE" (Gen. 2:17), in the deepest sense, of course, this meant spiritual death; but it also included physical death. Therefore, since physical death is the direct result of sin, if there were no bodily resurrection SOMETHING OF THE EFFECTS OF SIN WOULD ETERNALLY REMAIN IN THE REDEEMED. In other words, without bodily resurrection man would be stripped of one-third of his essence. If in eternity man should be only spirit and/or soul without a body, sin would have won a partial victory. Even in the natural realm the human body is undoubtedly among the most profound wonders of creation. Its mysterious composition and intricate complexities and physiological marvels are so great that I know not how any man of medicine or science could ponder its magnificence and fail to see the master mind of an omniscient Creator. But in the scriptures we see that the Spirit of the Creator declares that not only is there this physical body of the earth realm, but there is also the spiritual body of the heavenly order, and the glory of the terrestrial is one, but the glory of the celestial is another.

### **WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?**

The life which Jesus gives is Himself, and the life, which He is, is imperishable. Those who partake of it cannot perish, for they have passed from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life. "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall NEVER PERISH" (Jn. 10:28). Jesus did not die that you might live! Jesus died that He might GIVE HIS LIFE to you. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). HE is the kernel that fell into the ground and died, and, in dying, the life which He is has reappeared in the millions of those who have believed. Because His life is imperishable, they who receive Him shall never perish.

The flesh which we inherited from Adam who was of the earth, earthy, is counted by God to be nothing more than a seed. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou SOWEST NOT THAT BODY THAT SHALL BE, but bare grain (seed), it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but GOD GIVETH IT A BODY as it hath pleased Him, and TO EVERY SEED HIS OWN BODY" (I Cor. 15:35-38). I must confess that I used to believe, as many folk do, that in the resurrection the same body that goes into the grave would be the body that comes out of the grave. I wonder how many who read these lines have asked the question posed by the apostle: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Ah, how often through many years did I ask myself those very questions! I am confident that you, too, have asked. We have pondered how God would reconstruct the atoms of this flesh body and fashion it again into the likeness we once knew.

Consider for a moment the state of those who are dead. Some people suppose that those we lay away in their ornate coffins are to be taken up like those well preserved mummies of Egypt, but it is not so! This body speedily falls into dissolution - the first thing that goes is the brain and soon there is a large cavity between the ears; the heart soon follows. These are the two vital organs of man, and the rest of the body trails along not

far behind. The bones are the last to disintegrate. And so man returns to the dust. Open any casket left long in the ground and you find but a bit of brown dust.

Consider where these people have gone. Many have been dissolved in lime pits, or burned in great fires, or buried in the depths of the sea. There are those who have been eaten by beasts. I think of Roger Williams, the Governor of one of our first colonies. He had an unseemly fate befall him. When his casket was taken up to give it a more noble burial, it was found that an apple tree had pried open the lid, reached in and sucked poor Roger out, tooth and claw, head and foot. The poor fellow was gone altogether! He is no exception, for this is what has happened to the vast majority of the people in the world. They have returned to the elements; they have been eaten by other creatures; their particles are spread sometimes as far as from pole to pole. What has happened to the ancient king Nebuchadnezzar? or Alexander the Great? or Caesar? One part may be in the desert sands of the great Sahara and another part floating in the waters of the mighty Pacific Ocean. Are these to rise again? There are those whose particles are buried in some deep cavern at the bottom of an ancient main or found among the trackless deserts, seen only by the vulture's eye. Can these live again? Is that not indeed a thing to be thought incredible? Where indeed are the remains of man? Or perhaps we should more accurately ask: "Where are they not?" Blows there any wind down any street that does not contain within its swirl some portion of that which was once the son of Adam? Breaks there a wave upon any shore that contains not in solution some relic of that which once was called man? He is found under every tree, in every crevice and in every corner, under every meadow, perhaps in almost every flower. Shall these live again? Is that not a thing incredible?

If that does not stretch your incredulity, then let us imagine a man who lived a thousand years ago. His body consisted of 150 pounds of elements such as oxygen, hydrogen, sodium, potassium and a number of others. When his body died it was placed in the ground and deteriorated. And as with Roger Williams a tree grew over the grave and its roots absorbed the various elements which were once the body of this man. They became part of the tree. The tree bore fruit. A cow ate the fruit containing many of the elements which were part of the body of that man. They became part of the cow. The cow was butchered, and the meat was eaten by other men so that these men were literally eating the other man who had died, for the same elements which composed his body became part of their bodies. Then these men died and their bodies were buried and grass grew over their graves and ultimately their bodies were absorbed by the roots of the plants, and the plants were eaten again by animals. We find that the elements which composed the body of the first man who died became part of a thousand men and women. You can see how the bodies of the dead cannot be brought back atom by atom as they were originally. Certain individual atoms may belong to a thousand different bodies, and since no body can occupy two places at once, this makes it impossible for the actual body which was buried to arise with its original component atoms and molecules.

Who among us has never questioned whether in the resurrection we will recognize our friends and loved ones, whether uncle Joe and aunt Susie will look as they did at age twenty, or thirty, or seventy-five? We have debated whether in our glorified bodies we will be visible or invisible to the inhabitants of the earth realm, whether we shall eat and drink, wear clothes, travel at the speed of light, and with hundreds of other such notions we have repeatedly asked the very questions the apostle declared we would ask! "But some

man will say, HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP? AND WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?"

Paul had a word for all who raise such questions: "Thou FOOL!" The Phillips translation says, "Now that is a silly question!" The Wuest translation says, "Stupid one!" The Amplified Bible reads, "You foolish man!" And another version renders it, "You unreasonable person!" Why are these questions foolish, stupid, silly and unreasonable? Because, the apostle explains, appealing to nature, "In your own experience you know that a seed does not germinate without itself 'dying.' When you sow a seed you do not sow the 'body' that will eventually be produced, but bare grain, of wheat, for example, or one of the other seeds. God gives the seed a 'body' according to His laws - a different 'body' to each kind of seed" (Phillips translation). Paul tells us plainly that the "body" of the harvest is not the same "body" that was planted, and calls the man a fool for even questioning whether the corn of the harvest is the same grains of corn that were planted. Let the Ferrier answer this!

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be" (I Cor. 15:37). The apostle Paul here makes a wonderfully significant spiritual use of an analogy derived from his observation of what takes place in the natural world when a seed is sown in the ground and springs up and grows. He is talking about the resurrection of the dead, and compares the burial of a human body to the covering up of a vegetable seed in the earth in expectation of a bursting forth of new life. This is hardly an appropriate comparison if taken too literally, or applied to the wrong sense of burial. A literal dead body does not behave like a vegetable seed; it does not sprout and go on to produce new and more numerous bodies, the exact replicas of the old. When it is laid in the grave it is done with; it purifies and disintegrates. Paul knew this well enough just as well as we know it. His language here and elsewhere implies that he believed in a resurrection of the whole man, and that the resurrection body would be transformed into a spiritual, immortal, glorious body which would never again have to know decay or corruption. But the only sense in which this illustration of his about the sowing of a seed holds good is that the disintegration of a seed in the ground and the death of a human body are in each case the breaking up of a form in order that the LIFE WITHIN may reclothe itself in other and ampler forms - the seed on this earth plane once more, but the spirit and soul on a higher plane.

When we really know life, when we understand our own environment and the dynamics of the biological forces within it, we will surely have a clearer understanding of the laws and processes of the HIGHER SPIRITUAL REALM of the Kingdom of God. When you sow a kernel of corn in the earth of your garden, you sow it out of sight, to decay and disintegrate, that a new plant shall spring forth. The corn you receive in the fall IS NOT THE SAME KERNELS YOU PLANTED in the spring! The kernel you planted died, that the corn life within might be released. In this process the INNER LIFE springs forth and the corn of the harvest is the PRODUCT OF THAT INNER LIFE contained in the original seed. The seed's whole purpose is to die, that there may be a release of whatever life dwells within TO PRODUCE A NEW BODY. The principle is clear - a new, divine, heavenly life has been impregnated into the regenerated spirit so that the mortal body of the believer is a NEW KIND OF SEED CONTAINING A NEW AND HIGHER FORM OF LIFE. Thus it is that as our outer man perishes, as the old man with his works is put off, this outer-man body is "sown," he says, "in corruption; it is raised (harvested) in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised (harvested) in glory: it is sown in

weakness; it is raised (harvested) in power: it is sown a NATURAL BODY; it is raised (harvested) a SPIRITUAL BODY" (I Cor. 15:35-44).

Can we not see by this that the spiritual body IS NOT THE NATURAL BODY RECONSTRUCTED at all, but a brand new, totally different body, the PRODUCT OF THE CHRIST LIFE CONTAINED WITHIN YOUR MORTAL BODY, THE SEED. Surely, if no other instruction were given in the Bible but these few verses, we would have a sound foundation upon which to fasten our firm understanding that the natural body does not in any way become the spiritual body, but the spiritual body is the product of the indwelling life of the resurrected, glorified Son of God! If we would heed the voice of inspiration and revelation as it speaks through these words of the apostle, we would at once see and acknowledge that the "embryo" of our spiritual body ALREADY EXISTS AS A PRESENT REALITY WITHIN OUR REGENERATED SPIRIT! Hallelujah! It is, as a friend has said, "a life within a life, a MAN WITHIN A MAN, and a B-O-D-Y W-I-T-H-I-N A B-O-D-Y." That MAN WITHIN A MAN, therefore, is not as we have in the past supposed, some ethereal spirit, some nebulous, vague, airy, nothingness but IS, rather, SUBSTANCE, the very FLESH of the resurrected and glorified CHRIST OF GOD!

What the New Testament represents as true respecting Jesus Christ, it represents as true of the body of Christ. HE is the firstfruits of them that sleep. Their resurrection is like His resurrection, their life is like His life, as their death is like His death. They are not raised from the death realm by a power acting on them from without; they rise from the dead as the bird from its egg, as the plant from its seed. The sons of God have in themselves the immortality of their Father. The resurrection body is not a restoration to physical life; it is an introduction into a new level of life which transforms the very bodily existence. The body of the resurrection shall come from our resurrected inner nature. If we live after the flesh our inner nature shall not become filled with resurrection life. We die daily, and each day we are raised up. But that which is raised up is not our old nature, nor our old body. It is the eternal life of almighty God. It is a new creation. It is the resurrection from the dead! Do not talk about the old body - the flesh coming up again. We are sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body; sown an earth man, raised a heavenly man.

## **THE TWO BODIES**

With this wonderful truth in mind it should not be difficult in the least for us to understand the contrast between the two bodies spoken of in I Cor. 15:39-50. "All flesh is not the same flesh ... there are also CELESTIAL BODIES and BODIES TERRESTRIAL: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of terrestrial is another ... there is a NATURAL BODY and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY. And so it is written, the FIRST MAN ADAM was made a living soul; the LAST ADAM was made a quickening spirit. The FIRST MAN is of the earth, earthy: the SECOND MAN is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that 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. Now this I say brethren, that FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

These two bodies differ vastly in glory from each other. The glory of the earthly is one, the glory of the heavenly is another. The natural body, the earthly one, is a wonderful and beautiful piece of creation. I never cease to be amazed at how it functions, it is truly an amazing piece of work. Most people like their bodies as Paul said in Eph. 5:29, "No man

ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it ... even as Christ the church." I omitted the phrase, "and cherisheth it," and what an apt description this is, especially of those who happen to have a well formed, attractive body. My! the time some spend in trying to keep their body beautiful; and the money that is spent on soaps, creams, oils, and cosmetics to preserve and enhance the appearance of the body. There is a certain glory about the human body, but its glory is not worth being compared with the glory of the celestial. In contrast to the glory of the heavenly body, this body is vile and humiliating. The contrast between these two bodies - the first of flesh, the second of spirit - is almost too much for our weak and earthbound minds to comprehend. The natural mind and natural understanding cannot grasp it. The Holy Spirit declares that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Bearing the image of the heavenly is not taking your natural body to heaven. That is what millions of Christians think: that one of these days their present body is going to fly away to heaven, there to be clothed in a glistening white night-gown, and strum a harp while dancing up and down the streets of gold. Not so! my brother. Neither is bearing the image of the heavenly the imputation of longevity or immortality to this earthly body, so that one lives for a thousand years or forever in this terrestrial form. The body of our Lord Jesus Christ is a GLORIOUS BODY, or a BODY OF GLORY as the Greek expresses it (Phil. 3:20-21). A body of flesh is a body COMPOSED OF FLESH, and a body of glory is a body COMPOSED OF GLORY. This principle is so simple that even a child should understand it. As it is written, "There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies...there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body."

The most comprehensive single paragraph of scripture that deals with the truth that there are two distinct kinds of bodies, or two totally different bodies, is found in II Cor. 5:1-5 wherein we read, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this (the earthly) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house (celestial body) which is from heaven (the Spirit): if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle (fleshly body) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon (with the celestial body), that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit."

This passage starts with assurances of absolute certainty. "For we know" is as dogmatic and definitely positive as human speech can be. The thing we thus know is that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (physical body) were dissolved, our spirit would not be "naked" or "disembodied," for there is ANOTHER BODY, a CELESTIAL BODY, a SPIRITUAL BODY, a BUILDING OF GOD FROM HEAVEN for the spirit to occupy in the celestial world.

In veritable truth does the apostle say that in this body we groan. We groan from the hour of our birth until the time of our departure. We groan when our stomachs are empty and the pangs of hunger ravish our system. We also groan when we eat too much Mexican food and suffer the consequences. We groan when we get our teeth; we groan again when we lose them. We groan when we are children under the rule of parents, teachers, etc. We groan again when we become adults and are forced to face the responsibilities of life. We groan because of our children, and we groan when they leave home. We groan because of sickness, pain and sorrow. We groan at the multiplied problems and afflictions and troubles and tragedies that fall our lot. At almost every movement of the

body we are apt to come in violent contact with some sharp or unmovable object, and we groan again!

There are a lot of so-called revelations that are set forth these days which at first hearing sound very religious, advanced and spiritual, but as one examines that which is set forth, there are times when we find that what is being taught in some circles is not the same thing which the Spirit of God speaks into your own heart. For example, through many years I have heard a lot of folk speak of the "LIFE MESSAGE" and have been asked if I believe it. I would then have to inquire and probe into their minds and hearts to find out exactly what they meant by this term. Often I discovered that what they meant was that they had attained "by faith" a condition of immortality for this physical, flesh body, which they said would never die. In this body of dust they were able, they believed, to by-pass the grave.

I never cease to be amazed at how much effort people put into trying to "immortalize" this earth body of the first man Adam. The Holy Spirit witnesses that "there is a natural body, AND there is a spiritual body." The order in which these two bodies are experienced is also defined: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (I Cor. 15:46). Most saints don't know the difference between these two bodies! And most have not the faintest idea about where, when, or how to put on the spiritual body. So many of the Lord's precious people imagine that the natural body shall somehow become the spiritual body, or that the first man Adam shall in some manner become the last man Adam, the Lord from heaven. No way! Is that which is spiritual, natural? Is that which is natural, spiritual? Is that which is earthly, heavenly? Is that which is heavenly, earthly? Is that which is terrestrial, celestial? Is that which is celestial, terrestrial? Is that which is corruptible, incorruptible? Is that which is incorruptible, corruptible? Is the first Adam also the last Adam? Is the last Adam the first? Ah, beloved, there are TWO BODIES, TWO TABERNACLES, TWO GARMENTS - even as there are TWO ADAMS, TWO MEN, and TWO BIRTHS; the first birth and the second birth, one of flesh, the other of spirit; one of earth and the other of heaven! The first must decrease, the second must increase. The first must be "done away," the second must be eternally "established." The one must be "put off," while the other must be "put on." One dear sister, understanding not the difference between the flesh body and the spirit body thought that she had already laid hold on immortality for her flesh body and proclaimed on the basis of her conviction that she now had her GLORIFIED BODY. But one day she was hanging her drapes and fell and broke her GLORIFIED HIP!

Ah, hearken! my beloved brother, my precious sister, thou who thinkest thou possesseth immortality in thy Adamic body of flesh. Truly it is written, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me SHALL NEVER DIE" (Jn. 11:25-26). And again, "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead ... NEITHER CAN THEY DIE any more ... the SONS OF GOD, being the SONS OF THE RESURRECTION" (Lk. 20:35-36). What do you expect it is like WHEN YOU CANNOT DIE? What would it be like for this flesh body if it COULD NOT DIE?

Let us imagine one coming into that state of being, yet all natural laws still in force. If you CANNOT DIE, then there is no need to eat food, for you cannot starve to death. YOU CANNOT DIE. If you did choose to eat, you could eat anything, even the very strongest poisons, for YOU CANNOT DIE. Nothing would have the power to kill. Should you be run over by an eighteen-wheeler your flesh would not be mangled, your bones would not

crush, your blood would not splatter; and like Woody Woodpecker, you would arise from the imprint in the pavement and walk away unharmed, for YOU CANNOT DIE. You would be beyond the power of death. All natural laws may just as well be taken off the books, they have become of no effect. If there is still fire, you who cannot die cannot in any way be affected by the burning power of fire, no matter how great it might be. A furnace heated seven times hotter than ever before would have no power. The heat from an atomic or hydrogen explosion can never hurt you; as soon as the nuclear cloud has passed you would be seen standing there upon your two feet, for you CANNOT DIE. There could be no pain or hurt to you, for fire could have no effect. The natural law of cremation might just as well be removed from the books, for it has been superseded. The natural law of drowning would be transcended. Natural law says that one cannot breathe water into his lungs and live. If you CANNOT DIE, then you have NO NEED FOR ATMOSPHERE OR AIR to live, for even without air YOU CANNOT DIE. Nothing can kill you! Should you pass through the most poisonous of gases, you would not be affected, for you CANNOT DIE. Death would have lost its power, and not one thing could harm you or destroy you.

For those who cannot die, death has been done away. Therefore there would be nothing to prevent such a person from going anywhere in the universe. And there would be no need for any special preparation in the way of oxygen to breathe, spacesuit, spaceship, etc. Nothing could harm such a person and it would have become his or her nature to live under any circumstances. The time has come when we must see by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God that THIS EARTHLY HOUSE OF THE FIRST ADAM IS N-O-T OUR HOUSE FROM HEAVEN, this terrestrial body is not the celestial body, this mortal body is not the immortal body, this corruptible body is not the incorruptible body, this natural body is not the spiritual body, and this flesh from Adam is not the flesh of the Son of God! Those who walk in the BODY OF GLORY are those who have been given immortality. The body of glory is the BODY OF THE NEW CREATION MAN, not this bag of bones of the external, visible world. Those who fully "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," who "put on incorruption," who "put on immortality," thus putting on the body of glory - not one thing has any power to hurt or destroy these, for THEY CANNOT DIE. Nothing restricts them in any way. They are as God throughout the universe. They are the living, working, life-giving will of God. They become so one with the Lord that they are ONE SPIRIT in all things. These are the sons of God! And this reality is begun within us here and now, for the new creation is a life within a life, A MAN WITHIN A MAN, A B-O-D-Y W-I-T-H-I-N A B-O-D-Y!

Glorious beyond description is the fact that here and now, even as I pen these words, in the inner realm of our spirit man there is being constructed an incorruptible life, a building of God, a house-body not made with hands, a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not of this creation, eternal in the heavenlies. Not a mansion in the sky, not a cabin in the corner, not a white nightgown and wings with which to flit about over the hills of glory, as the churches so ignorantly portray; but a new life, a new nature, a new garment, a new tabernacle, a new body, a body of light and glory and power, a body of CELESTIAL FLESH, a body of incorruption, a body of immortality raised up and constructed by the mighty working of the INDWELLING POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION! When this work has been completed we will not be found naked, even though this present hunk of wretched flesh be laid aside!

Nothing can be plainer in the blessed book of God than the fact that every child of God possesses two bodies - the outer-man body and the inner-man body. "Though our

OUTWARD MAN perish (Greek: is perishing), yet the INWARD MAN is (being) renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16). As the outer-man body of death is dissolved, something else is revealed - a building of God, a heavenly house not made with hands, eternal. We see that beneath this surface tabernacle, this temporary state, is a body which is permanent. The new body is spiritual from its conception. It grows in spirituality. Just as an oak grows to be an oak so every seed can only bring forth after its kind. A spiritual seed will bring forth a spiritual body, and a carnal seed will issue only carnality. It is this principle - seed producing after its kind - that is the proof of the truth of which I now speak.

A brother in Christ has written, "Peter states that 'God has begotten us again to a LIVING HOPE through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance INCORRUPTIBLE and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.' There is only one who is living - God. There is only one who is incorruptible - God. And we know that He resides in heaven which is in us (Lk. 17:21; Jn. 14:23). The word 'begotten' means fathered. He has placed a seed in this carcass of mine and yours. A child births itself. The mother cannot do it. The child knows the day and comes forth. The child while yet in darkness knows the day, the hour, the very time of deliverance. But the mother only knows of it after the child reveals it. The Christ within us knows the hour, the day, the precise minute. But our outer man has no knowledge of spiritual things. We do not know because we still live in the outer man. The spiritual babe within us lives in that spiritual eternal heavens of which our outer man seeks to know OF and ABOUT, but cannot receive the things of the spirit because it is carnal. So, if you are aware that something is 'stirring' but you can't put your finger on what it is, that is because your outer man seeks to understand or pull down onto the natural plane that which is spiritually discerned. The spiritual man is living in the day of the Lord, but the carnal man still thinks it is coming. There is a new man that has been formed in us. Can you not sense the rearrangement of priorities in your life, and even a change in your personality? If so, you may be looking out of the old caterpillar eyes with the understanding of a butterfly! This is the dissolving of the old and the appearing of the new. The old heavens and the old earth pass away. But the new is revealed. Our mother, the heavenly Jerusalem comes down. Not out of the natural sky, but out of the heavens (spiritual realm) within to be established in the revealing of a NEW BODY" - Charles Weller.

The outer-man is old Adam. It is not the physical body, but the nature within that body - a sphere of life. It is the Adam nature that controls the physical part of us carnally. When the serpent tempted Eve to partake of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she first considered in her mind, then was motivated by her heart, and finally her hand reached forth and took what mind and heart dictated. It was not her physical body that sinned - it was her nature - the outer-man of "flesh" that rebelled against God. But the "flesh" is not the physical body. Your mind, you see, is not your brain even as your old Adamic heart is not the organ that physiologically pumps your blood. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). We have a biological heart, but that is not spiritually the heart of the Adamic outer man which is woefully deceitful and desperately wicked. That heart is a nature. The carnal mind is a nature. The flesh is a nature.

When Paul told the saints to "present your bodies a living sacrifice ... which is your reasonable service," he was not telling them to present themselves before the brazen altar in the temple, nor to physically march down to a church altar. He spake, rather, of the inner mind and will of you submitting yourself to God, and thereby relinquishing the death nature in it, dying to its will and desires, and letting God fill it with His nature and

desires. When God gets possession of your will, the physical body will also act in harmony with that will, for it will perform according to whatever the thinking man inside of it dictates. It can do no other way. The Adam nature covering (body) which we plant (die out to) is corrupt, dishonorable and weak. How wonderful it is that we can exchange that accursed thing for a shining garment of glory and beauty and immortality, yes, even the Christ of God, the Lord from heaven filling our inner-man body (heart and mind). He that hath an ear, let him hear.

We will never understand the nature and reality of the TWO BODIES until we know for a certainty that this outer body we see with our eyes is not the body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Cor. 6:19-20). If the flesh body was indeed the temple of the Holy Ghost it would not get sick or wracked with pain or consumed by foul, loathsome disease; nor would it grow old and feeble, and die. We assumed that when the inspired apostle stated that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit he spake of the physical body. But how can one assume such a thing? The message is clear - there IS a natural body, and there IS a spiritual body - not "shall be," but there IS. Both bodies are present realities. Why should we suppose that it is the natural body which is the temple of the Spirit? How can the natural body be the temple of the Holy Spirit when the natural man cannot ever receive the Spirit? Is it not much more logical and spiritually valid to say that the temple of the Holy Spirit is your SPIRITUAL BODY which has been made the receptacle of the Holy Spirit? The spiritual body is the substance of God, the flesh of the Son of God which clothes the inward Christ-nature.

We have put so much stress on outward things, so much "carnalizing" of the Word of God which is "spirit and life," that when we read the scriptures we oft times overlook the real truth the Spirit is speaking. The real man who is naked is not the outer physical body. In spite of all the "dress codes" religion may impose, it makes no difference, my friend, how much you clothe the outer body - your true "flesh" will still be exposed! It should be clear to all who have eyes to see that when the scripture makes such statements as, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," "put on the whole amour of God," "put on the amour of light," "put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem," "be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," - these cannot be put on the outer physical body, they must be put on in the inner realm of soul and spirit, the hidden man of the heart, even that NEW MAN which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

We are told in the wonderful parable of our Lord that in this, our day, the Kingdom of Heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins. These ten virgins took their lamps (understanding-enlightenment) and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. But five of these were foolish, and five were wise. It is my determined conviction that these ten virgins represent the senses of man - the five foolish senses of the outer man, and the five wise senses of the inner man. The five foolish virgins are the five soulical senses of the outer-man body. A mind that judges everything by the outward appearance as perceived by the external senses IS FOOLISH! To every outer sense you have an inner spiritual counterpart.

Our mind is that part of us which thinks and is the seat of consciousness; it is our intellect and in it dwells our ability to reason. When we are born of the flesh, we are born with a natural mind. We enter this world with five senses: sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. These are natural physiological and soulical senses, and feed information to our natural mind. Peter writes about our new birth in I Pet. 1:23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth

forever." This new birth is by an incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, even that Word which was from the beginning which is Jesus Christ. This incorruptible seed is the life of the Christ which quickens our spirit at the time of regeneration. He is the author of eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I Jn. 5:12). When we are born of the Spirit, God gives us these same senses which operate in the realm of the spirit, in the inner-man body. In the natural no one has ever been able to see in this world unless they have been born. So it is in the spiritual realm. Jesus speaks of this spiritual sight in Jn. 3:3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the Kingdom of God." Just as there are five natural senses in the natural realm, so also there are five spiritual senses in the spiritual realm. The five senses of the outer man are able to see, hear, taste, touch and smell natural things; but these same five senses in the world of the spirit are able to see, hear, taste, touch and smell all spiritual things which are invisible and incorruptible, as the apostle explains, "...eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him - but God HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY THE SPIRIT; for the spirit searcheth (out) all things, yea the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:9-14). When we are born from above the FIVE SENSES OF THE SPIRIT WORLD become resident and operative within the inner-man body. Gradually, as this inner man grows and we are quickened to become aware of these senses, the EYES of our understanding open wider and wider to the things not seen by the natural eye; by degrees the HEARING of faith increases until every good promise of God is established as truth within; in time we come into TOUCH with the Lord in His invisible presence and powers; little by little we TASTE and see that the Lord is very gracious; after a time we come to appreciate those sacrifices and incense-prayers and praises which are a SWEET ODOR to the Lord. As the natural senses can be cultivated, so can the spiritual; and the cultivation of these spiritual senses constitute marks indicating our growth in grace, our development as sons of God, to the completeness of our new selves in the glory, honor, and immortality of the divine nature.

The scriptures are plain. You can have eyes and not see, ears and not hear - so you must have two sets of eyes and two sets of ears - you have ears within that can hear on a level that is not heard by the outer ear. "My sheep hear My voice, and a stranger they will not follow" (Jn. 10:5,27). "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith" (Rev. 2:7).

The sons of God have eyes within that see on a level that is not seen by the eyes of the outer-man body. You can have 20/20 vision with your physical eyes and never see what you see with the "eyes of your understanding" (Eph. 1:18). It must forever be settled in our hearts that there is no true reality in any of the things that are SEEN, for how can we say that things which are always changing and passing away are realities? The only eternal things in the whole universe are the things which are NOT SEEN by the outer eye, and yet it is not that they are really invisible, for they are merely invisible to the kinds of eyes we have in our outer-man body. Eternal things are only inaudible to the ears of the natural and can be perceived only beyond the senses of the soulish man. The Holy Spirit has faithfully recorded of Moses, that grand hero of faith and spiritual vision, that "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE" (Heb. 11:27).

Here is the mighty power of the new creation: it sees what others cannot see! It sees, amid the thousand things natural men see and are guided by, something infinitely greater and more real - it SEES GOD. No wonder it leads a man to think and act differently from

other men. On everything it looks at, the bright light of eternity is shining. No wonder that under the inspiration of that vision it can do mighty deeds, for it sees God its helper and strength. Let me here say to every saint of God that just as, in any pursuit, the eye can be trained to see what others cannot see, so the spiritual eyes of the new creation inner-man body can be trained to see God everywhere. Abide in His presence until the heart is filled with it. You will begin to recognize HIM in everything that happens. Seek to walk in the light of His countenance. Seeing the INVISIBLE will make it easy to forsake this world and do the will of God! The heavens are shut up from the natural man. He cannot see eternal things. He sees only natural things. He cannot hear spiritual things. He hears only the lower sounds of earth.

We have an exhortation of David to taste in the realm of the spirit. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). That's not physical, you can't taste of the Lord physically, we're not cannibals! When one walks by the spiritual senses of the inner-man body He, like Christ, has meat to eat that others know not of and drink to drink of which those around him have never tasted. When a man really tastes of the things of the world of the spirit it is not possible for him to ever again be satisfied with anything less. And especially if he has tasted of the "meat" of God's Word, it is very difficult for him to go back to feeding his soul on the milk of babes or the husks of lifeless forms and empty traditions of men. The natural man cannot TASTE SPIRITUAL THINGS but only such things as he can eat with his physical mouth and take into his soul of the spirit of this world, none of which contain one iota of life or reality.

You also have another sense of smelling on a higher plane of reality. This sense of smell is mentioned in II Cor. 2:14-16, "Thanks be to God who leads us, wherever we are, on His own triumphant way and makes our knowledge of Him to spread throughout the world like a lovely perfume! We Christians have the unmistakable scent of Christ, discernible alike to those who are being saved and to those who are heading for death. To the latter it smells like the very smell of doom, to the former it has the fresh fragrance of life itself" (Phillips translation).

Touch - "Who touched Me?" Jesus asked as virtue left His body to heal the woman with the issue of blood. The people flocked around Jesus to try and touch Him that they might be healed of their many infirmities. Many times Jesus touched them and they were made whole. He touched the leper and he was cleansed. He touched Peter's mother-in-law's hand and her fever left her. He touched the eyes of the two blind men and their eyes were opened. He touched the deaf man and his ears were opened, and He touched the bier of the mother's only son and commanded him to arise and he that was dead sat up and began to speak. But today, because the Christ dwells within by His Spirit, we are able to reach out and touch Him in the Spirit, and we know His mighty touch by the glory of His presence and power in our lives.

The five foolish virgins are the five external senses; the gate of the spiritual world is closed to them; but why are they foolish? One reason is that the five outer senses are BORROWERS - everything they do they borrow - and that is why they have no light in their lamps, because they borrow everything from the outer world. They have never had the INNER SOURCE tell them anything, but they have lived by a borrowed revelation, they have borrowed what everyone else teaches, preaches, thinks and says. And when the Bridegroom comes and the hour of union is at hand they run to the inner senses and cry, "Can we borrow - give us of YOUR OIL!" The reply comes speedily, "NO - go to the source, get your oil as we got ours, we got our light from the inside, from the inner man of

spirit, from the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, AND THIS LIGHT CANNOT BE BORROWED."

There is an inner-man body, thank God! formed of the Spirit of the resurrected and glorified Christ, and this marvelous body is from heaven even as my outer-man body is of earth. I declare to you again that as a man puts on Christ he puts on not only the Spirit of Christ but also the RESURRECTION BODY of Christ and this body is a present reality and this body IS our house from heaven. Just because you cannot see this body at this time, do not doubt its existence, my beloved. It is just as real, yea, a thousand times more real than this fleeting body of dust. Even as our earth body has come from Adam, and is Adam's body, so our spirit body comes from Christ Jesus our Lord and is the body of His resurrection. That glorious body of Jesus which passed through the locked door, and which, like the wind, blew where it would, yet men neither knew where it came from nor where it went; that is the inner-man body of the new creation of which you are made partaker in union with Him. I have been out of my earth body in that spirit body and have looked back and beheld my earth body from another level of consciousness. I doubt not that many saints have traveled to distant points by this inner-man body, ministering to those unto whom they were sent, and have returned, in a manner not unlike the experience of Philip when he was caught away in spirit, or John the beloved when he heard the voice saying, "Come up hither," or like Paul the apostle when he was present in spirit by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the assembly of the saints at Corinth, though his body was miles away in the city of Ephesus (I Cor. 5:3-5).

Jesus, speaking of the power of the resurrection said, "I am the LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven," and again, "He that eateth MY FLESH... shall live." My sincere prayer to God is that He may give my readers eyes to see and hearts to understand this simple but sublime truth: ALL FLESH IS NOT THE SAME FLESH. There is a flesh that is corruptible and there is a flesh that is incorruptible. There is a flesh that is a shame and there is a flesh that is a glory. There is a flesh that is of the earth, and there is a flesh which has come down from heaven. There is a flesh with which we are familiar. There is a flesh about which the natural man knows nothing. The flesh with which we are acquainted is OUR FLESH. That which yet remains a mystery is HIS FLESH. "Whosoever eateth MY FLESH... hath eternal life" (in. 6:54). "For we are members of His body, of HIS FLESH, and of HIS BONES" (Eph. 5:30). Only the Holy Spirit can give us the understanding that Jesus was not offering us the flesh that was born in Bethlehem, or that hung on a cross. NEITHER WAS HE OFFERING US SOMETHING WITHOUT SUBSTANCE. When Jesus said, "Eat My flesh," He was speaking of a flesh invisible to the human eye but a flesh that was and is, nonetheless, very real - the very flesh of His glorified body! ONLY ETERNAL FLESH CAN PRODUCE ETERNAL LIFE! ONLY ETERNAL FLESH CAN PRODUCE AN INCORRUPTIBLE BODY! This, precious friend of mine, is the power of His resurrection. Oh! that I may know Him in the power of His resurrection!

# *Chapter 35*

## *Coming In Resurrection Power*

### *(continued)*

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

There has been a general misunderstanding of the Word of God throughout Christendom concerning the truth of the coming of the Lord; for it is clear as we consider all the scriptures on the subject that the Lord's coming is first and foremost a spiritual manifestation of Himself to and through His people. Paul therefore associates the coming of the Lord with a mighty revelation of the life, glory and power of God IN THE SAINTS. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels ... when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N HIS S-A-I-N-T-S, and to be admired I-N ALL THEM that believe in that day" (II Thes. 1:7, 10).

Obviously, this revelation of the Christ in and through His body IS the coming of the Lord, and signals the full embodiment and transcendental expression of the totality of His life and victory in His saints. It is the second Man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven completed as a corporate body and unveiled before the world in all the splendor of His celestial Being. The words of the inspired apostle Paul come sounding like a trumpet through the centuries: "The first man was from out of earth, made of dust - earth-minded; the second Man is the Lord from out of heaven. Now those who are made of the dust are like him who was first made of the dust - earth-minded; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven - heaven-minded. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so shall we and so let us bear the image of the Man of heaven" (I Cor. 15:47-49, Amplified).

God's purpose in man's redemption is not to just deliver us from the penalty of our sins, but to re-create us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image of Him who created us. Having been molded and fashioned after the image of the first man, we have now put off that likeness and put on the image and likeness of the second man, the Lord from heaven. We must put off the image of the earthy, and put on the image of the heavenly; we must be changed from the natural, earthly, living creatures we first were to be recreated as spiritual, heavenly ones. This is not an option, it is a must; it is not discretionary, it is necessary if we are to inherit the Kingdom. So the scriptures declare, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." My, what a purpose this is! To be changed from what we were created naturally, to be transformed, to be changed, to be transfigured into the image of the heavenly. It staggers the imagination to contemplate such a change; but change we must if we are to inherit the promises.

This marvelous change involves the whole man, spirit, soul and body. Many seem to think that a spiritual body is not a LITERAL body. In other words, that it is not a REAL body, or not actually a body at all, but a consciousness or a spirit. Literal, says Webster, means REAL; not figurative or metaphorical. "There is a NATURAL BODY, and there is a SPIRITUAL BODY," saith the Lord. Does any one suppose the apostle here teaches that there is a "real" body, and there is a "figurative" or "metaphorical" body; and as we have borne the image of the "real," we shall bear the image of the "figurative"? One would suppose they so read, from their exceeding blindness in not recognizing any but the animal body as a "true" body. They seem fearful lest, if the idea be entertained that Christ was resurrected in any other than an animal body, it will lead to the rejection of a LITERAL resurrection. We do reject the idea of saints being raised "a NATURAL body;" and if that is rejecting a LITERAL resurrection of the saints, we must plead guilty, and beg to be excused simply on the ground that the Almighty has said, "It is raised a SPIRITUAL BODY" (I Cor. 15:44).

Now will someone inform me why it is unscriptural, or fanatical to maintain that Jesus Christ has a SPIRITUAL body; and, as the saints are to be like Him, that they are raised spiritual bodies. Because some seem to think that a spiritual body is not REAL, but is only a metaphorical body; and that nothing is real except it be "of the earth, earthy," is no reason why those who can discern spiritual things, which the natural man cannot, should remain in darkness. The realm of the spiritual is a realm which, to those who touch it, is ten thousand times more real than the natural world. Man has been excluded from this heavenly realm ever since that calamitous hour when he stretched forth his inquisitive hand to discover by his natural senses that which is good and that which is evil. On that unhappy day his eyes were closed to the celestial world to discover the physical and natural and to be instructed in this barren realm of death. And yet that heavenly realm is as close to us today as it was then, the only difference being that our darkened vision cannot see it!

By His resurrection from the dead Jesus opened up to man again the spiritual realm "The same day, at evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst" (Jn. 20:19). "And after eight days, again His disciples were within, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (Jn. 20:20). "And their EYES WERE OPENED, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight" (Lk. 24:31). Such language was never applied to the movements of Jesus before His crucifixion, and is used only in speaking of spiritual beings. The spiritual body of Jesus, and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out the door, but simply disappeared or dematerialized into the same elements from which He had created them a few moments before. He vanished out of their sight, and was no longer seen of them on the physical plane, though doubtless He was still with them - invisibly present; and so also much of the time during those forty days. This is how it is with spiritual beings. When the Lord and the angels appeared to Abraham in that long ago, "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him" (Gen. 18:2). He did not see them coming, but, apparently, it was just here, at his side, they took on a visible form.

So it was that distant morning in the dusty little town of Dothan. Standing before the gates of the town and encircling its walls stood the hosts of Syria with horsemen and chariots, spears and swords and banners, a mighty and well-equipped army to capture one humble and harmless prophet of God. It was this army that Elisha's servant, Gehazi, saw. But there was another and greater army that stood about Dothan that day, for upon the

slopes and peaks of the nearby mountain were arrayed the numberless hosts of the Lord with horses and chariots of fire. "My father, my father," cried the terrified Gehazi, "alas, what shall we do?" The dismay and terror that gripped the emotions of this young man filled the heart of Elisha with pity, and, lifting his eyes to heaven Elisha prayed, saying, "Lord, I pray Thee, OPEN HIS EYES that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw. And, behold, the mountain was full of horses of fire, and chariots of fire round about Elisha (II Kings 6:13-23).

Spiritual bodies are represented as SHINING as the lightning. The heavenly messenger who came to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulcher where Jesus had been laid was described thus: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow" (Mat. 28:3). When Jesus was transfigured before His disciples upon the dizzy heights of Mount Hermon "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Mat. 17:2). When Saul of Tarsus met this same Jesus following His resurrection and glorification, the SHINING was so bright that he fell from his horse and his sight was destroyed as by a blazing sun; and yet "the men that journeyed with him saw no man." And it is written, "Who maketh His messengers spirits, and His ministers a flame of FIRE" (Heb. 1:7). Moses walked with his flock along the backside of the wind-swept desert when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a FLAME OF FIRE out of the midst of the bush" (Ex. 3:2). And while shepherds tended their flocks one starlit night just outside Bethlehem, suddenly, "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the GLORY of the Lord SHONE round about them: and they were sore afraid" (Lk. 2:9).

These were one and all appearances of spiritual beings from the spiritual realm. It is a wonderful fact that the elect sons of God are destined to rule and reign with Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven from that higher sphere. This is a presently UNEXPLORED AND UNKNOWN REALM OF LIFE so far as we are concerned. The natural mind cannot THINK ITSELF into such a realm of life as this by any kind of confession, positive thinking, or self-induced raised consciousness. It is only by the inspiration of the Spirit of God that we ever get even a glimpse of a realm so transcendent and glorious. No man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God does, and as God wills we are given understanding. The curtain is beginning to open and some are seeing that which lies before us to be apprehended, praise His wonderful name!

The spiritual world is a world with which we become familiar as we walk in the Spirit of God and experience more and more our union with the Father; a world so wonderfully real that all who once have had their eyes opened to it beg to remain in its celestial precincts, never more to return to the lowly estate and level of the natural man. And now I declare that not only the heavenly hosts, but heaven itself is all around you even as you read these lines, and, should the Lord but take away the veil of flesh from your sight, your eyes would behold the celestial realm and you would see that beings, incredible in glory and power, are all about us; for the Lord is not far from any one of us.

It follows of necessity that man's being, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. A bird would need a mighty change to be able to live under the water, or a fish to live in the air; but the Lord promises a much more striking change to those who are predestinated to be manifested as the sons of God with power.

Unknown millenniums ago Job uttered an inspired statement as he sat among the dust and ashes of his desolation and affliction. "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait UNTIL MY CHANGE COME. Thou shalt call and I will

answer Thee; Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thy hands" (Job 14:14-15). Never did Job utter a statement which bears out the absolute FAITHFULNESS of God to His creatures more than in this passage. He says, So what? If a man comes to the point where he goes by way of the grave - shall he live again? Is that the end? And then he answers his own question. He made reference to an APPOINTED TIME OF WAITING, through which we must pass until OUR CHANGE COME. We will not be left in this "unfinished state." There is much more work to be wrought in us before we are FULLY CHANGED. But even physical death will not deny us that fulfillment, because sooner or later, HE WILL CALL, and we will answer, because it is not dependent upon our state or condition, but upon HIS CALLING AND PURPOSE, and He has a desire to the work of His hands, the end is secure in the FAITHFUL CREATOR'S DESIRE to finish the work of His hands; His desire is towards us and that is the guarantee of our full redemption.

The appointed period of waiting is this long, long night of waiting until all that we hope for in Him springs into full manifestation, but there is not one experience that is unnecessary, not one precious moment that is wasted. Dread not this appointed night of waiting, dread not this difficult time of processing. It is our Father Himself who has ordained that we should proceed this way, and, when He has tried us we shall come forth as gold. Yea, we shall come forth in the likeness of Him who has passed this way before us, and has stepped forth from the darkness of this death realm into the power and glory of resurrection life full and abundant.

## **METAMORPHOSIS**

God has so beautifully provided a parable of this blessed truth in the world of nature about us. Caterpillars do not lead very exciting lives. They are, indeed, to be pitied. They never travel very far and when they do tremendous exertions are required. After all, what enthralling sights do they see down there groveling in the dirt? Picture the ugly, slimy, repulsive caterpillar! We instinctively shrink from it as it wriggles and squirms threateningly. But the lowly caterpillar which crawls along the ground, trod upon by the foot of man, is destined to fly on starry wings in a heavenly atmosphere no longer hampered by earth-bound things but transformed as though by God's Spirit from a creature of the dust to one which has put on a somewhat heavenly tabernacle.

We find ourselves in a condition today not unlike the lowly caterpillar. It starts out its life as a creepy, crawly thing, with a long body and many feet, possessing a voracious appetite, and does nothing but gorge itself on the plant on which it was born. This same creature in due time fashions itself a cocoon, enters into the chrysalis stage, then the pupa stage, and through this mysterious and wonderful process undergoes a complete change, so that when it bursts forth from its crypt of death it is an entirely transformed creature, not at all like the worm that it was to start with. It is now a creature of the air, adapted to the heavenly, and spends its time flying around the heavens, bearing the rich hues of all heavenly things, and gathering the most exquisite of nectars. This change is what in science is called a METAMORPHOSIS.

Paul sets forth the majesty of that supernal glory that now appears like a beckoning beacon before the anointed vision of the sons of God: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49). He also explains exactly how this ineffable change is to take place within the elect. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). "And be not

conformed to this world: but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour ... who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Literally Paul says that we are being METAMORPHOSED into the image of the heavenly, and that God will METAMORPHOSE even our vile bodies. The Greek word METAMORPHOO means simply "to change into another form." It comes from two words: META - which means "beyond," and MORPHE - meaning "form." "Beyond form" - or changed into another form. From this Greek root comes our English word "metamorphosis," which means to change from one form, shape or substance to another. As I have pointed out, the transformation or metamorphosis of a worm possessing a voracious appetite for natural food to a butterfly that has appetite only for nectar is the classic example of a metamorphosis. In like manner our Lord through death and resurrection was changed or transformed - metamorphosed from the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had known to the glorified Christ of ascension and exaltation. And this is just the word that is used with reference to the experience of believers who are to come into the same image of Christ

Metamorphosis is that change which takes place from WITHIN. We are not transformed by external forces acting upon us, but by the breaking forth of a new INNER LIFE from within, the very life Of Jesus! Let us consider the wonder of this thing carefully, because it is certain that METAMORPHOSIS has already begun in us and will continue until the complete transformation has taken place. Too many of the Lord's people sit with folded hands, waiting for a change in some sweet bye and bye, when God's Word clearly shows that this process of change has already begun. This is what must take place in us: we must be changed from what we started out to be, into a creature vastly different in form and nature. All the caterpillar wanted to do was eat and satisfy his natural appetite. The natural man does the same. He is a creature of the earth, and his primary concern is with the satisfaction of his natural appetites. "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh" (Rom. 8:5) and the things of the Spirit mean nothing to him. The realm of the Spirit is non-existent to the natural man, he has no entrance to it at all, but after we are born of the Spirit, and are no longer just natural creatures, the realm of the Spirit is opened unto us and we can now see hear and understand things that we didn't know existed before.

## **FLYING WORMS**

By way of illustration let us suppose that I own both a horse and a canary bird. One day my fine stallion comes to me and says, "Boss, I'm tired of being a horse, there seems to be no future in the business. Day after day, I spend endless hours standing in my stable or grazing about the pasture. Only occasionally do you come and saddle me, and away we go, galloping through the fields and across the meadows. But too soon you are gone and I am returned to the stable. Frankly, Boss, I'm bored. I am smitten with a desire for a Higher Life, and I want you to help me rise to a nobler way of living."

Of course I would say, "Pal, I will be glad to help if I can, but what do you want me to do?" Now imagine that the horse should reply, "Ah, good Master, I've been observing your canary bird. I see it through the window. Now there is the Higher Life, indeed! While I am out in the weather, exposed to the elements, the canary sits snug in the warmth of

your home. In fact, Mr. Canary is always near you, you talk to him constantly, and he sings continually for you. There is no place for loneliness or boredom in his life. No wonder he sings all the day. I believe I'd like to sit on a perch and sing songs! Will you help me?"

How utterly ludicrous! How could I, or any other person, help a horse to live the life of a bird? His nature is wrong. To live a bird life you must have a bird nature! I couldn't even explain this to a horse, his very nature makes it impossible.

To continue the figure, it would be equally preposterous for my canary to say to me one fine morning, "Boss, I'm tired of being a canary, there seems to be no future in this business. I'm confined by this tiny cage and all I ever do is sit here on this perch and eat bird seed. I never go anywhere or do anything. I am bored with this life of incessant swinging and twittering, and I yearn for the Higher Life. I want to accomplish something real. Will you help me?"

I would if I could, of course, so I reply, "Well, Tweety, let's talk it over. What do you want to do, or be?" "Ah, good Master," he replies, "I want to be a horse! I have observed the horse through the window, and there is the Higher Life, indeed. Mr. Horse is not confined to a cage, but enjoys the boundless freedom of the great out-of-doors and the wide open spaces. And not only that - you, Master, go and saddle him up, and sitting astride his back away you go racing through the fields and across the meadows, with the wind in your face and the thrill in your blood. I never get such excitement or comradeship. I want to be a horse! Will you help me?"

A canary bird with a saddle would be of no more use than a horse in a bird cage. Its nature is wrong, and the nature of each limits its activities, its desires, its environment, and its accomplishments and destiny.

To follow on with the illustration, suppose that one morning as I am strolling through the woods a caterpillar came to me and said, "Sir, I feel that I am living a most useless life, wasting all my time and effort tied to a bush and chewing leaves! I want to change my way of life. Will you help me?" Of course I'd like to help an ambitious worm to live a higher and better existence, so I would reply, "If I can. What do you want to do?" Whereupon the caterpillar would say, "I want to fly! I've been watching the birds, and I believe they live an ideal life. Can you help me attain my ambition, and assist me to fly?"

What shall I do? Shall I give the caterpillar a course of instruction in aero-dynamics and the theory of flight? No, that won't help; there are some things that are not achieved by education! Shall I tell the caterpillar how to become a better caterpillar? No, that will not work either. He can be the best caterpillar that ever catted a pillar; but he still can't fly! That's his trouble, he's a worm and worms don't fly! Even a course in positive thinking and right confession won't help the poor worm!

So I say to the caterpillar, "Strangely enough, I can help you. There are certain natural laws, which, if you will obey, will enable you to fly!" In great delight the worm says, "Now we are getting somewhere. Will you teach me those laws?" With regret I reply, "I'm sorry, worm, but I can't do that. I do not know those laws myself! I've seen them in operation many, many times, but I do not understand them, nor can I explain them." The disappointed caterpillar says, "You're a hot human! You've seen this hundreds of times and you can't explain it? What am I going to do, if you can't teach me those laws?" I smile and say, "JUST OBEY THEM whether you comprehend them or not." After some thought

the ambitious worm says, "All right, Sir, I'll take your advice. What do I do now?" I tell him, "Just go right on chewing leaves! You see, when you are ready THE LAWS WILL BE REVEALED. When the laws are revealed to you all you have to do is obey them. In the meantime, just keep on chewing leaves!"

So my caterpillar goes back to his bush and resumes his daily grind. Then one day a strange lassitude comes over him, and he loses his appetite for leaves. He has never had a nap in his life, but suddenly he feels sleepy. He crawls away to a secluded corner, and suddenly discovers that he possesses equipment and knowledge that he never knew he had. He becomes an architect and designs a house. He has never thought of a dwelling before and has never seen one, but his first attempt follows a pattern that is standard dwelling for all caterpillars of his variety, and is perfect for its purpose. He finds that he has a spinning machine in his mouth, and an unlimited supply of fabric somewhere down in his goozlum! He is an interior decorator and a water-proofer as well, and he builds a habitation for himself that the genius of man cannot duplicate. But unbeknown to him, the house is actually a TOMB!

There is planted within the very being of that worm a call to a higher life-form, and, driven by that hidden nature within AT THE APPOINTED TIME HIS CHANCE COMES. These dramatic changes begin with two tiny glands behind his brain which since his first day had been secreting microscopic amounts of a juvenile hormone. As soon as the caterpillar builds his tomb and begins hanging head down from his leaf, the well-spring of the glands attached to his brain starts drying up. These glands had controlled his larval growth, his larval life, and when their life-giving substance ceases to flow, the caterpillar begins to die and the butterfly to be formed.

George Hawtin relates, in one of his writings, an article which appeared some years ago in LIFE magazine. For many centuries biologists had wondered what could possibly cause a caterpillar to change to a butterfly. At last one biologist discovered a very significant thing. He found that this remarkable transformation was caused by a hormone in the tiny brain of the caterpillar. He found that, if the hormone was removed, the caterpillar would remain a caterpillar until death, but, if the hormone was left in the brain, the caterpillar would change to a beautiful butterfly. To prove his theory he joined five caterpillars together, removing the hormone from the brains of the first four and leaving it in the brain of the last one. The first four remained as they were while the last changed to a butterfly. He then reversed the process, leaving the hormone in the head of the first worm, and removing it from the last four. To the amazement of all the whole five changed to butterflies, or shall we say, became the same as the head one. The spiritual significance of this remarkable discovery cannot be overlooked, for it is God's Word in His creation, teaching us that as a worm is transformed to a celestial creature by a tiny cell in its mind, so also are we transformed by receiving the MIND OF CHRIST. Thus Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice - and be not conformed to this world, but BE TRANSFORMED by the RENEWING OF THE MIND" (Rom. 12:12). -The Page.

Open the cocoon of a caterpillar while the insect is in the process of metamorphosis and you will discover that within that death cell is such a mass of corruption that it would be difficult to even imagine how anything as graceful and beautiful as a butterfly could possibly emerge from it. No sooner does the worm begin to slumber in its cocoon than it begins to disintegrate and you would find only a chrysalis full of repulsive, apparently dead, formless, viscous fluid. But before the caterpillar ever crawled upon the earth the

potential to become a butterfly lay within his being from the very moment of the fertilization of the egg. When the larva had begun to form in the egg, certain little groups of cells, belonging NOT TO THE LARVA BUT TO THE EVENTUAL BUTTERFLY, had also formed, and these remained dormant, safely stored within the body of the caterpillar. At the appointed time these cells awaken to life and begin to grow and multiply. Their presence becomes dramatically evident during the six short minutes when the last larval skin is shed, and the cocoon is spun. Hanging there in his cocoon, the worm bides his time and acts out a living prophecy of the words of Job who said, "If a man die, will he live again? ALL THE DAYS OF MY APPOINTED TIME WILL I WAIT UNTIL MY CHANCE COMES!" (Job 14:4).

Lazy days pass by in dreamless slumber. One observing merely from the outside would never imagine the awesome work being performed within that little cocoon. On the surface, there is nothing to see, for the cocoon serves as a veil, a womb, to conceal the marvelous processes which change a caterpillar into a butterfly. As the butterfly cells grow, they completely CONSUME the form of the caterpillar. When the process is complete the hour comes when our worm wakes up. He feels crowded, and his shoulders feel like he is a hunch-back. He finds that he has a tooth on the top of his head, where he never had one before. He starts nodding his head up and down, and the cocoon begins to yield to the pressure of the NEW BEING within and is burst asunder as the beautiful - yes, superlatively beautiful, and heavenly - butterfly steps out, gracefully drying its wings as they unfold in the light and sparkle with a breath-taking iridescent beauty. In the process the caterpillar ceases to exist, the cocoon is discarded, laid aside, and THE NEW CREATION IS MANIFESTED TO THE WORLD! A few minutes later, without asking me or anyone else how to do it, he spreads his wings and takes to the air, to fly the rest of his life. My worm flies because he OBEYS A SET OF NATURAL LAWS, which he never comprehends, and which are equally mysterious to us. But we and he both know they work, because we have observed the result so many times!

## **THE LAW OF LIFE**

There is a sphere of nature where miracles occur. A miracle is an order and natural proceeding on the plane of a law which is higher than our present comprehension. We don't understand all the mysteries of how caterpillars turn into butterflies, we just know they do. In the same sense we admit that we do not know just how this earth-man is metamorphosed into the heavenly man, how this corruptible puts on incorruption, how this mortal puts on immortality, how this vile body of humiliation is changed to be fashioned like unto His glorious body; we just know that obedience to certain clearly defined orders of procedure (laws) results in the supernatural change. This change ALWAYS comes in obedience to some certain supernatural, spiritual laws. What are these laws? Ah - I cannot explain them, my friend, I just know that they work.

Many times through my ministry after having spoken of the manifested sonship to which we are called and the Kingdom realm we are entering, people have come to me with tears in their eyes, saying that they must come into this and how can they do it. I have had to tell them that I do not know HOW to enter into these glories. I am not like one preacher I know who told the people, "Grab on to my coattail, and I will take you into the Kingdom!" The sad fact is that neither he nor they entered in. I am myself only able to enter as HE shows the way. But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that I know for a certainty that these spiritual laws that govern our spiritual metamorphosis will be revealed to you as you are ready for them. And as you OBEY THEM whether you comprehend

them or not, your change will come. So what are you to do if I am unable to explain these laws to you? I say to you what I would say to the caterpillar: JUST GO RIGHT ON CHEWING LEAVES! Continue to eat the Word God is giving you today, continue to consume the truth He is quickening to you now, live and walk out consistently, day by day, the revelation sovereignly implanted within your spirit, and as your APPOINTED TIME comes each spiritual law will in turn unfold before your wondering eyes, clearly revealed to mind and heart.

What a great gulf there seems to be betimes between the condition of the worm and the state of the butterfly! We clearly see on one hand the desperate wickedness of our own hearts, and on the other hand the unspotted holiness to which we are called in Jesus Christ. On the one hand is the depth of our own corruption, on the other is the height of the glory of God, that image of the holy One, to which we are to be renewed. On the one hand is the incredible weakness of this mortal frame of dust, on the other is the awesome strength and glory of the spiritual body. Many times there is almost no spirit left within us. We would almost cry out, "Even with God, this is impossible!" We are ready to give up both faith and hope, and cast away that very confidence through which we are to overcome all things through Christ strengthening us, forgetting that "after we have done the will of God," we are to receive the promise.

The same omnipotent Lord who called us out of death sets in motion every creative act whereby we shall be transformed into the image of the heavenly. Paul tells us 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). A "law" is a natural regulation, a constant and unchanging rule. A law is not necessarily derived from a life, but a life is definitely accompanied by a law. This law which accompanies life is called the LAW OF LIFE. The law of a particular life is also the natural characteristic, the innate nature, of that particular life. For example, cats can catch mice, and dogs can stand guard through the night. These abilities are the natural characteristics and instinctive functions of a life. It does not require human teaching or urging; rather it develops very naturally without the least effort or instruction. Such natural characteristics and innate capabilities in a life constitute the law of that life.

The life of God is the highest life in the universe; it is the transcendental life, the surpassing life. Therefore, the characteristics, nature and capabilities of this life must definitely be the highest and most surpassing of all. Since these highest and most surpassing characteristics and powers constitute the law of the life of God, this law is the greatest and highest law of the universe. When God by the Holy Spirit regenerates us, He puts His own life, accompanied by the law of that life, into us. This law of life is the inward law which is God's special gift to us. This law of life is put within us; therefore it is an inward law. Furthermore, this law of life is derived from the life of God and is the nature and function of the life of God; therefore it is the LAW OF HIS LIFE; hence it can supply and perform on the level of omnipotence, omniscience, and incorruptibility.

Let me illustrate how the law of life works. Consider a withered orange tree. Suppose we set up some laws for it, demanding: "You must grow out green leaves, bloom white blossoms, and bear orange fruit." We know that such demands, though made from the beginning of the year till the end of the year, are absolutely vain and futile, because there is no inward power of life to answer to the demands of such outward laws. Yet if we could transfuse the ORANGE QUALITY OF LIFE into it, though we do not demand anything outwardly from it, the life will have a natural capability and power which will cause the tree to grow the leaves, blossoms and fruit of the orange tree. This is the function of the

LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS. When we allow the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus to work unhindered in us in ever-expanding spheres, the life of God within us can then spread to such a degree that "Christ be formed" in us (Gal. 4:19). When Christ is thus gradually formed in us, we are gradually transformed into the image of the Lord (II Cor. 3:18) and have the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29) until eventually we are entirely "like Him" (I Jn. 3:2). This is the glorious result of the working of the law of God's life within us.

There are certain times and seasons when God brings to life truths that have been allowed to lie in grave clothes for ages and dispensations. As a seed lies dormant in the winter months and then bursts into life in the warmth and rain of spring, so also has the truth of God been allowed to lie in death throughout the wintry night of our walk in the religious systems of Babylon now at last to burst into a fruitful harvest in the spring of God's purpose to bring many sons to glory. There came a wonderful day when Christ came into our lives. "What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, Since Jesus came into my heart," we sweetly sing. But did you ever wait in holy reverence for the Spirit to reveal the eternal truth of those words to your deepest heart? Oh yes, we received Him - as a saviour, as a thought, as an idea or an ideal, as a truth, as a presence, as an experience, as an ethereal kind of spirit, something vague and intangible dwelling by faith in our hearts. The Spirit of the Lord is quickening, however, that there is SUBSTANCE to that MAN within us. When the incorruptible life of the Christ was conceived within us, we must realize that He was conceived within as the EMBRYO of a SPIRIT-BODY. Not just a spirit, but a SPIRIT-BODY!

When Paul speaks, then, of being strengthened with might in the INNER MAN, he is speaking of SUBSTANCE within us. When Peter speaks of the HIDDEN MAN of the heart, he is speaking of GLORIFIED FLESH that has been born into the believer but is hidden beneath the veil of Adamic flesh. A MAN is not a spirit. A MAN is spirit, soul and body. The first MAN was of the earth, earthy. The second MAN is the Lord from heaven. It is this second MAN that has come into us in His life. Jesus never said, "Except you receive My Spirit, you have no life in you." Rather, He said, "Except ye eat the FLESH of the Son of MAN, and drink His BLOOD (spirit), ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). As we feed that man within with the FLESH SUBSTANCE and the SPIRIT LIFE of the resurrected and glorified MAN, this infant spirit-man begins to grow and when he is fully formed he will burst forth from the cocoon of Adamic flesh and stand in splendor and majesty as a NEW CREATION MAN - body, soul and spirit!

Oh! my brother, my sister, may the Spirit of God quicken the truth of these things to your heart! As I have looked to the Lord about these precious truths, it has become increasingly clear to my spirit that Jesus did not receive the GLORIFIED BODY when He arose from the tomb - no more than the butterfly became a butterfly when it broke from the cocoon. The worm becomes a butterfly BEFORE it emerges from the cocoon. The thing the Spirit would teach us in this, then, is that a butterfly does not become a butterfly BECAUSE it escapes the cocoon. It, rather, escapes the cocoon BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME A BUTTERFLY! Even so, Jesus did not possess a glorified body BECAUSE He arose from the grave. He, instead, burst forth from the grave BECAUSE HE ALREADY POSSESSED A GLORIFIED BODY! What a difference! Because He was indwelt by the incorruptible life of His Father, that life being formed fully within Him, He could announce to His disciples before His death: "The third day I shall rise again." And indwelt by this resurrected, glorified Christ Paul could confidently declare: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (cocoon of flesh) were dissolved, we HAVE a

building of God, an house (body) not made with hands, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS" (II Cor. 5:1). A new spirit, a new soul and a new body are even now being formed in that heavenly realm within us. It is true right now that "there IS a natural body, and there IS a spiritual body." The message is abundantly clear - we shall not be the manifested sons of God BECAUSE we escape death. Rather, we shall escape death BECAUSE we are the sons of God!

## **THE RENEWING OF THE MIND**

Biologists have discovered that there are two tiny glands at the back of the brain of the caterpillar which secrete a growth hormone. These glands control his growth as a worm and his larval life. It is when these two glands shrivel and cease to yield their life-giving flow that the caterpillar begins to die and the butterfly begins to form. This is most enlightening when spiritually applied to the renewing of the mind. This is a wonderful discovery, and I cannot help but believe that these two glands figure in some mysterious and divine way the carnal mind which gives motivation to the natural man. When we apply the fact of the existence of TWO GLANDS instead of one, we see an amazing picture of the duality of the carnal mind - the knowledge of GOOD and EVIL and the law of SIN and DEATH. If you long, dear one, to be metamorphosed into the image of the heavenly, then "PUT OFF concerning the former conversation the OLD MAN, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND; and PUT ON the NEW MAN, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

It is an amazing fact that there is an active force, the secretion of a new hormone which appears in the brain of the caterpillar at the precise time when the two glands controlling the larval life cease to function. It is this new hormone which actually causes the metamorphosis from the chrysalis stage to the butterfly. In other words, both the death of the caterpillar and the formation of the butterfly begin in the creature's MIND. The death of the caterpillar is effected by the cessation of a hormone from two glands in the brain, and the formation of the butterfly is caused by the secretion of a new hormone from another process in the brain. In the light of these remarkable circumstances is it not most significant that the apostle Paul by inspiration wrote: "Be ye transformed (metamorphosed) BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND."

All our lifetime we have been subject to the bondage of corruption and death which is rooted in the CARNAL MIND. Ah - "to be carnally minded IS DEATH" (Rom. 8:6). That is God's own definition of death, and according to inspiration death is IN THE M-I-N-D! "It's all in your mind," they say, and though it may be spoken in jest, it is a wondrous and divine truth, nonetheless. In the same chapter a truth is introduced showing that the transformation of the body begins with the renewing of the mind, for, says the apostle, "to be spiritually minded IS LIFE..." (Rom. 8:6). Ah - life, also, is in the MIND! And he continues, "If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU" (Rom. 8:11).

If ever a reason was given for a change of mind, a change of thinking, a raising of consciousness, this must be it: "Be ye metamorphosed BY the renewing of your mind." It is the termination of our old way of thinking - of the carnal consciousness of sin and death - and the activation of a new way of thinking - the spiritual consciousness of LIFE IN CHRIST that brings the change, works the change, and completes the change until our

transformation into the heavenly is consummated in spirit, soul and body. Make no mistake about it! Paul declares forthrightly in Rom. 12:2 that this transformation, this change, this metamorphosis begins with the casting off of the corrupt and carnal mind which carries the mentality of sin and death, and replacing it with the mind of Christ which is the mind of life and glory and virtue. We have heard a great deal about the corruptible putting on incorruption and the mortal putting on immortality. We have embraced many theories about how this would be accomplished, but in one majestic sweep of inspiration the apostle brushes aside all theories to tell us that we shall be transformed BY THE RENEWING OF THE MIND.

Mind means thought, intellect, reason, sense, thinking principle. Thought is thinking. The renewing of the mind means the renovation, reconstitution, re-programming of our thought patterns and processes. The old mind, carnal and human as it is, is always thinking thoughts of sin and death. It leaves us mortal, corruptible and unchanged. The new mind is the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is the intellect, the thought patterns, the thinking principles of Him who has conquered both sin and death and abides forever in the life and immortality of the celestial. The mind of Christ is a transforming mind! It renews not only the mind, but the body as well. Our minds, our THINKING must be raised from the level of the natural, carnal minds we were born with, and they must be spiritualized. This is not an instant change, it is not attained with one grand leap, but a continuous renewal as we hear the voice of the Spirit as He unfolds to us the mind and thoughts of God. These are thoughts of love, of righteousness, of life and light and power and incorruption and glory which transform into the image of God. If we wait in holy reverence in God's divine presence He will teach us how to think out of our divinity instead of our humanity.

Earlier I wrote of the law of the spirit of life. In Rom. 8:2 Paul speaks of not only the "spirit of life" but also the "law of the spirit of life." This tells us that not only is the spirit life, but it also has its law. Therefore, when he speaks of the spirit he speaks of life - divine life - and he speaks likewise of the law of that life. He joins the three - life, spirit, and law - together. Life and the spirit cannot be separated; law and spirit likewise cannot be divorced. Life is the content and issue of the spirit, whereas law is the nature and function of the spirit.

Every life definitely has a certain nature and consciousness. The higher the life, the loftier its nature and its consciousness. The law of a conscious life belongs to the realm of consciousness. For example, our youngest son, in his teen years, was a lover of hamsters. He had a hamster which from the time of its birth had never eaten anything but hamster food. One day he gave it an insect. Immediately, the hamster bit off the insect's head and then proceeded to eat it. Now this unique action of biting off the insect's head before eating it is a feature of the "instinct" of the animal. It is in his nature, a part of his consciousness. Though you breed countless generations of hamsters, and not one of them ever sees an insect, the moment you give one of those distant descendants an insect he will promptly bite off its head and then eat it. He requires no training whatever. This is the LAW of its life - its innate nature and consciousness. Nature abounds with tens of thousands of examples of this law of life-consciousness in the marvelous life-forms God has created on this planet. The law of the physical life pertains to the order of consciousness. Everything is what it is and acts as it acts out of its CONSCIOUSNESS.

The life of the spirit of life is the life of God Himself, which is the highest life; therefore it is the richest in consciousness. This life within us causes us to be full of divine

consciousness, and this consciousness is the consciousness of LIFE. The law of life within us is this consciousness. So - as we put off the carnal mind which is filled with the consciousness of death, and are renewed in our mind into the mind of Christ which is the consciousness of life, our spirit, soul and body will become infused with not only the life of God, but also with the law of God's life, and we will walk in righteousness rather than sin - and we will think thoughts of life instead of death.

As soon as we are regenerated and are awakened to the life of God within, this law of life definitely causes us to have a certain consciousness. Our responsibility is to obey the sense of the law of life, thus thinking and acting out of the consciousness of life rather than death. In the beginning, the consciousness of this law of life may be comparatively weak and infrequent. Yet if only we are willing to obey the first sense, though it be weak, the consciousness following will be stronger and stronger. We have to begin by submitting to this first weak consciousness and continue to submit. In this way the law of life can work within us unceasingly until it reaches every part of our whole being. Thus the life within us will be enabled to expand outward and increase in depth and height until corruption is swallowed up into life in every fiber of our being. This is THE COMING FORTH OF THE CHRIST IN RESURRECTION POWER! This is the Christ the resurrection and the life!

Few believe that the spiritual body can be put on here and now even as we stand upon our feet. Do you? Do you believe it is possible for you to be changed, transformed, metamorphosed in your whole man here in this life? And, since you cannot by any natural process perform this for yourself, are you willing and ready to come under the deep secret law of letting the mind of Christ cancel out the carnal mind, of letting the law of life nullify the law of sin and death in the secret chambers of your consciousness? Within the cramped cocoon which swings through the winter gale on the branch of a tree, a mighty transformation is taking place. Be still - all of a sudden the shell cracks, the cocoon gives way, the folded form stretches itself out of its cramped position, and limbers itself up with joy. In its new consciousness it does naturally what it has never done before, the former things have passed away, and with them all their limitations. The worm can fly! It is the law of its life! And the law of your life, precious friend of mine, is to know and live and demonstrate the full capacity of Him who is within you THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE!

# *Chapter 36*

## *Coming In Resurrection Power*

### *(continued)*

Wondrous things await the elect of God, things which it is not lawful for a man to utter in the hearing of uncircumcised ears and hearts. Long ages have come and gone since that first glorious dawn when the Creator uttered the portentous decree, "Let there be light," and there are vast ages that lie yet unborn before us. Our present dispensation is closing, we are already overlapping into another. Glories greater far than this age has disclosed are already beginning to burn. Dawn with blushing hues is advancing in the eastern skies, stretching forth her golden fingers to draw aside the shades of night and open the gates of day. Soon will come the explosive fulfillment of divine promises that pertain to that wonderful age to come, of which we have merely "tasted" its powers (Heb. 6:5). Our blessed Lord and Christ shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied and that glory is to be revealed in us. The groaning earth is waiting, creation is longing for deliverance. The seas are roaring, the earth is quaking. There are wars and rumors of wars. Amid the ruthless surging tide of unbridled crime, drugs, rebellion, immorality, sickness, suffering, poverty, sorrow and injustice, we hear the groans of the dying. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain. Men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after those things which are coming on the earth. The cry of the oppressed is entering into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. The night has been long, and is so cold and dark. But the "Day Star" is arising. The morning cometh! Already the flashes of light are climbing the eastern sky. Heaven and earth will soon be ablaze with the glory of the revelation in the manifested sons of God.

Why has God not brought deliverance to this sin-cursed world during the past two millenniums of church history? Ah, God be praised! There are co-heirs in whom the glory is to be revealed. There are "many brethren" to be manifested in the image of "the firstborn." The number of these is not yet complete, but the hour is at hand. When all the heirs of the Kingdom are gathered out of this dark age, God will unveil His many-membered Christ to the world. The long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God will take place, and creation will be delivered from the bondage of decay and death and brought "into the glorious liberty of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:21). Creation cannot possibly be delivered during the church age. The gospel may be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven and it leaves the creation in the same bondage of corruption. The gospel of this age has been designed to call out a people for His name, to form the enChristed body in the earth. It is not intended that it should do anything else. But when the sons of God are manifested with Christ in His glory, it will be the signal for the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption. The godly and glorious and incorruptible race of the second Adam is at hand, God's NEW MAN. He will bring the cure. He will enlighten the minds of the people and turn their hearts to the Lord. He will heal the broken world. He will rebuke sin and sorrow and disease. He will bind death. He will rifle the grave. He will deliver creation.

Those who have been apprehended to this high calling have been overshadowed by the power of the Highest and are aware of a glorious life within - a bursting life in embryo ready to come forth, or as Peter said, "unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:5). It is the birth of the New Creation Life in Christ Jesus, the full manifestation of the sons of God. This is Christ formed in us. So arise, shine, for thy light is come. The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the light shall arise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee. This is His day; this is your hour.

## **THE DAWN OF RESURRECTION**

It is erroneous to speak of the resurrection of the body while ignoring the resurrection of soul and spirit. Man's body is not all that dies, or is dead. Death seized upon Adam in the very day when he partook of the forbidden tree, although many hundreds of years passed before his body was finally laid in the grave. The divine edict was not, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thy BODY shall die," but "in the day that thou eatest thereof T-H-O-U shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). The result of sin would pass upon the WHOLE MAN - body, soul and spirit. "The SOUL that sinneth, it shall die," saith the Almighty. "And YOU hath He quickened, WHO WERE DEAD in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Tim. 5:6). We are prone to equate death with the demise of the body, but nothing is farther from the truth. If we who WERE DEAD have NOW BEEN QUICKENED by the spirit of life from God, the question follows: What part of us was dead? And what part of us has been quickened? Obviously, it was not our body! Equally obvious is the fact that it was not our soul, for the soul is still in the process of transformation.

Some teach that the spirit cannot die because it came from God, but we must remember that all death is not the same death. Death is a condition, a state of being - not cessation of existence. The man lying in the casket still has his bodily members, you behold his face and his form, but something has gone out. Through special processes his body may be preserved for millenniums. His body still exists, but it has entered the state, the condition of death. A dead man has not life, though his members remain. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," said the wise man, but I do not hesitate to tell you that a dead spirit is a candle whose light has gone out. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," the Word says, so it necessarily follows that he that is NOT joined to the Lord is NOT one spirit. A dead spirit is a spirit from which the divine essence has been withdrawn - the spirit still exists, even with consciousness, but it exists in the state of death - unresponsiveness to the realm of God. The man whose spirit does not respond to God, nor to the bright spirit world, nor to spiritual things, is a man who is dead in spirit.

Recently I read the story of a man from Puerto Rico named Jose, whose body had suffered much damage from leprosy. His insensitivity to touch was so great that, when blindfolded, he could not even detect whether someone had entered the room and held his hand. Touch cells and pain cells had fallen silent. As a result, scars and ulcers covered his hands, face, and feet, bearing mute witness to the unintentional abuse his body had endured without any sensation of pain. Because pain cells in his eyes no longer alerted him when to blink, gradually Jose's eyes dried out. That condition, aggravated by severe cataracts and glaucoma, soon made him blind. A terrible misfortune cut off Jose's last link with the outside world. He lost his hearing. Thus, at the age of forty-five Jose lost all contact with the world. He could not see nor hear if a person spoke. He would wake up from sleep and forget where he was. He did not know whether it was day or night, hot or

cold, and when he spoke, he did not know if anyone heard or answered. No one could penetrate through his isolation even to ask him for permission to help. Jose's body coiled tighter and tighter on the bed; he was preparing for death in the same position as his birth.

Death is merely the final inability to respond or correspond to the world about you. Such is the condition of the unregenerated human spirit. I tell you the truth - the spirit of the natural man is dead - dead to God, dead to life, dead to reality, dead to truth, dead to righteousness, dead to promise, dead to the spiritual world, dead to spiritual things. He abides in this death through all the decades, centuries, or millenniums of his existence until Christ comes into his heart. The spirit of man can only be penetrated by the Holy Spirit which is the great Quickener, the great Lighter. When our spirit (the candle) is lighted by His Spirit a resurrection in the realm of spirit ensues.

Separated from God man is dead - spirit, soul and body. Receiving again of His life we find it to be a RESURRECTION LIFE. Two Greek words are used to speak of the resurrection. The first is ANASTASIS, generally translated "resurrection." The second is EGEIRO, rendered as "raise, raised or risen." A close examination of the texts where these words are employed reveals that they are frequently used interchangeably and both are applied to the resurrection of body, soul and spirit. ANASTASIS means - a standing or rising up. It denotes much more than our English word "resurrection" which we term to mean the restoring to life again. As one has pointed out, the Greek word means THE WHOLE PROCESS OF ADVANCING AND RISING UP UNTIL THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE REALM IS REACHED, and our goal is nothing short of full conformation into the image of God, Christ formed in us, to be ONE IN HIM.

Resurrection is the process of STANDING UP and ADVANCING - it is arising from the dust and the low realm of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. Resurrection is the process of having our life LIFTED UP from the earth, to be raised to the heavenlies, to be joined in one with the Spirit of God. The more ONE we are WITH HIM, the more we will say with Paul, "for our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). The word "conversation" literally means "citizenship" and MANNER OF BEHAVIOUR. What a revelation to the world when we begin to manifest the behavior of that higher realm - so foreign to the flesh.

Resurrection is the process of man's "fall" being REVERSED. If one is watching a program on his VCR and decides to stop and rewind it to see a scene again, he is simply reversing what he has previously seen with his eyes. It is comical betimes to watch the people running backwards, and bodies rising from the ground to the roof of a building, etc. What you saw is restored to its beginning by passing through the motion in reverse. And this is precisely what resurrection is: THE FALL OF MAN IN REVERSE! Since resurrection is man's fall in reverse, a standing up again into that oneness in God man knew in his bright beginning, the order of Adam first being alive, then dying, is put in reverse. In the new creation death comes first, then life. We cannot have resurrection life without death. We die to self and sin that we may live unto God and righteousness. From that death we stand up again in HIS LIFE.

When we were first born of God our bodies were not "resurrected" at that time, but when that birthing by God's Spirit took place, there was certainly something within us that STOOD UP. In that blessed moment the ego of old Adam laid down in us and died, while the new creation man STOOD UP ALIVE. We were resurrected! Truly the resurrection

had dawned within our bosom. But our outer-man bodies saw no change. The spirit within that first died in that long ago Eden has been quickened by His Spirit and caused to STAND UP FROM THE REALM OF SEPARATION AND DEATH. We have experienced the resurrection of our spirit, and now there must follow a resurrection of our soul. We have experienced the STANDING UP of our spirit, and now the awakening and RISING UP of our minds into the mind of Christ is taking place. Even now we are partakers of the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16), but we have not yet seen it in the COMPLETE RESURRECTED STATE. Ah, beloved, let us stand up!

I mentioned earlier that the word "risen" comes from the Greek word EGEIRO, meaning "to gather, through the idea of collecting one's faculties, to waken, to rouse from sleep, disease, or death. Here again the truth of being risen with Christ implies the GATHERING OR COLLECTING OF ONE'S FACULTIES. All the spiritual faculties that were lost in the fall of Adam are being restored to the elect by the operation of God. All that was lost shall be regained, including our lost faculties which have to do with spiritual capacities and abilities, as well as the recovery of all spiritual truth. It is more than merely coming to life again, it is the orderly restoration of the totality of our original state of being.

Evelyn Isaacs has written: "Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and as long as He dwells within, the resurrection process is going on. Resurrection is a standing or rising up. In the place of spiritual stagnation, we have come into a way of life. Upon arising to our feet, we are becoming adjusted to living in the fullness of His presence. It is a recovery of our morals and of our spiritual faculties, the regaining, and the restoration of truth. Our aptitudes are restored and we again see, hear, and feel with our spiritual senses. Since we read in Jn. 15:27 that we were with God from the beginning, resurrection life is the restoration and recovery of all that we were in the beginning with God (Prov. 8:22-32). Now we can say, 'I know that my redeemer liveth because He has risen in me.' You know you have been translated and are living in a heavenly land. Where once you stuttered, now, another speaks. Feet that were unsteady are now sure. Holy boldness has taken the place of fear. The soul reaches upward and takes root in the heavens instead of the earth. This is the only tree that grows UPSIDE DOWN. There is a new voice within and we are singing a new song. We behold new vistas and are leaping, as it were, on hind's feet, leaping from mountain peak to mountain peak of revelation. We are brought out of the night into the full light of the great day of God Almighty. Rising from the dead is the resumption of heavenly life. These plants of renown, growing in fertile soil, are no more of the world than Jesus was. Our spirit has been fully healed and we are living in our Paradisical home. We are being brought back to our one true love and to the same glory we had with the Father before the world was (Jn. 17:5; Job 38:7). This is the time of full restoration to our right mind, to our former estate, back where the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. All this process of resurrection is realized in the person of Jesus Christ, for resurrection is a person; His person! May we rest on the pinions of His wings and ascend from realm to realm. If Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is in vain. Though He were born a thousand times, what does it matter, if He is not born in you? Though He arose a thousand times, if He is not "risen" in you, what difference does it make? In union with Adam's nature you die, but in union with the Christ nature you not only live, but you are ALIVE! Adam was a living being, but Christ is a life-giving spirit, restoring the dead to life. The first Adam was earth minded, the second Adam is heavenly minded" -end quote.

In Adam all die, but in Christ all are made alive. In Christ! I am reminded of the story I read once about a preacher who was addressing the people one Sunday, trying to

impress upon them the importance of religion. "All you people of this congregation," he cried from the pulpit, "one day you're going to die. Do you hear me? All you people of this congregation, one day you're going to die." One little man sitting in the front pew started to laugh, so the preacher asked him, "What's so funny?" The man answered, "I don't belong to this congregation." "In Adam all die." But I have some good news for you, my friend. I'M NOT IN ADAM! I don't belong to old Adam. I pertain to the Christ, the second Man. And in Christ all are made alive. Hallelujah! "If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). That really says it all!

## **THE "OUT" RESURRECTION**

There is an interesting passage in Mark 9 which throws great light on this subject. The opening verses contain the record of the transfiguration; and then we read, "As they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying within themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from (Gr. ek, from among) the dead should mean." The disciples felt that there was something special, something entirely beyond the ordinary orthodox idea of the resurrection of the dead, and verily so there was, though they understood it not then. It lay beyond their range of vision at that moment.

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

A moment's just reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). In the Greek language the resurrection "of the dead" is NEKRON or TON NEKRON and is applied to all classes of people because all will be raised. But the term EK NEKRON - "out of the dead" - is not once applied to the unjust or the ungodly, or in any general sense. The latter phrase is used altogether 49 times in the New Testament, to-wit: 34 times, to express Christ's resurrection, whom we know was thus raised OUT OF THE DEAD. 3 Times, to express John the Baptist's supposed resurrection, who, as Herod thought, had been raised OUT OF THE DEAD. 3 Times, to express the resurrection of Lazarus, who was also raised OUT OF THE DEAD. 3 times, it is used to express spiritual life OUT FROM AMONG those who are still dead in sin. In Rom. 6:13 we read, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from (among) the dead." In Acts 4:1-2 the Sadducees were grieved because Peter and John "preached, through Jesus, THE RESURRECTION WHICH IS FROM AMONG THE DEAD."

The resurrection of which Paul spoke was not even the general resurrection of saints. Paul knew that he was a saved man, and as such knew there was positively no way he could escape the resurrection of the just. Now, if there were but one resurrection of the saved, as modern Babylon teaches, then all of his strivings were altogether uncalled for and useless. But no: Paul was not striving in vain; and unto the saints at Philippi he wrote, "But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as one combined loss for Christ's sake. Yes, furthermore I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege - the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage - of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may win Christ, and that I may actually be found and known as in Him, not having any self-achieved righteousness that can be called my own, based on my obedience to the Law's demands - but possessing that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ, the truly right standing with God, which comes from God by saving faith. For my determined purpose is that I may know Him - that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him... that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from HIS RESURRECTION; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into the likeness even to His death, in the hope that IF POSSIBLE I MAY ATTAIN TO THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL RESURRECTION THAT LIFTS ME OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD EVEN WHILE IN THE BODY. Not that I have now attained this ideal or am already made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me" (Phil. 3:7-12, Amplified).

Oh! dearly beloved brethren, the resurrection "of" the dead is one thing, but the resurrection "out from among" the dead is a mightily different thing. If ALL the people in a building leave it at the same time, it is the coming out "of" the company; but if only SOME of the people present leave, theirs is a coming out "from" the rest of the company. It was for this resurrection "out from" the dead that Paul longed continually. This was the bright and blessed hope that shone upon his soul and cheered him amid the sorrows and trials, the toils and the difficulties, the buffetings and the conflicts. Every soul who dies, both saint and sinner, must be in the resurrection "of" the dead, for as in Adam ALL die, so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. There is no possible way of avoiding it. But to be a partaker in the resurrection "from among" the dead, that, Paul tells us, is a special blessing and distinction for those who follow on to KNOW the Lord. The resurrection "from" the dead has already begun. It started 1900 years ago. Our Lord was the firstfruits of this company, "raised up out of dead ones" (I Cor. 15:20). There have been a few, a little remnant all through the years who strove and attained to this position. And there is a little remnant alive today who belong to this same company and who will now STAND UP AND COLLECT THEIR SPIRITUAL FACULTIES, transformed fully into the image and incorruptibleness of God by the power of the indwelling Christ. But mark: the way into this great privilege is through death: death to self and the world. Blessed be God! this process has already begun, and it has begun IN US.

### **FROM WHENCE WE LOOK ...**

You will never understand the power of Christ's resurrection until you know union with Him. There are a couple of scriptures that I would like to consider with you. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, you will be given to understand a mystery comprehended by very few men or women who have walked the face of this

planet. The following words of the apostle Paul are freighted with meaning and spiritual significance. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). The opening statement of this beautiful passage declares that "Our conversation is in heaven." The word conversation is from the Greek word POLITEUMA meaning "citizenship." It is not our words or our talk that are in heaven, but our citizenship - our habitation and residence with full civil rights. We are citizens of heaven. Our residence is in heaven. Heaven is our place of birth, our homeland, our native sphere of habitation.

There are some things about which we must be very clear. If we would grasp the deep meaning of our heavenly citizenship, we must come to an understanding of some basic and simple facts about HEAVEN ITSELF. We want no theories nor guesses. We want facts. We want nothing but the highest authority. And what better authority can we find than the One who made the heavens and who owns them? If anyone understands all the facts about heaven, it is He! Let us see what He said. He had left His heavenly glory. He had humbled Himself, had taken upon Himself the form of sinful man; and becoming a man, was despised and rejected. And yet, while in humility and reproach, a man among men, He made this statement: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" (Jn. 3:13). The Son of God left His glory, and descended to the depths of this earth. Yet, while a man on earth, in humility, He Himself said, "The Son of man WHICH I-S IN HEAVEN."

When Jesus said that He was even then, as a man, in heaven - He used the usual Greek word for heaven, OURANOS. The meaning of the word is elevation, height, exaltation. But this elevation, height and exaltation is something so vast, so infinite, so inexhaustible that a person can be in it, can descend from it, and yet still possess it and be in it! The sweet singer of Israel, speaking of the vastness of the universe says, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps. 19:1). The earth is simply a planet revolving around the sun. The sun is merely a star in a galaxy known as the Milky Way. And the Milky Way is but one small galaxy among billions that are known to exist. And scientists with their most powerful telescopes have never found the outer extremities of the universe. It appears to be infinite, unending! Certainly, were you to descend to earth from some distant galaxy, you would have descended from heaven while still remaining in heaven! The heavens are so vast that man can never escape them - he can only descend and ascend within them.

But the heaven that God dwells in is not the physical universe, nor is it some limited spot far out in the universe somewhere where God dwells in His majesty sitting upon a material throne. First of all, God is SPIRIT and spirit cannot utilize the material in its own realm. Not only is God spirit, He is OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT. He is everywhere present at the same time. David said of Him, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning... even there shall Thy hand lead me..." (Ps. 139:6-10). Solomon, at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem said, "And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS cannot contain Him" (II Chron. 2:5-6). God is spirit. He is omnipresent spirit. He fills all things. Therefore, God is not confined to some geographical or celestial location. He is equally present everywhere throughout the eternal, unbounded heavens!

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

The Holy Spirit witnesses with unspeakable clearness that WHAT CHRIST IS ALL other sons of God are now becoming. He is the FIRSTBORN from among the dead ones; a vast body of sons will be raised because He was raised. He was crucified; THEY were crucified IN HIM. He was buried; THEY were buried IN HIM. He was raised; THEY were raised IN HIM. He ascended to God's right hand; THEY are ascended IN HIM. He was seated to reign; THEY are seated IN HIM.

Over and over again, the Gospel of John states that Jesus went unto His Father. We will quote only four of these as follows. "I depart out of this world unto the Father" (Jn. 13:1). "I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more" (Jn. 16:10). "A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father" (Jn. 16:16). "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I" (Jn. 14:28-29).

Many Christians today are quite as carnal as were these first followers of Jesus who, being Jews, and God having shown their forefathers many wonderful signs, were expecting now to see something tangible and earthly, and it was therefore difficult for them to comprehend and receive these words of Jesus concerning His Father, and heaven, and His going unto the Father. God is a spirit and both fills and transcends all space. And since God is in heaven, heaven is wherever the Spirit of God is, whether it be far distant or deep within us. Therefore, when Jesus went unto the Father, He did not travel many miles; He simply moved out of one dimension into another; He returned to the Spirit-form from whence He came forth as He said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (Jn. 16:28). This, then, is what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye shall not see Me - because I go unto My Father," or back into the spirit form and realm of heaven which is invisible. And now in spirit we are eternally joined unto Him in His own incorruptible sphere of life and state of being. He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit - in heaven! Henceforth, may our conversation be in heaven and of heaven, from whence also we look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

It will be well worth our time to examine prayerfully just what is actually stated in the passage of scripture now under consideration. "For our citizenship is in heaven, FROM WHENCE WE LOOK..." "We LOOK." I ask you to notice this particularly. "From whence WE LOOK." "FROM WHENCE we look." It does not say, "from whence we SHALL look." Nor does it say, "from whence the Lord shall come." "From whence WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change our vile body..." It does not at all say that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven, although that is how our superficial reading and carnal mindedness has taken it. Nothing is said here about where Christ dwells, or where He is coming from. The subject is not where Christ is, but where WE ARE and WHAT WE ARE DOING THERE. Where are we? "Our citizenship (residence, homeland) is in heaven." This lovely passage shows the believer to be a heavenly man, positioned in the heavenlies. And what are we doing there? From that lofty vantage point and exalted state of consciousness we are LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR to change our vile body. Just as a man may sit in a fire-tower steadily looking for the tell-tale signs of smoke that alert him to a forest fire, so WE SIT IN HEAVEN LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR BODY. The message is clear - we are not on earth looking for our Saviour to come crashing down from heaven. Rather, from our exalted seating in the height of heaven we look for this change, for we know the Christ there, we belong to Him there, we are joined in one with Him there, we are heavenly because He is. He will extend the work of salvation and exaltation to the body-realm, so as to present the whole being in the power of eternal life in the true sphere and home of that life above. We are to possess a fully developed body which belongs to the celestial world. This change from death to life takes place as Christ rises from within us, coming out of heaven (spirit) to manifest finally in the visible world. As we find Christ in us and our union in Him as the source of our life, tremendous changes take place. Oh! the mystery of it! It is not from earth that we look for heaven to swoop down and change us; it is in heaven that we look for our outer man to catch up with our inner man. "FROM HEAVEN we look..." Hallelujah!

### **IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE**

Our change from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible is a promise of God that can no more fail or pass away than any other of God's promises. "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:51-53).

I want to show you one of the hidden secrets of God, that only the Spirit of Truth can bring forth. After saying, "but we shall all be changed," the next words read, "in a moment." The Greek word used here for "moment" is ATOMOS. This passage is the only place in the Greek New Testament where this word is used. ATOMOS is the word from which is derived our English word "atom." The word carried the meaning in the Greek of that which is UNCUTTABLE or INDIVISIBLE because the Greeks believed that the atom was the smallest particle of matter that existed, therefore it could not be divided, cut, split, or reduced in any way. The translators have taken this to mean that our bodies shall be changed in "an atom of time," that is, in an instant of time so brief that you could not make it any quicker, or reduce the time in any measure. I can understand their reasoning, but it seems to me far afield from the facts. There are other Greek words that do mean moment, an infinitesimal period of time. If the Spirit intended this to be - in a moment - then why did He use the word ATOMOS instead of the word that actually means Moment. For instance, in II Cor. 4:17 we find the statement, "For our light afflictions which are but

for a moment..." This word "moment" comes from the Greek word PARAUTIKA which means instant or momentary. So why did the Spirit use the word ATOMOS instead of the word PARAUTIKA when He said, "We shall all be changed, in a moment ... if He meant moment? And why do the translators persist in translating it "moment"? There must have been a reason for the Holy Spirit to use the word ATOMOS, that God has kept hidden from the translators. Does not this word ATOMOS indicate that we shall be changed in the ATOMS of our bodies, in the very structure and substance of our outer house, in the ATOMICAL STRUCTURE of our bodies? "We shall be changed in ATOMS, in ATOMICAL STRUCTURE, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump!" Certainly this is much more in harmony with the subject: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" I Cor. 15:44,49). Certainly this involves a change in our atomical structure!

Following these words the apostle hastily adds this enigmatical phrase, "in the twinkling of any eye." "Twinkling" is from the Greek word RHIFE meaning "a jerk" of the eyes. RHIFE is from the root RHIPTO, a word which indicates a sudden motion; to hurl with a rapid movement; a stroke; to toss; to fling. The twinkling of an eye relates not so much to time as it does to the ACTION and MOTION involved. It is not a question of how quickly the eyelids flutter, but the fact of a movement, a jerk, a change of direction, a SUDDEN REFOCUSING OR LOOKING AWAY. If I were reading a book and I heard the door open, I would swiftly dart my eyes in the direction of the door to see who is entering. I would LOOK AWAY from the book and quickly REFOCUS my sight on the person coming through the door. This abrupt motion, this sudden refocusing of vision, this rapid change of eye contact is what is indicated by the Greek word RHIFE.

When our attention is unexpectedly attracted by a sudden burst of revelation and spiritual understanding there is that instantaneous "turning away" from our former concepts, beliefs, actions and ways, to behold and embrace the truth and glory of God disclosed by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This sudden change in perspective, this immediate transformation of consciousness satisfies precisely the meaning of the Greek phrase - "in the twinkling of an eye." It bespeaks vision, illumination, understanding, perception and perspective. Furthermore, it has absolutely nothing to do with a so called "rapture of the saints," or the "second coming of Jesus." Plainly and unquestionably it concerns O-U-R CHANGE, O-U-R TRANSFORMATION into the image of Christ. It says nothing about us being "raptured" in the twinkling of an eye; what it does say is that "WE SHALL BE CHANGED in a moment (in atoms), in the twinkling (re-focused vision) of an eye." Yet the preachers loudly proclaim on the basis of this verse that Jesus will return in a split second, and the saints will in a flash of time travel a trillion miles of miracle at the Rapture. It is as pure a myth as ever entered the brain of man!

My heart leaps within me as I contemplate this wonderful reality - being CHANGED! From the distant mountain peaks of faith comes a sound as clear as morning chimes. It is the voice of the inspired apostle sounding out from centuries past, "BEHOLDING as in a glass the glory of the Lord, WE ARE CHANGED into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). Beholding - we are changed! It is the same message - "We shall be changed ... in the twinkling of an eye!" We are changed by a beholding, by a looking, by A LOOK. Betimes it takes a lot to turn us. The Psalmist cries out, "Turn us, O Lord. Cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved" (Ps. 80:3,7,19). It is only as we turn in the direction of the present glory that we can know transformation! You can read the history of revivals, you can study the exploits of men of faith in centuries past, you can reminisce about the great visitations of God yesteryear.

There is not enough power in such things to transform you. And there is no need to cry, "Lord, do it again!" for our God is ever progressive in His dealings and the outworking of His purposes, and He doesn't regress to "do it again." This is a New Day and God will do a New Thing! Transformation comes only in the light of the present glory and revelation of Jesus Christ. We must turn, to behold Him as He is, not as He was. There is a multitude of people today whose experience goes no further than that small measure of knowledge about the historical Jesus they read of in the Gospels. Countless thousands more know Him only in the light of yesterday's revelation. Oh! we need to turn to Him today by the Spirit. Seeing and knowing Him involves an on-going unveiling of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

It is never enough that there is something to be seen; it is not sufficient that a landscape is within sight; the properties of the landscape require in the observer a certain perceptiveness. When an interviewer approached the instrument of a celebrated microscopist, he paused and said, "But you must tell me what I am to see." The expert was delighted and replied, "You are a man after my own heart. You recognize that there must be a prepared mind to enable the eye to see rightly." Everything depends on the quality of perception we bring with us. We see what we are qualified to see, and what we actually see determines all our conduct, as someone has written:

"Earth's crammed with heaven  
And every common bush afire with God,  
But ONLY HE WHO SEES takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit around and pluck blackberries."

It is true of all spiritual things that we see "through a glass darkly," but it is our own carnal minds and natural understanding which distort our sight and discolor our vision. When Cain forfeited the favor of God and his guilty life passed out to a fugitive existence, he lamented his fate; but above all his fears, he felt that his darkest destiny was to be denied the vision of God. For he cried, "From Thy face shall I be hid" (Gen. 4:14). The heaviest part of his sentence was to be exiled from God. He felt an aggravated sense of what is the common experience of mankind; alienation from God is written in large letters over the history of the world. But the hiding of God's face is not His withdrawal, but our lack of the powers of perception. Our carnal, earthbound souls have forfeited the power to see Him. Our spiritual denseness has hid His face from us, and we cannot see Him until that great, intercepting mass is taken out of the way.

We are going to have to get beyond dead doctrines and religious traditions. We are going to have to see the living Christ, for He is the Word of God, the Truth of God and the Reality of God. It will take more than sermons on sonship and exhortations on perfection to make us perfect sons in God's image. We must SEE HIM to be changed into His likeness. It is going to take more than singing choruses, clapping hands, shouting Amens and Halleluiahs, and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God to bring us to the knowledge of God. We shall have to MEET HIM as Thomas and Paul and John met Him. We must hear His voice speaking to us in the deepest recesses of our spirits. We must commune with Him in the glory of God that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship can only come by personal association with Christ Himself. I am willing to stake all that I have and all that I am on this one bold assertion: No man or woman can ever be changed into the image of God or put on incorruptibility until he has cast off the yoke of the carnal mind and the bondages of human tradition and religion and has met

THE FIRSTBORN SON PERSONALLY, COMMUNED WITH HIM INTIMATELY, and continued to walk in the light and glory of what he sees.

The promise of this vision assures us of the perfecting of the powers of our spiritual life. When Moses desired the vision of the glory of God, he was warned that no man can see God's face and live. No man can stand in the full blaze of divine glory until he himself corresponds in nature to that glory. The glare of the eastern sun on desert sands has dazed men's eyes; the fierce, gleaming radiance of sunlight on the snow-clad hills has blinded human sight, and none can, with naked eye, behold the sun in the sky. How, then, can our mortal vision turn its gaze upon the glory that is ineffable? When John on Patmos saw the glory of God's Christ he "fell as dead!" in the overwhelming presence. Our nature is not constituted to bear the blaze of uncreated light. But this restricted nature is not for ever. For the burning radiance of His holy light shining upon us releases us as we are exposed to it from the obstructiveness of our own impaired senses, and then with purged heart, renewed mind and quickened life we shall perceive Him.

George Hawtin has penned some beautiful words of truth along this line. He writes: "I have often thought of the wonderful words 'no man can SEE GOD AND LIVE.' Oh how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me to reverently say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live AS THEY USED TO LIVE, but they are TRANSFORMED. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into THAT SAME IMAGE of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure you are changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion" -end quote. Truly we are changed by beholding - in the twinkling (glance, look) of an eye! You won't see the Christ until you start looking for Him, and you won't find Him until you go where He is revealed. He is fully, totally revealed in His glory in the realm of spirit. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more ( that is, no longer after the flesh, merely as a man)" (II Cor. 5: 16).

A friend in California has written, "How short-sighted has been the vision of God's saints - yet how much we truly believe that we see. Some years ago the Lord spoke to me as many of us waited before Him and said, 'If you can see what Elisha saw, you will receive what Elisha received.' I was startled to hear those words, and though I did not fully understand all that was included in that which Elisha received, I did know that he had come into a possession of the double portion of the Spirit. Turning to the chapter in which is recorded the account of Elijah's catching up into heaven (II Kings 2), beginning with verse 9 I began to read, 'And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he (Elijah typifying Christ) said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless if thou see...' And the Lord interrupted my reading, saying, 'Stop right there!' Then He repeated to me the words that I had just read, 'IF THOU SEE...' and said, 'You must have the vision of faith and the open vision into the heavenlies.' He then instructed me to continue reading, and I read, 'If thou see ME.' This was enlarged upon by the scripture which says, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (Heb. 12:2). With a spiritual eye we must see HIM! As Jesus said, 'This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which SEETH THE SON ... may have everlasting life.' We must be able to see that which is invisible, for Elijah, who prefigured Christ in this passage, said, 'If thou see me WHEN I AM TAKEN FROM THEE,

it shall be unto thee.' There is a beholding of Him by the Spirit which changes into that same image" -end quote.

Do you know, dear friend, why the masses of Christians today have little or no revelation of the purposes of God, no hope of sonship, no going on to perfection, no putting on of the mind of Christ, and no conformation to His glorious image? It is because at every turn they have ceased to LOOK UNTO JESUS, having left the road He has marked out to wander in Stygian blackness. Here, there, and everywhere, one finds in tracts, magazines, books, on the radio and television, and behind pulpits across the land some poor deluded traveler who is proclaiming his particular alley - his theory, his doctrine, his gift, his ministry, his program, his baptism, his methods, or feeble little experience to be THE PASSAGEWAY to a new and better day. But in all this we find no true dawn. Instead of bright sunlight and clear skies, all we find here is some poor soul groping hopelessly by the pathetic light of a flickering match which he himself holds.

I present to you, beloved brother, sister, a RISEN CHRIST in all His beauty, majesty, and incorruptibility, who bids us FOLLOW HIM to enter the glories of His new day of life and light and glory! Turn - behold HIM! You will be changed in the twinkling of YOUR EYE!

# *Chapter 37*

## *Coming In Judgment*

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day" (II Thes. 1:7-10).

We are living in a time when the truth about the Lord's return is missed by many of the Lord's people, misunderstood by others, and misinterpreted by multitudes. The promise of the Lord's coming is intended to be GOOD NEWS. Yet many people react in fear to the very thought of the coming of Christ, 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. The central figure 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). David prophesied, "...for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Ps. 96:13). Paul urged the Athenians to repent "because He hath appointed A DAY in which He will JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Judgment is inseparably related to the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1).

Through the cunning of the adversary, both the world and the popular church 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 fear and dread. Because of this FEAR there is, to them, no more unwelcome tidings than that the Lord is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH. Many tremble inwardly at the thought of God's

judgments, and in this mind put them far from them, preferring not to even 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 finale for our planet with billions of people suddenly thrust into eternal damnation. They have absolutely no idea of the wonderful blessings in store for a sin-weary world under the glorious reign of the sons of God filled with all the nature, wisdom, glory and 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 and the coming of the Lord ever since. One day, they expect, they will suddenly be yanked up through the air, 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 WAIT UNTIL YOUR DADDY (Jesus) COMES HOME!"

Then there are those who seem to be consumed with teaching and preaching about the terrible conditions that mark the end of this age: war, famine, pestilence, lawlessness, immorality, the antichrist, the mark of the beast, the great tribulation, persecution and trouble. Their main passion seems to be what the church system, the world bankers, the Jews, the Illuminati, the Russians, the politicians and the wicked in general are doing in the world. Their whole life is absorbed in discussions about who is the antichrist, credit cards, Social Security numbers, bar-code marking systems, laser-tattooed identification numbers, conspiracies, wilderness hideouts, survival camps, and all sorts of carnal preparations for getting through the "great tribulation." Still others want to talk about the horrors of AIDS, or some other manifestation of this dark hour. But I do not hesitate to tell you, beloved, that it is a total waste of time and effort to continually analyze the negative realm and curse the darkness. If we are really genuinely concerned about the darkness of this night, let us get up off our spiritual lazy bones and hasten to follow hard after the Lord. Pursue HIM with all your might! Let us repent of all our foolish preoccupation with the works of darkness and our fear of the night and turn our eyes to the light of His glorious face. Christ is the ILLUMINATION OF THE NEW DAY. And only as we walk with Him can the curse and bondages of this present darkness be turned into the glad morning of peace, righteousness, and life we all long for.

Judgment is God's strange work. He uses it as a tool in His redemptive and restorative processes. Men make it 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 17:31). "And the smoke of their torment doth go up to AGES OF AGES; and they have no rest DAY and NIGHT (time periods), who are bowing before the beast and his image..." (Rev. 14:11, Young's Literal). The Concordant Literal New Testament reads, "And the fumes of their torment are ascending FOR THE EONS OF THE EONS. And they are having no rest DAY and NIGHT..." God's great goal lies BEYOND THE AGES, on the OTHER SIDE OF TIME, for

"He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages (the end of all time periods and ages) to UNIFY A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S AND HEAD THEM UP AND CONSUMMATE THEM IN CHRIST" (Eph. 1:10, Amplified). GOD ALL IN ALL is the grand goal (I Cor. 15:27-28). God does not reach His goal during any of His judgmental or disciplinary measures wrought out in time. These only break and mold and prepare His creatures for it. Let us not confuse the process with the goal. The process involves JUDGMENT IN TIME. The goal is ALL THINGS GATHERED TOGETHER INTO CHRIST - IN ETERNITY.

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 spirit 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. Oft 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 cities and towns, 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!

## **THE WRATH OF THE LAMB**

There are some good people who have conceived of the idea that the God of this universe is a Person of ALL LOVE expressed only through GOODNESS and MERCY. They do not want to think of Him as One who would punish individuals and nations. They do not want to think of Him as a God of fiery indignation and judgment. They do not want to think of Him as One who is capable of administering a fiery retribution on those who trample under foot His holy laws and abuse His spirit of grace. To these people God is a one-sided Being - a God of pure love and goodness, but not a God of wrath. Now, just think for a moment: If He were such a Person, He would be a God without character. Our God is a God of holiness who hates sin. He is a God of justice, whose very nature demands that He must punish and correct sin.

It must be quite convenient, and soothing to one's conscience, to have a God who will always overlook sin, and who will never punish or correct the erring. But such a God would only exist in the figment of the imagination of a deluded soul. Such a God could never be a reality; and a God who is truly holy and altogether righteous would never eternally condone that which is so totally antagonistic to His nature and character. In

order for God's righteous Kingdom to be fully manifest there must be judgment and retribution against all that is evil in God's universe.

We have met some brethren in this end-time move of the Spirit who have exaggerated the bright side of the love of God out of all proportion to its other aspects. The love of God has been presented in such a way that it is a weakness rather than a strength. It has been presented on the sunny side of the street with nothing on the other side ever mentioned. There is a "love" of God preached that has become such a one-sided, mushy, gooey, sugar-sweet thing that it contains nothing of the vital and vigorous concern of a Father for the best interests of a son - it would never love enough to chasten, scourge and correct that son! They have perverted love, making it sickening rather than stimulating, causing it to slop over on every side like a sentimental feeling rather than expressing an abiding concern for the object of love.

All those who make God's nature and activity only gentleness have taken one side of the truth and allowed it to get out of balance. Gentleness without austerity becomes soft and characterless. Mothers who dote on their children in this way often raise criminals. The kind of person who is all sweetness with no steel in him is not inspiring. He has the same effect as eating too many chocolates. And the offspring of this false doctrine is one of the most unlovely by-products of Christianity - the "spoiled brat" Christian. He is the man who thinks God has given him a privileged claim on life. Nothing bad should ever happen to him now, he should never be sick, never have to suffer or do without, he should have the shiniest car, the finest home, the best job, the most elegant clothes and every desire of his carnal heart with never a care in the world nor a cross to bear.

The kind of God we have revealed in the scriptures is a God of both love and judgment. He is not a nebulous nonentity of sentimentalism. He is a God of character. We thank God today that He is a God of love and mercy - and there would not be one of us alive today to breathe His fresh air, if it were not for His amazing love toward us. But those who do not want to believe that God will administer a sufficient amount of corrective judgment upon the disobedient and rebellious, should be reminded that God is exactly that kind of Being. In the very cradle of human history, we find God pronouncing a curse upon our first parents on account of their transgression. He even pronounced a curse upon the earth itself on account of their sin.

After a while sin abounded in the earth, in that antediluvian era, and we find God executing judgment on the whole human race in the dreadful flood which destroyed all flesh, except for Noah and his family who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Upon the wicked nation of Egypt, God sent not one but ten, of the most severe judgments of which only divine justice could conceive and execute. Pharaoh knew the hopelessness of effort when the Almighty is against one's schemes. God can take the wheels from the chariots of the mighty, and give their proud power to the overwhelming waters. Upon the wicked, idolatrous nations of Canaan, God caused the judgment of war to fall, wiping out more than twenty great kingdoms in one sweeping purge. In like manner, God sent His judgment of destruction upon the haughty Babylonian empire; then upon the Medo-Persian empire; and later, the Grecian empire; and later still, upon that kingdom of iron, the mighty Roman empire. Because of their sins they were destroyed.

Nor did God spare His chosen people, the Israelites. Because of their unbelief and idolatry, and witchcraft, and rebellion, and haughtiness of spirit, God sent upon them the judgment of the captivities. "It is a FEARFUL THING to fall into the hands of the living

God" (Heb. 10:31). Napoleon confessed in his humiliation and with his shattered army, "The Almighty is too strong for me." Nothing prospers if God's vote is against it. Evil may seem to pay for a day, but in the long run it is crushed and broken and bankrupt. If you believe history, you must believe that God is a God of judgment!

Let every man and woman of God who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship know that there is the DARK SIDE OF GOD'S LOVE! If a person refuses to surrender to the will and way of God the Great Physician will put His child on the operating table. He will use the surgeon's knife when He sees a tumor of self-will or a deadly virus of carnality sapping our spiritual lives, or when He sees the cancerous growth of sin. The two-edged sword CUTS DEEP. It is a sharp sword and leaves the soul wounded when it cuts, as Jacob was wounded while wrestling with the Lord. He rebukes and chastises whom He loves, and if necessary He will proceed to the most desperate actions - indeed, HE WILL KILL YOU TO SAVE YOU! (I Cor. 5:5).

There is going to be a unique and different unfolding of this One we call Jesus Christ! For He is about to go forth bringing His judgments to the whole earth, to the entire bestial order that the carnal mind of man has erected. In the book of Revelation we see the Christ riding forth on a white horse with the armies of the sons of God following in His path, "judging and making war." In Rev. 6:16 it is called "the WRATH of the LAMB." What an amazing divine paradox! The "Lamb" of God who "takes away the sin of the W-O-R-L-D" on the one hand, and the "wrath" of the Lamb on the other hand. The Lamb - precious embodiment of meekness, mildness, lowliness, gentleness, patience and sacrifice - coming upon the world for which He died in the hot fury of wrath, until men are found fleeing from the wrath of the Lamb!

Can this be the same Jesus? The very thought seems incongruous. The two ideas seem completely incompatible and hopelessly irreconcilable - and they are until we understand the PURPOSE of the Lamb's wrath. The Lamb does not suddenly undergo some fundamental change, laying aside His Lambhood, transformed like the proverbial werewolf into something altogether contradictory, now Himself an executioner instead of a Saviour. Nay! It is not the wrath of One who has transmuted His Lamb nature, for it IS the very W-R-A-T-H OF THE L-A-M-B! This wrath, therefore, is strikingly unique - not unappeasable rage or beastly savagery inflicting unrepairable destruction and damnation upon mankind - but corrective, redemptive judgment to break the rebellion of men, and RESTORE ALL INTO HIMSELF AGAIN. That, my beloved, is the Divine Vengeance of Love - the wrath of the Lamb!

This dual nature - the meekness and wrath of the Lamb - makes Him what He is, both the SAVIOUR and the JUDGE of the universe. In His redemptive activity His face is set against sin. Nothing can ever alter that. He will go to all lengths to turn men from evil, and restore them into harmony with the mind and heart of God. The sheer simplicity and sincerity of His passion is enough to melt and win the most sophisticated or the hardest of men. The wrath of the Lamb is beyond our understanding. But the seer of Patmos was shown the unveiling of the wrath of the Lamb. I want to declare that God is going to come forth in these last days in a revelation of Jesus Christ with the judgments and wrath of God. This shaking and purging will affect the very Church of the living God. The hour is come when judgment must begin at the house of God, but the whole earth will reel violently under the overflow.

It is that STERN and TENDER hand of God which makes the Lion and the Lamb dwell together in the saints. As he walked the lonely shores of Patmos, the apostle John found himself borne away into the realm of the Spirit. In spirit he beheld a wonderful sealed book which no man could open. The symbolism of this book, and the message it conveys, is too much for us to discuss in this writing. However, John was brought into a place where he could see the intention of God to write His nature in the lives of a people. As he gazed in astonishment at the sealed book he was strangely moved to tears, and as he wept he heard one of the elders instruct him to dry his tears, because "the LION of the tribe of Judah" had "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" (Rev. 5:5). The beloved prophet stood transfixed with wonder as he looked, and, lo, "in the midst of the throne... stood a LAMB as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). Let us look at these two highly significant names - "the LION of the tribe of Judah" and "a LAMB as it had been slain." There are many beautiful names of our Lord, each given to teach us some facet of His Person, nature, and work. Through these divine titles our finite minds grasp, a little here and a little there, something of the Infinite One who works His strange and wonderful work within us. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" speaks to us of the kingly character of our Lord. This official title takes us back to the familiar prophecy recorded in Gen. 49:8-10. Jacob was giving his last blessing upon his sons, looking forward to the then future history of the tribes of Israel; and to Judah he said, "Judah is a LION'S WHELP ... the scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh (the Christ) come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Jesus is the Lion sprung from Judah. He overcame, in the trials of life, in the temptations in the wilderness, in the agonies of the garden, in the terrors of death, and in the bonds of the grave. He hath ascended, leading captivity captive. He is the Victor now over law, and sin, and death, and hell, and the whole kingdom of darkness. He who appears in the Revelation as a Lamb, is the same whom the elder had just described as a Lion. The two titles seem to be incompatible! What more opposite than the monarch of the forest, in strength and majesty, inflicting terror and death, and the Lamb, in its uncomplaining meekness, in the hands of the sacrificer. BUT THE TWO PICTURES DO NOT CONFLICT. They complement each other, and combine to bring out what could not be otherwise so well portrayed, and yet what the truth of the matter requires.

It is by His sacrifice as a Lamb slain, that He comes to the qualifications for the further office of a Lion, to assert and enforce His supremacy. "He was led as a LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7); but He is yet to "send forth judgment unto victory" (Mat. 12:20). As the Lamb He hath "borne our sorrows and carried our iniquities," and stands in the midst of the throne with life and blessing and glory for all; but it is reserved for Him, as Judah's Lion, "in righteousness to judge and make war," and enforce the power of His sovereignty upon all that stands in resistance against it.

This is certainly a word for us today. God has purposed to reveal every aspect of His purpose through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. God the Father had a purpose in Christ even before redemption, way back in the beginning, spoken of as "the eonian purpose." So we are living this very day in a progression. God is marching on. He wants to reveal Himself and unfold this glorious One that we call the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the tremendous unveiling in the form of symbols and signs that came to the prophet on that far-away Isle, is today FULFILLED SPIRITUALLY within the people in whom the Christ dwells. Let all who read these lines know for a certainty that it is the

glorious CHRIST WITHIN who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the slain Lamb that lives in the throne. You will never understand the mystery of the Lion and the Lamb until you understand that Christ is in heaven, and heaven is within us, for the Christ of glory eternally and gloriously lives out His life in His body, His people. It is within His elect that He must come forth as both the Lion and the Lamb in the midst of the throne, in the POWER of the Kingdom of God within. The Lion is the omnipotent power and the sovereign authority of God in manifestation, whereas the Lamb is the inward quickening and sustaining life of God.

There is a two-fold working of God in the lives of the Lord's apprehended ones. First, SELF must be dethroned, and in the accomplishment of this Christ is a Lion, clothed with power and majesty and terribleness. As the Lion He will crush every bone in the body of your self-life and tear away and consume every morsel of your flesh. But as the Lamb He wondrously imparts of HIS LIFE that you may live by the Spirit. The Lion is Christ warring, devouring, conquering all that pertains to the nature of old Adam. The Lamb is Christ AS OUR LIFE, that we may appear with Him in glory. But further these same qualities and characteristics must be fulfilled in the elect as we are conformed into His image, made ONE IN HIM. The company of the sons of God shall bear both the image of the Lion and the Lamb. The kingly strength and regal authority of the Lion nature shall function through the sons in perfect unity with the gentle and ministerial character of the Lamb. These two streams of the divine nature, working together as one, in judgment and mercy, shall flow mightily and great, and will cause the very earth to shake, will move heaven and stir hell, and bring the triumph of God's Kingdom among men. When the effective dealings of God through the Lion are BALANCED by the merciful and gracious administrations of the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb then lie down together in the Kingdom of God where there is peace and joy and righteousness for evermore. Thank God! He is preparing His LION AND LAMB COMPANY, those blessed ones made one with the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb on Mount Zion. This glorious ministry shall prevail in the earth and restore all back into God again.

Only with the correct understanding of the purpose and results of God's judgments can we enter into the rest of God in these turbulent times. Many are agitated in these dark days, their hearts failing them for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. The apostle Paul saw believers who were distressed by the terrible afflictions, tribulations and wickedness in the world, and he invited us to join him in entering into the rest of God. "And to you who are troubled REST WITH US, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. 1:7-10). What a word! REST WITH US when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven... in flaming fire taking vengeance! Let us therefore enter into the rest of God and cease worrying about all the problems, injustices and tyrannies of men, for the Lord shall soon bring judgment on the whole order, removing it to make way for the expansion of His glorious and righteous Kingdom. The whole earth eagerly and with bated breath awaits the manifestation of the glory of the Lord. God is not going to bypass the mode of operation He has chosen of working through human instruments. He comes in judgment - and in the process He comes TO BE GLORIFIED I-N H-I-S S-A-I-N-T-S AND TO BE ADMIRER I-N A-L-L T-H-E-M THAT BELIEVE. He shall come forth mightily through His people as the Lion in judgment to crush the carnal inventions of man, but He shall reign ultimately as the Lamb in blessing and peace and glory. Hallelujah!

## **THE JUDGMENT DAY**

We have been led to think in terms of the first coming and the second coming, whereas the Bible speaks in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. Our God does not talk about the "first coming" and the "second coming" - He talks about the on-going revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For example, let us take a look at that thought in Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me who is to Rule in Israel, whose GOINGS FORTH have been of old, from everlasting."

Notice, His "goings forth." The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of "goings" has to do with the onward marching of God - the unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever-increasing unveiling of Himself to man. The unfolding of end-time events and God's order for the ages to come, which are the main contents of the last book of the Bible, are called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

The pages of the Old Testament are literally sprinkled with the accounts of the Lord's comings, beginning in Eden's blessed Garden and continuing through all generations of old. We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearances. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of the harlot church system's unscriptural terms "first coming" and "second coming," but the truth is that He came; He continued to come. He comes; He continues to come. He will come; and He will continue to come! There are numerous "comings" and "appearings" of the Lord in the New Testament. BUT THEY DO NOT ALL REFER TO THE SAME EVENT. The word "coming" is very often used in the scriptures of a visitation or manifestation of the Lord to judge or bless or accomplish some aspect of His plan and purpose among His people and in the earth. One would think, listening to the preachers rant and rave about "THE second coming of Christ," that every time the Lord says, "I will come," He is speaking of one specific, particular, singular event sometime out in the dim and misty future. I would be remiss if I failed to tell you that this is a great error.

Rev. 2:5 tells of a coming of our Lord. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I WILL COME unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Since Jesus had gone, a coming of Jesus would be a return. So what does the Lord say? He warns the Church at Ephesus that if it does not repent, "I WILL COME ... QUICKLY!" "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." "Candlestick" means lamp stand. A lamp stand is for holding up a light. Now what is the use of an assembly of believers? This is the purpose of the Lord's people - "YE are the light of the world." Christ tells these people that if they do not repent HE WILL COME TO THEM IN JUDGMENT, swift and effective judgment, and remove them from being an assembly of light-bearing children of God. It was a coming that might not take place! Jesus said, "I will come if you don't repent." What would prevent this COMING? Ephesian saints repenting! The Ephesian Church was an active and patient and doctrinally sound Church. But it lost its first love for Christ, the pure, virginal love for Him and for Him alone, mingling fleshly interests with their devotion to Christ. Sadly, the Ephesian Church never repented. So God allowed the light to go out. Later on the darkness of Mohammedism swept over the land where this Church had been located. There is no lamp stand in Ephesus today, for there is nothing but the ruins of a once great city. In Ephesus there is no Church at all. The sight of the ancient temple is now a marsh, inhabited only by frogs. Ephesus, of course, in keeping with the pattern of the book of Revelation, was merely a TYPICAL

CHURCH, and the Lord's solemn warning signal flashes out to this day to be heeded by every man and movement that is of the Ephesian spirit and character: "Repent, or I WILL COME unto thee quickly!" Is this, then, THE so-called "second coming" of Christ? Assuredly not! But it is His coming nonetheless. It is His on-going coming in judgment beginning at the house of God!

It is my deep and considered conviction that just as the "coming" of the Lord is progressive - past, present, and future - so is the unfolding of the "judgment day" past, present, and future. The question follows - When did the judgment day begin? Jesus answers the question in the plainest of language. "For the Father judgeth no man, but HATH COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22). "And Jesus said, For judgment I AM COME into this world" (Jn. 9:39). "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31).

It is high time that the saints look into some of the things they have been taught. We have been told some funny stories. The preachers in the church systems love to speak loudly and preach long about what they term "the FINAL judgment." But the term "FINAL judgment" never appears once within the pages of God's blessed Book! In fact, the word "final" never appears there at all. It is a word that has been added to judgment and taught to the people as a divine revelation of an event that is supposed to transpire somewhere out in the future. The Word of God does not teach that there is a "final judgment day" at some future time. The pen of inspiration has blazoned with unmistakable clarity the truth: "Be ye also patient; establish your hears: for the COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH. Grudge not against one another, brethren, lest ye be condemned (judged): behold (look!), THE JUDGE STANDETH BEFORE THE DOOR" (James 5:8-9). Oh yes, the Judge IS HERE! even now standing before the door of your mind and heart. Some of the modern translations bring out the truth so beautifully: "Be patient, ye also; establish your hearts, because THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD HATH DRAWN NIGH; do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves shall not be judged. Look! THE JUDGE IS ALREADY STANDING AT THE VERY DOOR" (Young's Literal & Amplified Bible).

The judgments of God are first and foremost not external, but internal; not future, but on-going. The Word of God, history, and our own experience shout aloud the truth that the soul's verdict is even now being written moment by moment, not by recording angels in heavenly books on some distant shore, but by each man himself on the fleshy tables of his own heart. This present life is to each of the consecrated ones his "day of judgment" - his day of trial, testing, proving, chastening, his day of being brought to perfection in Christ. The apostle Peter's words are in harmony with this: "Judgment must BEGIN at the house of God!" (I Pet. 4:17). Let all men know that the hour has come when judgment must begin at the house of God. JUDGMENT BEGINNING AT THE HOUSE OF GOD! This does not imply a sudden visitation of catastrophes, calamities, and troubles, but it means that there will be a concentration of divine instruction and discipline, as the Father purifies each individual, until He can gather to Himself a FIRSTFRUITS.

It should be plain even to a child that the judgment day began with the coming of the Judge. The Judge is WITHIN YOU because the Christ is WITHIN YOU! It takes no extraordinary intelligence nor any exceptional spirituality to reach that conclusion. Let us stop putting the judgment beyond the cemetery and believe what God's Word really says about it. To all who wait for a judgment day in some future time or age I now say, as our blessed Lord has said, "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of

this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). Far too many Christians want to put it out at some final end, but either Satan is being bound and chained in your life today or he will never be eradicated from this planet. NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out! It is happening now and shall continue to happen in God's progressive unfolding of His judgments through the ages until that wonderful consummation when God becomes ALL-IN-ALL!

"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," saith the Lord (Lk. 19:22). On that far-away Patmos, in august symbol and awesome sign John the Revelator in spirit beheld "the dead, small and great stand before God; and the BOOKS were opened: and ANOTHER BOOK was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books" (Rev. 20:12). As you meditate upon this significant passage, dear one, allow the Spirit of God to reveal truth to your heart. We have entertained such carnal notions when we come to the book of Revelation. The Holy Spirit must teach us the very first principle of this book - the book of Revelation is a book of SYMBOLS - and no symbol is ever to be taken in its literal form. It is significantly wonderful that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is not a four-legged lion, nor is the Lamb in the midst of the throne a four-legged lamb! The Lamb has seven horns - not literal horns, of course - for the horns are mere figures representing the seven-fold spirit of power and life which emanates from the mind and nature of the Lamb. I am sure my readers understand the simple truth that the various beasts in the Revelation are not literal beasts, the cities are not literal cities, nor is the great harlot a singular physical woman who sells her body. One and all are but symbols and figures of deep spiritual realities, positive or negative, as the case may be. May I reverently inject another thought? The "dead" who "stand" before God and are "judged" out of the "books" are not the physically dead in the outward cemeteries, nor are the books such as you may have in your library. If they were, the principle of the book's symbology would utterly fail. If the Lamb who opens the "book" in chapter five is not a four-legged Lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the book is not a two-covered book! And if that "book" is one of Revelation's wonderful symbols, does it not logically follow that the "books" in chapter twenty are likewise word-pictures in the form of symbols?

The first key to understanding the book of Revelation is the fact that the book is, in its entirety, a book of symbols. Any other approach will leave you hopelessly lost in a sea of confusion or muttering like a mad man about things utterly ridiculous. "I saw the dead, small and great," John declared. When Jesus came this world was spiritually a cemetery. ALL were dead! NONE were living. "To be carnally minded IS DEATH," is the Spirit's own graphic and accurate definition of what it means to be dead (Rom. 7:6). "And you hath He quickened who WERE DEAD in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). To the spiritually dead the apostle commands, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from THE DEAD, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). Let us with pure minds and an understanding quickened by the spirit of revelation from God consider these meaningful words, "And I saw the DEAD... stand before God." I saw the DEAD -- S-T-A-N-D! And immediately the "books" were opened.

Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is

written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by its true name.

Where is the record? and what are these "books" where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are naught but the BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE - THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR VERY OWN B-E-I-N-G! In the sight of God you, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind and character is everything that YOU ARE. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Mat. 12:34). When your mouth speaks, the message inscribed in your inner nature is exposed and read by all who hear. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page of your book - the book which you are - known and read by all men. And think not, O man, that should your earthly body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought and deed. NO! All is accurately recorded in the law of your own life, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual and soulish condition and state of being, and to deal with you in judgment God has but to "stand you up" and prompt you to speak or act - and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life. At once your "book" will "open," each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book WHICH YOU A-R-E. When God, either now or in ages yet unborn, lays His mighty hand upon you, my friend, and summons you to STAND before Him, your book will open, and you will not then manifest anything other than what you are, for "the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature (dead or alive, visible or invisible) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with who we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13).

Without doubt, God is the great "book opener." I shall never forget an occasion many years ago when the Lord pressed this message home to my heart. In those days I was accustomed to changing the oil in my car. It never ceased to amaze me how a simple ten minute job could invariably turn into a disastrous hour-long ordeal! This certain day I had a few extra minutes, so determined to utilize them by changing the oil. I crawled under the car and proceeded to try to remove the oil plug. But it refused to cooperate. It simply would not budge. I pushed on the wrench with all my might; I grunted, groaned, and moaned as the minutes passed into an hour. The plug refused to yield and by this time was becoming damaged. Exasperation laid hold upon me. At that point I became exceedingly agitated and began to act very un-godlike. And just as soon as my rage reached its most explosive pitch, and what was manifested was all of ME and none of HIM, I saw two feet walking slowly by the car. The feet belonged to my neighbor. I knew that this neighbor was aware that I was a minister of the gospel! Suddenly I realized that my "book" had just been "opened" and my neighbor had been permitted to read a very ugly chapter! My heart smote me. Oh God, no! How ashamed I was that this man had read such a sordid scene! Humiliated and convicted (judged), at once I laid down the wrench and breathed the earnest prayer, "Father, FORGIVE ME! Help me somehow to get this oil plug out." No sooner were the words uttered than the Spirit whispered the words of wisdom, "Go to the other side of the car and pull instead of pushing." I crawled out from under the car and obeyed the prompting of the Spirit. In less than a minute the

plug responded and the black oil flowed out. The message is clear - I could have drawn upon the Spirit earlier and prevented all the trouble - but God wanted to put His finger on something in my life! He opened my book and for me it was a "judgment day"!

The grand purpose for this "opening of our book" is so that all that is written therein may be exposed, revealed, displayed, and brought to judgment, dealt with by a concentration of divine discipline and instruction, as the Father processes each individual. The procedure is simple but very effective. The person abiding in some realm of death is caused to "stand" before God - brought directly into relation to the countenance and dealing of God. God arranges the circumstances, puts him into a situation, and his "book" is "opened" - the inner condition uncovered, the secrets and intents of the heart manifest in such a measure and expressed to such a degree that there need be no other record of his state appealed to. As it is written, "God shall bring EVERY WORK into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14), for, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). Ah - you will despair and shrink before God's judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your book to destroy you - but to DELIVER YOU! God brings no man to judgment apart from the opening of his book. It is a divine law - God can never deliver you, nor any man, until the corruption in your heart has been drawn into outward manifestation, exposed, to be dealt with by God's stern and tender hand. When the inner nature erupts in some outward uncleanness, DO NOT DESPAIR! Thank God for exposing the deceitfulness and wickedness, cast yourself upon the tender mercies of the Lord, and yield yourself under His mighty hand that victory may be obtained in YOUR EARTH. We must never be discouraged when the motions of the flesh and the carnal mind overwhelm us, but neither should we become complacent about it, for God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never terminate His judgments until every man is conformed into the image of the glorious Son of God.

"And another book was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE" (Rev. 20:12). This must needs be opened too, for the book of life is the nature of the Lamb inscribed by the Spirit in the life of the New Creature. The book of life is called "the book of the life of the Lamb" (Rev. 13:8). If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is a biography or an autobiography of the life of the first president of the United States, George Washington. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there: where he was born, who his parents were, where he was raised, the schools he attended, who he married, how he became general of the army, and finally president of our great nation. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of God's Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, and what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for the sons and daughters of the most High are the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb. It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the Lamb, the book of the Son of God is A PEOPLE. "Forasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit GIVETH LIFE" (II Cor. 3:3,6). See also Heb. 10:8-11.

How pitiful that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful EPISTLE OF CHRIST, this glorious BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB. They have poured over the books of religion, the books of hypocrisy, the books of fleshly wisdom, forms of godliness, dead doctrines, empty rituals and ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations. But precious few have ever even seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial realms above when God opens His holy book of life! The book of life is that blessed company of the sons of God, elect, chosen and transformed into the image of Christ throughout the ages. This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time's clock is striking the hour and the time is drawing wonderfully nigh for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God's book of life people, and what a manifestation it shall be! All creation from time immemorial has groaned and travailed for the manifestation of God's sons, to deliver creation at last from the bondage of corruption.

God has a MESSAGE for the world - the revelation of Jesus Christ! This message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss of words to express the glory of God's BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared and finished it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

# *Chapter 38*

## *Coming In Judgment*

### *(continued)*

The scriptures reveal that just as the "coming" of the Lord is progressive - past, present, and future - so is the "judgment day" progressive - past, present, and future. The question follows - When did the judgment day begin? Jesus Himself answers the question in the plainest of language. "For the Father judgeth no man, but HATH COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22). "And Jesus said, For judgment I AM COME into the world" (Jn. 9:39). "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31).

It should be plain even to a child that the judgment day began with the coming of the Judge. The Judge is WITHIN YOU because the Christ is WITHIN YOU! It requires no extraordinary intelligence or spirituality to reach that conclusion. Let us stop putting the judgment out beyond the cemetery and believe what God's Word really says about it. To all who wait for a judgment day in some future time or age I now say, as our blessed Lord has said, "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out." Far too many Christians want to put it out at some final end, but either Satan IS BEING bound and chained in your life, and in the experience of multitudes TODAY, or he will never be eradicated from this planet. NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out! It has to begin somewhere and end somewhere. It is happening now, praise God, and the work shall advance unto that glorious consummation when God becomes ALL IN ALL! We will be better equipped to face up to our PRESENT WALK and respond to the Father's dealings in our lives TODAY when once and for all we lay hold upon the significant and incontrovertible truth that "N-O-W is the judgment of this world: N-O-W shall the prince of this world be cast out."

The apostle Paul, speaking on Mars Hill, told the Athenians, "The time of this ignorance God winked at; but NOW commandeth all men everywhere 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 17:30-31). This passage sets forth four wonderful truths: (1) God has appointed A DAY (2) In that DAY He shall JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness (3) He shall judge the world by that MAN whom He hath ordained (4) This ASSURANCE is given unto ALL MEN.

This judgment day is not a day of eternal doom, but a blessed day of ASSURANCE UNTO ALL MEN. But how is that assurance given unto all men? In just this way. God has appointed A DAY in which He will in righteousness judge the world by A MAN whom He has ordained for that purpose. That Man, of course, is His Son, and His Son died the death of all humanity, but this assurance lies in the fact that GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD. The assurance given UNTO ALL is, that as God dealt with His own Son in death and resurrection, so He will deal with ALL HUMANITY.

The first question encountered in this passage concerns the word "day." God has appointed "a day" in which He will "judge." Is it a twenty-four hour day, a thousand-year day, or a dispensational day? This much is certain - a twenty-four hour day in which all the billions upon billions of souls from Adam on down, march in a line before a literal judgment bar misses entirely the true purpose and import of this judgment day. When does this "judgment day" come? Most Greek interlinears furnish this reading: "Because He set a day in which He is about to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom He appointed." Two thousand years ago Paul said God was about (Greek: mellei) to judge the world. This word MELLO, where found in the present, active, indicative tense signifies, not only INTENTION of purpose but also NEARNESS of action, meaning at the point of, or ready to do what has been stated. Had Paul meant to teach a judgment day two or three thousand years in the future, he certainly would not have used MELLO in any tense, and especially in the present tense. Therefore the judgment of the world was ABOUT to take place in Paul's day, yea, had ALREADY COMMENCED according to the teaching of Jesus!

There is a wonderfully significant term used by Jesus on several occasions wherein He states, "The hour IS COMING, and NOW IS." This unique expression points to something that is coming, but which has already begun - it SHALL BE, and yet it ALREADY IS. The process has begun but remains to be carried forth to its consummation. Just before His crucifixion Jesus warned His disciples, "Behold, the hour COMETH, yea, is NOW COME, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone" (Jn. 16:32). The predicted scattering was even then beginning by events already set in motion as the hour of His death drew nigh, but would be fully manifest during the time that His body lay in the tomb, and continue throughout the forty days until His ascension. "The hour COMETH...and NOW IS." In the tenderest of pathos Jesus informed the woman of Samaria, "The hour COMETH, and NOW IS, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23). The great transition from a localized God who dwelt in a magnificent temple built by men's hands to the omnipresent God known and experienced by the Spirit in the living temples of our own bodies was wondrously near at hand even as these enlightening words poured from the anointed lips of Jesus. The change had, in fact, ALREADY BEGUN in the Person of Jesus Himself who knew the Father in a dimension none had ever known Him before. Thus could He say, "The hour is COMING, and NOW IS." For multitudes it was still to come, but for Jesus it was a present and glorious reality.

Later, the Lord proclaimed, "The hour is COMING, and NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and HATH GIVEN Him authority to EXECUTE JUDGMENT also, because He is the Son of man" (Jn. 5:25-27). In this beautiful passage, pregnant with truth and spiritual instruction, both the resurrection and the judgment are associated with the activity of the Son of God, and both are included in the divine order: "The hour is COMING, and NOW IS." Hear it! The resurrection is COMING...and NOW IS! The judgment is COMING... and NOW IS!

## **CHRIST THE JUDGE**

Judgment does not mean punishment alone. Punishment may be an element in judgment. Judgment is discrimination, decision; the finding of a verdict, and the passing of a sentence. Judgment is translated in the Old Testament most often from the Hebrew word MISHPAT. MISHPAT means simply "a verdict" which may be either FAVORABLE

or UNFAVORABLE. The only judgment most people understand is the negative aspect of judgment, the UNFAVORABLE VERDICT, followed by swift and severe punishment. It should require no more than a moment's reflection, however, to enable anyone to see that the very same judge who sentences one man to pay a fine, another to die in the electric chair, may suspend the sentence of a third man and declare yet a fourth man "not guilty" - acquitted! It is plain that a great many different "judgments" or "verdicts" may come from this one judge. Thus, the work of the judge is not merely to condemn and mete out sentences, but to weigh all the facts and take all the circumstances into consideration in each case and render a just verdict, favorable or unfavorable, as the evidence may dictate.

It was Sunday, October 5, 1986. There was a football game being played in St. Louis. St. Louis was playing the New York Giants. St. Louis was behind with only 2 minutes and 20 seconds left to go in the game. One touchdown could tie the game. Suddenly there was a pass into the end zone. It was so close. Was it a score or wasn't it? If you watched the game on television or read about it in the paper, you heard that the officials went into the instant replay to help make the call. For five minutes the game was held up while they looked at instant replays from every angle until they finally waved to one referee on the field, a man named Chuck Hammerling. They said, "You call it." He called it: "Incomplete!" St. Louis lost. How would YOU like to be that referee? Chuck Hammerling went to the shower room, packed his bags, and sneaked out of the stadium, hoping nobody would see him. He got to the airport, boarded the plane, slid into his seat and looked around to be sure that he was safe. When he looked across the aisle he said to the man sitting there, "Did you hear the game today?" "No," the man replied. He said, "Are you a St. Louis fan by any chance?" "Not particularly." "Good," he sighed, "I finally feel safe."

That is a mere human reaction to the awesome sense of responsibility in rendering a decision, a verdict. But speaking of the judgment of the Lord, hear the note of triumph and exultation when David speaks by the inspiration that 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 trees of the forest (people of the nations) "sing out" when the Lord is coming to JUDGE THE EARTH? One would think they might weep, or shrink in consternation at the thoughts of His judgments, but why all the SINGING? Why the REJOICING? 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 harmony and righteousness. And when the divine

disciplines have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow in restoration and victory. Hallelujah!

My soul rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the knowledge that my Judge is Christ Jesus my Saviour and Lord. That Christ should be appointed Judge is most proper and fitting. Our American law ordains that a man shall be tried by his peers, and there is justice in that statute. Now the Lord God is the Judge of men, but at the same time it is in the person of Jesus Christ. "God shall judge the secrets of men BY JESUS CHRIST" (Rom. 2:16). JESUS CHRIST! What a name for a Judge! The SAVIOUR-ANOINTED: that is the meaning of the name. Jesus Christ, the Anointed Saviour, is the JUDGE! Someone has pointed out that we have a "hanging Judge" - hanged on a tree on Golgotha's hill! Men shall be judged by a Man. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son... and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (Jn. 5:22,27). Why, "because He is the SON OF MAN?" Because He has come into the scene where man is a sinner, under judgment and curse, and He, who has come into this scene became a man.

I think that God has chosen Christ, the MAN Christ Jesus, that there may never be an objection raised concerning that judgment. Men shall not be able to say - We were judged by a superior Being who did not know our weaknesses and temptations, and therefore he judged us harshly, and without a compassionate consideration of our condition. No, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He is our brother, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, partaker of our humanity, and therefore understands what is in men. He has shown Himself to be skillful in dissecting motives and revealing the thoughts and intents of the heart. It will be the loving Christ, whose tears, and bloody sweat, and gaping wounds, attest His brotherhood with mankind; and it will be clear to all intelligences that however dread His sentences, He could not be unmerciful. God shall judge us by Jesus Christ, the Anointed Saviour, that the judgment may be judgment UNTO VICTORY!

The thoughts of many hearts were revealed by Christ on earth, and it is that same wise and compassionate Christ who is the Judge today. When the self-appointed judges of wrong brought to Christ a woman taken in sin to have Him pronounce His verdict and sentence upon her, He appeared to be preoccupied. Then in one brief moment of time He lifted the whole subject out of the realm of controversy, saying, "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her." A strange hush fell upon the crowd. Self-accusings began to make themselves felt within, forces long dormant were awakened to work, voices long silent began to shout, and "being convicted in their own conscience they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest." Ah, the judgment-seat was already set and the striking feature is that men pronounced judgment upon themselves and accepted it without murmur or protest. But to the frightened woman cowering at His feet, He said, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?" She answered, "No one, Lord!" And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you either. Go your way, and from now on sin no more." Glory! What a Saviour! Hallelujah! What a Judge!

## **THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST**

Perhaps in spirit we have stood with our adorable Christ as in humiliation He emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant, descending into the depths of our earthiness, tasting the bitter dregs of the darkness and death of this dread realm for every man; but have we stood with Him in His exaltation, where He sits far above

principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but in the ages to come, HIGHLY EXALTED and given a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father?

What a difference between the babe of Bethlehem's manger, the child of Nazareth, hunted by Herod, carried down by night into Egypt for shelter, and the King of kings and Lord of lords, before whom every knee shall bow! What a difference between the weary man full of sorrows, and He that is girt with glory, sitting on a throne encircled with a rainbow! From the derision of men who cast Him out, and preferred a robber and a murderer to the Saviour, to the throne of universal judgment - what an ascent! I am unable to convey to you my own heart's sense of the contrast between the "despised and rejected of men," and the universally-acknowledged Lord, before whom kings and presidents and prime ministers and pontiffs must bow into the dust. He who was judged at Pilate's bar, shall summon all to His bar. What a change from the shame and spitting, from the nails and the wounds, the mockery and the thirst, and the dying anguish, to the glory of One whose eyes are as a flame of fire, His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in an oven, and out of whose mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword! Oh, how we ought to bow before Him now as He reveals Himself in His righteous judgment and in His fathomless grace!

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). That is very decisive, if there were no other text. We must ALL APPEAR. The Greek word which is translated "judgment seat" is BEMA, and means simply a step or that which the foot is set on, indicating a raised platform reached by steps and occupied by some person in authority. The same word is translated "throne" in Acts 12:21, and it can mean award-seat, as much as judgment-seat. It would apply as fully to the seat occupied by a judge in a civil case as to that of a judge trying a case of life or death. It bespeaks not of the TYPE of judgment, but of the FACT OF AUTHORITY.

When we come to this thought of the judgment seat of Christ we approach a subject upon which there has been a fathomless sea of misunderstanding and a world of carnal conjecture. The idea generally entertained is of Christ coming to earth, seated upon a dazzling throne, and that He will summon everyone in rank and file before Him, to be judged. Adam would stand there, with Mother Eve, and look in wonder upon his offspring. It would be the first time in which he has ever had the opportunity of seeing all his children together. What a sight he would then behold - far stretching, covering all the globe which they inhabit, enough not only to people all earth's plains, but crown her hill-tops, and cover even the ways of the sea, so numberless must the human race be if all the generations that have ever lived, or shall ever live, shall at once "appear" before the judgment seat of Christ! Every one from before the Flood, from the days of the Patriarchs, from the times of Moses, and David, and from the Babylonian kingdom, all the legions of Assyria, all the hosts of Persia, all the multitudes of the Greeks, all the vast armies and legions of Rome, the barbarian, the Scythian, the bond, the free, men of every color and of every tongue - what a vast assemblage would be mustered, what a spectacle would be held! I do not hesitate to say that though good and holy men have conceived the foregoing picture, it is, nonetheless, entirely out of harmony with the whole portrait of judgment. This distorted picture arises from a too-literal interpretation of a few

obscure verses of scripture which were supplied merely as SYMBOLS, to be understood by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God.

"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10). These are deeply solemn words, which our hearts would do well to ponder. But no less important than what the passage DOES say, is what it does NOT say. It does NOT state that we shall all appear or stand before the judgment seat of Christ AT THE END OF THIS AGE, or AT THE END OF THE WORLD, or IN SOME FAR-OFF HEAVEN SOMEWHERE, or UP ON A CLOUD, or IN SOME FAR DISTANT AGE. The divine record states in emphatic terms that we MUST all APPEAR, but it does not dictate that we must all appear at once, or when or where we shall appear. The simple fact that we must appear has been embellished by the religious systems with a liberal sprinkling of carnal reasoning and unscriptural speculation!

Having established that "the Father HATH (already) COMMITTED all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22), and "the time IS COME that judgment must begin at the house of God" (I Pet. 4:17), and "ye ARE COME unto ... God the Judge of all" (Heb. 12:22-23), and "the Judge STANDETH before the door" (James 5:9), and "N-O-W is the judgment of this world" (Jn. 12:31), can we not see by these words of inspiration that the Christ truly CAME as Judge, and continued to come; He now COMES as Judge, and continues to come; and He YET SHALL COME as Judge, and shall continue to come until the last verdict is handed down, the final sentence carried out; there shall surely be those severe prunings, crushings, shattering, melting; but when they have accomplished their desired results, His new life shall flow in restoration and victory for all mankind, praise His wonderful name! The judgment seat of Christ does not refer exclusively to any ONE coming moment or event, nor to ANY specified future time period in which Christ acts as Judge. It is a comprehensive term, embracing within its range the whole judicial dealing of Christ our Lord with men and nations until, by His redemptive judgments, "He will destroy in this mountain (the Kingdom of God) the face of the covering cast over ALL PEOPLE, and the veil (of spiritual blindness) that is spread over ALL NATIONS. And He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will 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, and we will be glad and rejoice in HIS SALVATION" (Isa. 25:7-9).

"For we must all appear before the- judgment seat of Christ; that every one may RECEIVE the things done in his body" (II Cor- 5:10). The words of Paul in this passage demonstrate vividly the truth we have been dealing with heretofore. I would draw your attention to the word "receive." Let us see just what this word "receive" means according to Strong's Concordance. It means "TO TEND or to take care of; to provide; by implication to carry off." This should make it plain to us that the things we are doing in the body, the deeds performed in the body, are before the judgment seat of Christ, and are constantly NOW being judged and every thought is being brought into captivity to the Christ. Everything is being tended to, provided for, and all that need be removed is being carried off. This judgment is not inflicted from without, but from within. God, the wisest of all Fathers, has so ordered the universe that somehow, sometime, sin brings its own punishment, and it shall be the experience of the whole of mankind, as it was of Israel, and as it has been of the saints, that "thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and by backslidings shall reprove thee" (Jer. 2:19). In our own bodies we daily sow and reap (Gal. 6:7), actively receiving blessing or cursing according to the deeds performed. Who can deny that it is THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, who, moment by moment

renders the verdict, setting in motion the precise circumstances, events, and dealings which constitute the reaping, the receiving in our body according to the deeds done! No, we are not awaiting some future specified day of judgment, but are keenly aware that we are constantly N-O-W being judged, receiving either the increase of HIS LIFE WITHIN, or His corrections - in our body.

What a judgment seat! What a Judge! What reality! Oh! what an unspeakably glorious and awe-inspiring scene John the beloved beheld as from his vantage point in the spirit he saw "a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Rev. 20:11). Who is it that sits there? It is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ. The One who fills that throne is without doubt the Son of man. And how does He sit there? In and through His body, the saints, unto whom judgment is given (Dan. 7:22). A throne is of authority. The throne is called "great" because of its vast magnitude, its awful sovereignty, and the majesty of the One who fills it. It is called "white" because of the absolute purity and righteousness of its Judge and His judgment. So we see a seat of authority of great majesty, power and purity. Observe, the heaven, and the earth, fly from the face of Him that sits upon the throne!

"From His face (intelligence, countenance, illumination) the earth and the heaven fled away." Consider the scene! In its symbology the "earth" is that earth WHICH WE ARE, the carnal, earthly nature of old Adam. "The first man is OF THE EARTH, EARTHY" (I Cor. 15:47). "As we have borne the image of the EARTHY, we shall also bear the image of the HEAVENLY" (I Cor. 15:49). "Heaven" means height, eminence, elevation, exaltation. God dwells in heaven, the invisible realm of spirit that transcends this gross material realm. When you touch God by the spirit, you touch heaven. When you experience God in the spirit, you experience heaven. When you know God in the spirit, you know heaven. When God is revealed to you by the spirit, heaven is opened and you behold heavenly things. There are many heavens, for there are many realms, dimensions, and levels on which God can be touched, experienced and known in the spiritual world. Most saints have passed through several heavens in their UPWARD WALK of progressive spiritual experience. But Jesus is greater than them all, for He "ascended up FAR ABOVE A-L-L H-E-A-V-E-N-S" (Eph. 4:10). God is so great in His fullness that even "the heaven OF heavens (the super-heaven containing all other heavens) CANNOT CONTAIN HIM!" (I Kings 8:27).

It is wonderful to know God in His heavens. Each heaven bespeaks of a sphere of life, a plane of relationship, a level of experience in God by the spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. But, thank God! there is a realm of HIS FULLNESS which lies ABOVE and BEYOND all heavens! When the Christ appears on His great white throne of judgment its effulgence reveals the darkness of the carnal mind, uncovers the deceitfulness of the wicked heart, exposing in stark reality the man of sin sitting in the temple of God. For us to become the sons of God, the image of God, this thing - SELF, carnality, and all that pertains to the earthly nature - must be destroyed by the brightness of His coming, removed, taken out of the way. Blessed be God! Before the face of Him whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength, none of the things of the flesh can stand, so they flee away, and no place is found for them! Our "earth" flees away from before the face of HIM who sits upon the throne!

Before the face of Him who sits upon the throne in the higher-than-all-heavens, the limitations of our present "in part" knowledge of the Lord, every heaven of spiritual experience which is less than HIS FULLNESS, stand revealed as falling short of the image and glory of God. Before the majesty of His white throne, in the searching illumination of His eyes of flaming fire, none of our spiritual immaturity can stand, and ALL our HEAVENS flee away, and no place is found for them! In the sovereignty and fullness of His throne there are no more "heavens," no more companies, groups, levels of servants, friends, bride, sons, prophets, apostles, pastors, kings or priests; no more those who know Him as Saviour, while others know Him as Healer, others as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and still others who follow on to know Him in deeper measures. High above the earth realm, and far beyond all the heavens of spiritual experience sits the GREAT WHITE THRONE - and the invitation is extended: "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). But you will never know Him in the power and glory of His throneship, my beloved, until YOUR EARTH and all YOUR HEAVENS have flown away, and you have put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature, to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. Can you not see that this process is progressively going on all the time, as we are changed from glory to glory, moving inexorably toward the final goal - GOD ALL IN ALL!

## **THE MINISTRY OF JUDGMENT**

Up to this point we have emphasized the office of Christ Jesus our Lord as universal Judge and the effectual working of His judgments in our lives. The scriptures reveal, however, that the Church is the body of Christ, and God's blessed Christ must include both the Head and the body. All true saints must be aware of this sacred secret - that the body is the body of ALL THAT THE HEAD IS. If Christ the Head is Saviour, then the body of Christ the Head is the body of the Saviour - a body of SAVIOURS. If Christ the Head is King, it follows that the body of the Head is the body of the King - a body of KINGS. And armed with the knowledge that Christ the Head is the great and universal Judge, it should be perfectly clear that the body of the Head is the body of the Judge, a body of JUDGES! The purpose in the firstfruits being judged is that they in turn may be qualified to judge. The judgments of God shall be executed upon the human family and the ages to come by this glorious CORPORATE CHRIST, Jesus Christ the Head and all the sons and daughters of God, His body, the completeness of HIS THRONE which shall smite the dark kingdoms of this world, and the saints shall take the kingdom and reign with Christ in power, authority and glory.

God is preparing a mighty COMPANY OF JUDGES whose responsibility it shall be to JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness! Daniel 7:21-22 sheds much light upon this subject. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Again, "And he that overcometh... to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27). "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN UNTO THEM" (Rev. 20:4,6). The apostle Paul adds, "Do ye not know that the SAINTS shall JUDGE THE WORLD? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that WE shall JUDGE ANGELS, how much more things that pertain to this life? (I Cor. 6:2-3). Jesus spoke of this same beautiful truth when He said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father

has appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in the kingdom, and SIT ON THRONES JUDGING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL" (Lk. 22:28-30).

Most of the Christian world is waiting for Jesus to come at "any minute" and bring judgment upon the earth. In the greater light of present truth we now understand that the judgment which HE IS, and which is now wrought out in His saints, the firstfruits of His redemption, will ultimately be manifested to creation in and through the sons of God. The judges for this day are now in preparation for their awesome task. Yes, YOU shall judge the world, saints...but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love. The first aspect of the ministry of the judges in the coming age is JUDGMENT. This work however, shall be swiftly followed by the second ministry of MERCY and RESTORATION, for God's judgments are ever unto correction and redemption.

All who judge must be possessed of that same anointing of the SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD that rests upon the firstborn Son of God. "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2). "These things saith He that HATH THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD" (Rev. 3:1). Thank God! The very thought of a universe governed by the sons of God who are filled with the seven-fold intensified Spirit of the Lord leaves me absolutely breathless! Words become totally inadequate and human ability to articulate the wonder of such a thing fails completely. Our faltering minds cannot fully appreciate nor comprehend the wonder of Enoch's prophecy: "Behold, the LORD COMETH with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15).

There are several points of interest in the passage just quoted. "Behold, the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS." The original would be better expressed, "The Lord cometh I-N HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF." He comes in that people who are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, life of His life, mind of His mind; the extension and projection of all HE IS - HIMSELF CREATURES. "To EXECUTE judgment upon all." To execute means to carry out, to fulfill, to PURSUE TO THE END. Holy myriads of Himself shall carry out judgment upon ALL, and pursue it unto the end, until the full fruit and effect of that judgment shall be manifested IN ALL. "And to CONVINCED all that are ungodly..." To convince means to CONVICT, REPROVE, and FULLY PERSUADE all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. This is conviction, my friend, HOLY GHOST CONVICTION that must be ministered into the minds and hearts of men before they will submit so that the cleansing process can begin in them. Hallelujah! What a judgment! Thus the Lord comes in His holy ones to bring an ending to the long reign of sin, darkness, and death, praise His wonderful name.

Day by day we are learning the ways of the Lord. Only God can teach us these things and equip us to judge with righteous judgment. It would be well here for us to take particular notice of a divine principle set forth by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. All who earnestly desire to acquire the wisdom and attributes of THE JUDGE and possess the nature which dispenses RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT should give prayerful consideration to these words. "For I know nothing by myself...but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come..." I Cor. 4:4-5). Judge nothing before the time, UNTIL THE LORD COME. When is that? In the blindness

of church tradition someone's mind will immediately jump to the conclusion that Paul is talking about waiting to judge until the so-called "second coming of Christ." But that is in no way the meaning here. "Judge nothing before the time...until the Lord come, who (when He comes) both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God."

Judge nothing... until the Lord come - to judge. In any situation, circumstance, problem or trouble where judgment is required, it means just this - MAKE NO JUDGMENT APART FROM THE MIND OF THE LORD! Judge not, precious friend of mine, by the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear. Judge not by the outward appearance, by carnal reasoning, natural understanding, fleshly wisdom, nor by religious tradition. WAIT UPON THE LORD. Render no judgment about anything until the Lord draws nigh with that precious wisdom which is from above, until the light of His presence brings divine understanding, until the glorious mind of Christ gives spiritual discernment. Judge nothing until the Lord appears in the matter, disclosing the counsels of HIS MIND, making bright the pathway before your feet. The wisdom which is from above teaches us that this coming of the Lord in judgment is a PRESENT ACTION, NOT a future event. When the Lord comes He "brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and makes manifest the counsels of the hearts," that there may be righteous judgment. Jesus is the true Light that has come into the world and when this penetrating Light enters into our hearts, we have understanding.

No man has a right to judge anything until this Light has shined into his intellect. Otherwise he is judging in darkness and will do just as Paul says in Rom. 2:1, "For wherein thou judgest another, THOU CONDEMNEST THYSELF; for thou that judgest doest the same things." No one has any right to judge anyone else when he is himself in darkness and doing the same things he is judging in another. But when the entrance of the Lord occurs, then our whole being will be filled with light and we can know surely that the first one judged will be O-U-R-S-E-L-V-E-S. The faults and failings of others will fade as the darkness before the shining orb of the morning sun when God begins to reveal ourselves to us!

As a brother has shared, there are times of divine visitation when the Lord deals with you. Don't try to bring things to judgment before the Lord comes. The same thing is true for other people's lives. Don't try to bring them under conviction and get them into a dealing before the proper time. There is a time the Lord has reserved for every one of us. He will walk up and down the whole territory of our being. He will cover us thoroughly from head to toe, in every area of our lives. He is going to convert this whole "earth" of mine so that it may reflect the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! We are always in a hurry. God is never in a hurry. Be sure to give Him enough time. He is going to deal with you. He is going to deal with your brother and sister. He is going to have a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, thoroughly purged, whose iniquity has been taken away. He is going to have a vast family of sons in the express image of the Father in heaven. He is going to have a world wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the transformation of the world in that day will be the marvel and joy of the inhabitants of earth. He is going to have a universe pulsating with the beauty, harmony, life and glory of God, for His grace shall freely reach out and touch everything in all the unbounded heavens with the eternal life of Him from whom all things come, by whom all things exist, and in whom all things end. As George Hawtin has so eloquently written, "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. There shall be no end to its increase in this age, no end to its increase in the age to come, and no end to its increase in the ages of the ages. His increase shall reach far

beyond the measure of man's mind until planet after planet, star after star, galaxy after galaxy throughout the vast rock strewn sidereal shall taste the increase of His government and the glory of His restoration and no inharmonious chord is heard in all God's universe forever, but order, interdependence and unity, where CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL" -end quote.

There is a PURPOSE IN JUDGMENT, and it is always a purpose of love. There is a deep, clear purpose in everything that God does. And His love for us, deep and tender, is the fire burning under that purpose. The character of God must be kept ever in mind. The leading trait in His character is expressed, not by the word "purity," nor "righteousness," nor "justice," but by the word "love." Though if we knew the real meaning of "love" we would find it includes these others, and more. The purpose in judgment is two-fold. It is a purpose TOWARD SIN, to get rid of it. And God's attitude here is relentlessly uncompromising. No exceptions are ever noted. And there is a purpose TOWARD MEN. Now regarding the purpose toward men, it is disciplinary. The whole thought is to change the man. It is love working, love for the man. The purpose is the same as the surgeon's. He thrusts in his keen-edged blade, not to destroy life, but to save it. He is driving hard against the disease. The knife that cuts and hurts is held steady by the kindly purpose in the heart.

Judgment only terrifies those who don't understand the process. One has seen the effect of tropical storms on people when first going to reside in a land where they prevailed. Having been brought up in a land where lightning and thunder were rarely seen, they found the effects of a typically tropical storm to be TERRIFYING. But one is astonished to find that the inhabitants of the country in question looked forward to those electric storms with unmingled satisfaction. They forgot the elements of terror in the scene, in remembering the glorious blessings that the storm would bring. They saw the welcome rains falling from heaven and putting an end to their time of suffering and privation. The terrible period of drought and famine, dealing out death on every hand, would give place to the period of green and plenty. And truly their hopes were well founded, for in a few days, death seemed swallowed up of life; there was joy with plenty on every hand. The storm, therefore, had two different effects upon two classes of people. To those unaccustomed to the scene, and unmindful of the blessings at hand, it was terrifying; they saw only the electric storm with its menacing bolts of lightning and frightening peals of thunder. The more experienced inhabitants, however, rejoiced at the thunder and lightning because these heralded the blessings beyond.

So it is in regard to the coming of Christ in judgment. Strangers to the grace of God and His ways are alarmed by the portents of that Day. But those who have drawn close enough to the heavenly Father to know His mind and heart understand that all His judgments are corrective and redemptive, and therefore altogether desirable, beneficial and glorious! The ecstatic exclamation of joy and gladness at the prospects of the coming of God's righteous judgment in to the earth is found all through the psalms and the prophets. If you are truly destined to stand among the company of the sons of God, the long-awaited liberators of creation, you will most assuredly thrill at the heavenly vibration of David's inspired song: "Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: the WORLD ALSO shall be established that it shall not be moved: HE SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUSLY. Let the heavens rejoice, and LET THE EARTH BE GLAD; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood REJOICE before the Lord: for HE COMETH, for He C-O-M-E-T-H

TO JUDGE THE EARTH: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Ps. 96:10-13).

"Make a JOYFUL noise unto the Lord, ALL THE EARTH: make a loud noise, and REJOICE, and SING PRAISE. Let the sea (raging, surging multitudes of humanity) roar, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods (armies) CLAP THEIR HANDS, let the hills (small kingdoms, third world nations) BE JOYFUL TOGETHER before the Lord; for HE COMETH TO JUDGE THE EARTH: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity" (Ps. 98:4,8-9).

There is a scene in Revelation 8 - so awesome, so incredible, so glorious! "And when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them. And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up" (Rev. 8:1-7).

In this dramatic scene all heaven is hushed! For nearly half an hour the elders kneel in silent wonder. The living creatures, the mighty cherubim, the burning seraphim, all are hushed and speechless. The saints before the throne are silent. Angelic choirs put away their hymnals; the harps have been put aside; and there is not a sound in heaven. All is hushed! Why? It is because the SEVENTH SEAL has been broken and they have seen the judgments written on the seventh document. Seven angels with seven trumpets stand ready to inflict fiery judgments on the earth-realm. THIS INDESCRIBABLE SILENCE HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH PRAYER! It has to do with INCENSE! It has to do with WORSHIP! It has to do with the holy FIRE upon the altar! The time has come for God to bring to His golden altar EVERY PRAYER of His people, all the PRAISE of His saints, and the WORSHIP of His elect. The judgment is set. All is brought to His judgment bar. He is going to put His consuming fire under the incense of OUR WORSHIP to test the aroma! Will it be a sweet smelling savor - or a stench in His nostrils? Will it be the stench of flesh, the foul smell of soulish zeal and emotion, the offensive odor of carnal religious exercise - or will it be the sweet savor of a broken and contrite spirit, the fragrance of a yielded and obedient heart, the pleasing scent of a worship that is in spirit and in truth?

Then John saw the angel take the censer and fill it with FIRE from the altar of God and cast it into the EARTH - into that earth which WE ARE, into the lives and hearts of God's people; and "there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings and an earthquake" great commotions, intense dealings, marvelous unveilings, powerful words, deep revelations, fearful manifestations, fiery processings and judgment of such intensity and severity that our soulish nature reels to and fro, shaking to its very foundations. Trumpet after trumpet, judgment is poured out from GOD'S ALTAR into the spiritual lives of the elect until they are so thoroughly purged, purified, refined and transformed that when we arrive at the final drama, the closing scene, the grand finale of the pageant of the SEVENTH TRUMPET we find "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great

voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the TEMPLE OF GOD was opened in HEAVEN, and there was seen in His temple (the body of Christ) the ARK OF HIS TESTAMENT (the glory, nature, authority and incorruptible life of God). And there appeared a great wonder in heaven (the realm of the spirit); a WOMAN (the true Church, the bride) clothed with the SUN (the illumination and glory of Christ), and the MOON (cold, reflective light of external religion) under her feet, and upon her head a CROWN OF TWELVE STARS (authority of divine government): and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And she brought forth a MANCHILD (the manifested sons of God), who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up UNTO GOD (into the highest heaven, the realm of His fullness), and to HIS THRONE (governmental authority)" (Rev. 11:15,19; 12:1-2,5).

Talk about judgment unto victory! This is the judgmental process of God which MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD! God shall bring forth a "firstfruit company" who are UNDEFILED BEFORE GOD. These are they that have repented of sin and every work of the flesh. With Christ, their victorious Head, they have died to all the desires of the flesh and mind. They are a people who have fixed all their hopes in Christ the Lord. Their hearts cry not for the tinsel of the world, nor yet for the trinkets of popular religion, but their prayer ascends to God day and night, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Purged of all pride, self-interest and filthiness of flesh and spirit, and of all soulish works and worship, these shall be accounted worthy to reign with Christ as kings and judges from the spirit realm, and those who rule from henceforth are a royal priesthood like unto their Lord, after the order of Melchizedek.

# *Chapter 39*

## *Coming In A Shout*

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven WITH A SHOUT, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4:16-17).

I believe every word that the beautiful passage above says about the coming of our dear Lord. I believe what it says, not the fables men have built around it. I don't believe what the apostate churches say about it, nor what the tradition-bound preachers say about it; but I certainly believe what the Holy Spirit of truth says about it!

This famous, and often misunderstood scripture, is one of great pondering. Because this is from Paul, the idea prevails that it must be a simple statement of literal facts, easy to understand with the natural mind, and altogether physical and natural; therefore many have come to expect a terrible vibration of the atmosphere from immortal lungs, an actual blast from a silver or perhaps golden trumpet, accompanied with a voice from the throat of Michael the archangel, that will resound throughout the whole earth, and will waken the dead in the cemeteries. But according to this same Paul, in Rom. 8:11, it is the "Spirit of God that DWELLS IN YOU" which will quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies, not the blast of a trumpet.

While the King James Version states that the Lord shall descend from heaven "with a shout," that is not quite the way it appears in the original. The Greek uses the preposition EN meaning "in," and Young's Literal Translation renders it correctly, "Because the Lord Himself, IN a shout, IN the voice of a chief-messenger, and IN the trump of God, shall come down from heaven." The Lord does not come "with" a shout, but "in" a shout. If, therefore, we can recognize the shout, we should accept that as an indication, not that the Lord will come soon, but rather that He has come and is now present, appearing in power and glory IN THE SHOUT.

The word "shout" gives us a clarification, helping our understanding. It comes from the Greek word KELEUMA which means "a cry of incitement, an order, a command." Conybeare translates it, "A SHOUT OF WAR," and in his footnote explains, "this word denotes the shout used in battle." Thus we could rightly term this A WAR CRY. So the Lord descends from heaven in a shout, and this "shout" has a very special character. It is the word of a general ordering his army, the word of a commander to his own troop, of an admiral to his own seamen. It is the summons to His own, the rousing word of command, not with apprehension of fear, but A JOYFUL SOUND, a battle cry filled with courage and victory!

The Lord descends from heaven in a shout, with a summons designed only for the ears and the hearts of His elect. Not one uncircumcised ear shall hear - not one uncircumcised heart will be moved by that heavenly voice. "Shout" is a term implying the relationship that exists between the Lord and His chosen ones, like that of soldiers summoned by their general. If nothing more were meant than the loud, deafening roar of His voice for all

the world to hear, then this particular Greek word, KELEUMA, would not be used. This word has nothing to do with the tone or pitch of the voice, but conveys the thought of a shout from one who COMMANDS to those who are COMMANDED; and, therefore, it is mere ignorance to suppose that the Lord comes with a LOUD SHOUT so that all the world can HEAR HIM!

If you ask, "How can some hear and not others," the answer is simple. Modern broadcasting has made it possible for sounds to be heard by some and not by others. You know the reason, of course. Some are tuned in to the right wave length, whereas others are tuned in to other wave lengths. Thus it is with the coming of the Lord! Amid the myriads of voices clamoring for attention in the world today, domineering and demanding, all trying to prescribe the course we should follow, how we rejoice that we can turn the "dial" and "tune out" all such, and on the frequency of the deep inner calm of our own spirit discover the peace, joy, knowledge, wisdom and power that come from listening to the Voice of our Shepherd. Gladly do we turn away from the confusion of the religious systems of our day, with their multiplied creeds and contradictions, that we might be quickened and transformed by the power of HIS LIVING WORD WITHIN. How quickly the pressures of life, the feverish passions of the carnal mind, along with all the confused directions of natural-minded men, are all hushed and cleansed by the presence of the Lord IN HIS WORD to us. The clamoring voices of this bestial system mean nothing when HIS TRUTH is made LIFE WITHIN by the quickening of His Spirit.

"I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search" (Ps. 77:6). "And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they KNOW HIS VOICE. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they KNOW NOT THE VOICE of strangers. My sheep HEAR MY VOICE, and I know them, and they follow Me" (Jn. 10:4-5,27). My sheep hear - the Greek word for "hear" in this passage is OKOUO and while it means "to hear" as in discerning a sound, it also includes the meaning of "to hearken" and "to understand," a responsive action to one's hearing and the result thereof. This goes beyond the outward hearing of the natural ear, and penetrates into the area of our inner receptivity, understanding, and responsiveness to act in accordance with what is heard.

"He goes before His sheep, and they follow Him, for they KNOW His voice." There are various Greek words for "know," each bearing its own shade and depth of meaning, in this case it is OIDA, denoting ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE. Praise God, there is a realm where you can have absolute knowledge of His voice - without doubts or questionings. I do not hesitate to say that such absolute knowledge comes as a result of prolonged and intimate association, communion, and relationship with HIM. I "know" my wife's voice, not merely its sound, but also its meaning and intent. By each inflection of her voice I discern her attitude, determination, state of being, etc. Such knowledge has developed as a result of fifty-eight years of being her HUSBAND! His sheep - the mature ones - shall come to the place where they unmistakably know His voice, not just hear it, but KNOW it. It is precious as we tune out the voices of this world, and of our own carnal minds, and listen only the voice of the spirit within; the more we do so day by day the stronger and more resonant and meaningful becomes His voice unto us.

There is a beautiful illustration of hearing the Lord's voice in I Kings 19:8-13. After that Elijah had called fire down from heaven and slain the prophets of Baal he fled to the mount of God in Horeb where Moses had met God in the burning bush, and where God in blazing glory had spoken forth His law unto Israel. Elijah found a cave in the side of the

mountain and went in it to rest. While he was in the cave, he heard God's voice speaking to him and saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah said to the Lord, "O Lord God, I have been very earnest for Thee; for the people of Israel have turned away from their promise to serve Thee; they have thrown down Thine altars and have slain Thine prophets with the sword; and now I, even I only, am left; and they are seeking my life, to take it away." Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go out and stand upon the mountain before the Lord." Then, while Elijah was standing upon the mountain, a great and strong wind swept by and tore the mountains apart and broke the rocks in pieces; but the Lord was not in the wind. Then came an earthquake, shaking the mountains; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire passed by; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was silence and stillness, and Elijah heard a low, quiet voice which he knew was the voice of the Lord. When he heard the voice of the Lord, then Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle, and he stood before the Lord in the opening of the cave.

In commenting on this incident, Ray Prinzing wrote, "'AND, BEHOLD, THE LORD PASSED BY...!' Perhaps this is the first level of experience, and we used to sing, 'Jesus is passing this way.' Or again, 'Reach out and touch the Lord as He passes by.' No consciousness of His indwelling, so we prayed for Him to pass by often. 'AND A GREAT AND STRONG WIND RENT THE MOUNTAINS, AND BRAKE IN PIECES THE ROCKS BEFORE THE LORD; BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE WIND.' If we move on that plane, that's the voice we hear. RE-ACTION to the presence of the Lord. He passed by, and what re-action, what a wind, it shook the place, the rocks crumbled, strong men cried like babies, there was shouting, singing, prophesying, re-actions to His presence everywhere, but HE was not in the wind. 'AND AFTER THE WIND, AN EARTHQUAKE; BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE EARTHQUAKE.' Say, were you in that meeting last night? everybody was shaken, it was a real earthquake. All they could do was talk about the quake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, that was only some more re-action to His presence passing by. 'AND AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE, A FIRE; BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE FIRE.' Have you had the fire experience? they ask. Or, how about the burning, it is like another baptism. In His own way God surely uses the fires, but if you always try to find God's voice, because once you became conscious of Him in that way, be careful, this time He was not in the fire, it was but another re-action that followed His presence passing by. 'AND AFTER THE FIRE A S-T-I-L-L S-M-A-L-L V-O-I-C-E. AND IT WAS SO, WHEN ELIJAH HEARD, THAT HE WRAPPED HIS FACE IN HIS MANTLE, AND WENT OUT, AND STOOD IN THE ENTERING OF THE CAVE.' If you desire to have a clearer consciousness of the VOICE WITHIN, you will have to get past the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, and wrap your face in the mantle. The mantle prefigured the endowment of the Spirit that rested upon him. When our wanton eyes which are never satisfied with seeing, are covered by the mantle; when our ears that are never filled with hearing, are covered with the mantle; when our nose, forever sniffing out the strange odors, becomes covered with the mantle; and all else that is typified by the face - when all is covered by the mantle, so that we are turned inward - no more distracted by the outward phenomenon, then we are ready to draw out the message via the STILL SMALL VOICE" -end quote.

This "shout" in which the Lord descends is God breaking upon us in POWER as the LIVING WORD OF GOD. May the Spirit of God in His own divine and mystical way shine the light of revelation upon these inspired words from the pen of the apostle Peter: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD OF GOD which LIVETH and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). If the Spirit of God will give us understanding

concerning this incorruptible SEED of the WORD OF GOD, then we will understand how it is that Christ comes to us IN A SHOUT. There you have two items: the SHOUT and the Christ who is IN the shout. Within every natural seed that can grow into a new plant or creature there are two parts: the OUTER form or substance, and WITHIN the "germ" of the seed wherein is contained the life from which the germination and growth must come. Thus, the "germ" or "life" is IN the seed. In like manner the Word of God has the outer form or substance - the actual words spoken, the natural sound, the thought, idea, concept and understanding conveyed - and within the outer is the living germ, the Logos, the Christ of God.

The simple yet infinitely wonderful truth of God is this: the incorruptible, life-giving, transforming power of the Christ is IN EVERY WORD that proceeds out of the mouth of God! I must point out that there is the living word, the spoken word, the written word, and the created word. Let there be, therefore, no doubt that the Word of God of which I speak is that word in which Christ dwells, the living word, the Logos of God. A dead word contains no life and gives no life, but a quickening word is the living word wherein is the Logos, the Christ of God. There are many pitiful words and pathetic messages pawned off on God's precious people under the guise of "the word of God." We are going to have to get beyond quoting scriptures and beyond dead doctrines and religious traditions. We are going to have to hear with our spirit the Voice of the Living Christ, for He is the Word of God, the Truth of God, and the Reality of God. I cannot emphasize too strongly that it will take more than sermons on sonship and exhortations on perfection and boasts about immortality to make perfect and incorruptible sons in God's image. We must HEAR HIS VOICE, for it is only those that hear His voice who shall live. It is going to take more than having meetings, singing choruses, clapping hands, shouting Amens and Hallelujahs, and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God to bring us to the knowledge of God and transformation into His likeness. We shall have to see Him and touch Him and hear Him and walk with Him as did John on the Isle of Patmos. We must hear His voice speaking to us in the deepest recesses of our beings. We must commune with Him in the glory that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship can only come by personal association with the LIVING CHRIST. And think not, precious friend of mine, if you cannot now discern His voice amidst the confused babble of voices that fill the earth, that you will hear HIS SHOUT when He comes in that glorious Word by which He shall finally deliver us from the last vestiges of sin and death and present us faultless before His Father as holy sons of God with power.

Praise God for the Voice of the Son of God, the Shout in which the Lord Himself descends from heaven! Jesus Christ, the Logos, the pure and complete and eternal Word of God, is descending from the highest realms of our heavens (spirit) and into the conscious realm of our soul to impart to us that which will enable us to ascend - body and soul caught up into the majesty, glory and incorruptibleness of heaven - the realm of spirit. What a Voice! What a COMMAND! Not only does He come unto His elect in the war cry of triumph and victory, but His chosen ones are, thereby caught up in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus to themselves BECOME the voice of God to creation. He descends in a shout, we are caught up into the shout, made one with Him in His Word. There are myriads of voices crying out in the land today, but there is only one voice which is the LOGOS OF GOD - and it is the voice of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Many are hearing the voices of the sages of ancient times, others are hearing the voices from extra-terrestrial beings, some are listening to the voices of the masters and gurus of the dark pagan religions of the East, some are communing with the familiar spirits of the dead, others have their ears tuned to the bewitching voices of the television evangelists,

or the captivating programs, rituals, activities and teachings of the religious systems, while others imagine their own voice to be that of Christ's; but one and all are but the voices of men and devils. There is only one Voice in all God's great universe that will cause one to be lifted up in his soul from the realms of dust and desolation to ascend into the heavens and sit with Christ in His glory - the voice of JESUS. All other voices are facades that masquerade as messengers of God. They are naught but gusty winds from the mid-heavens of men's carnal minds that drive the raging waves of the troubled sea, foaming out their shame.

Blessed be God, He comes IN A SHOUT! It is the shout of the omnipotent Christ of God. It is the same Voice that called into being the heavens and the earth in that primordial beginning. By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made and the earth. It was His Voice that spoke on Sinai and shook the earth and the heavens. It was His Voice that said to a dead man in a tomb, "Lazarus, come forth!" and also said, "loose him and let him go." It was His Voice that commanded the waves of the sea, "Peace, be still!" and the hurricane heard that Voice, fell on its face on the glassy, watery floor, and came and licked its Master's hand. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. The astonished crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The power of the speech of the Prince of Life pierced the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. The tender Christ delivered him to his mother, and made effective His command, "Weep not!" Her son was not only brought back from the gates of the tomb, but was restored to her as a gift from the Lord by the POWER OF HIS WORD. It was this same Voice that cried at that zero hour of the ages, "It is finished." At that Voice the veil in the temple was rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the sun hid its face, the graves of many of the saints were opened and they that slept arose. It was said of our Lord and elder brother, "Never man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:46). "What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him" (Mk. 1:27). "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Mat. 8:27). That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered-brethren-company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, BUT ACCORDING TO MY WORD" (I Kings 17:1). The pure and powerful Word of God shall cause His sons to ride victoriously. Naught shall be able to stand before the two-edged sword of H-I-S W-O-R-D. How glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company! The Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that CLEAR WORD OF THE LORD which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to naught.

When this Voice comes to you, my beloved, and to me with the command, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away" (S. of S. 2:10), no power of earth, hell or religion can detain the elect of God from rising up to meet Him. No, we have not always been able to clearly hear His voice, but He is teaching us, preparing us as He leads us from pasture to pasture. At the time Jesus was on earth, the Jews had fallen into much slumber and inertia, although outwardly they were religious and self-satisfied, and they did not know the Word of God when He was made flesh and came and stood before them. When their Messiah came, for whom they had been looking for centuries, they neither knew Him nor received Him. Because He was born in a stable, and His body was poor and without comeliness; because He did not come in pomp and glory, the Jews knew Him not.

He who came to His own, was the One who had led them through the wilderness, and who revealed God to them; He had gone before them in the cloud by day and in the pillar of fire by night. It was He who had dwelt in unutterable and unapproachable glory in their Holiest of all; it was He who had defeated their enemies for them, and had spread His pavilion over them, so that all nations were afraid before them. He it was, who came to His own and they knew Him not.

He does not call the elect to come away with Him, but to come away and meet Him. Leave everything, especially your self-life behind, and come away to that which He has for you. We hardly realize that every time Christ calls us and we refuse Him, whether we say it with our lips or with our actions, we really say, "I choose this person or thing, I choose myself, instead of Christ." If we choose to walk with those who are not walking in the Spirit and in the Truth, we really choose carnality and error in the place of choosing Him; for we cannot walk with both. There are times when He offers us advancement, and in place of rising up and leaving everything so that we can enter in and possess that which He shows us, we fail to enter in; we choose our own ease, or the comfort of some Babylonian garment, or our own wills in place of His. It is when we first hear His Voice, that we must rise up and come away to meet Him. God does not stand still, He is ever moving on; and if we delay, His Voice will grow fainter and fainter, so that when we do arise to go to Him, we may not find Him in the glory of His new day. Only as we learn to HEAR and HEED His Voice will we be ready to ascend with Him when He comes to us IN HIS SHOUT.

Thank God! there is a people in this hour unto whom the Lord is coming IN A SHOUT. For those blessed ones there is no more hesitation, no more vacillating back and forth between the flesh and the spirit, no more obeying the voice of the stranger, for these mature ones, these disciplined ones, have received the Lord in a shout of command - they no longer have any other master, priorities, or options - and the response is immediate and unreserved. These make up the mighty army of the Lord, the sons of God who shall rule and bless creation in those glorious ages yet to come. Even now as I pen these words HIS SHOUT is heard by a vast company of men and women over the face of the whole earth, in every nation under heaven, inciting and ordering the members of His body, giving them the command to flee from the harlot system of Babylon and to assemble UNTO HIM in preparation for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God.

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the shout that issues forth out of His mouth. The shout in which the Lord comes has two aspects - first, His shout of command UNTO US, His brethren; then, His shout of command THROUGH US unto the nations. Furthermore, there is progression to His shout. The Lord ALWAYS comes in a shout. The Lord Himself always descends from heaven in a shout. The Lord descends from the invisible realm of the spirit into our lives, our experience, our world of appearances, our earth - in a shout. He comes to us IN A WORD OF COMMAND, A WORD OF AUTHORITY AND POWER. It is doubtful if any Christian on earth has fully understood as yet how great is the transforming upheaval that works within the soul when men and women through the operation of the Spirit of God in their lives are born again, born from above, seized upon by a life from heaven, renewed, regenerated, recreated and translated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. But this change, this transformation, this translation from death into life could never take place apart from the entrance of the all-powerful, incorruptible Christ into their lives. Ah, when first you were quickened by His Spirit, when the word of salvation reached you, was there not an urgency, a conviction, yea, a compulsion to KNOW HIM? IN that living word of

salvation THE LORD HIMSELF DESCENDED into your earth, and in His shout of victory you who were dead in trespasses and sins were quickened and translated from the low realms of darkness and death and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places.

It was the day of Pentecost. As the disciples of Jesus were waiting and praying in the upper room in Jerusalem, the power of God manifested itself in their midst. Had not the messengers declared at His ascension, "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven?" And now, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, suddenly, "there C-A-M-E F-R-O-M H-E-A-V-E-N a sound as of a rushing mighty wind... and there APPEARED UNTO THEM cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." Ah, it was a fulfillment of the messenger's promise to them, this SAME JESUS had returned, had come from heaven in mighty Spirit power, they heard Him come, they saw Him come from heaven, even as they had seen Him go into heaven. The Lord Himself descended into their midst IN A SHOUT OF COMMAND, and these men and women were quickened, transformed instantly from the carnal traditions, rituals, and ordinances of Old Testament religion into a people ablaze with the dynamic spiritual life of God. Is it not also true, dear reader, that the Lord Himself entered into YOUR TEMPLE in a mighty shout of triumph on that blessed day when you were baptized with that same Holy Ghost and Fire! The principle is plain - every time there is a resurrection, an ascending, a catching up into higher dimensions of HIS LIFE, the change and translation is actuated by the coming of the Lord IN A NEW WORD OF LIFE, IN A FRESH WORD OF COMMAND - A SHOUT! Though we have known Him thus from experience to experience, from realm to realm, and from glory to glory, we yet with patience wait for His descent in that FINAL SHOUT which will bring the consummation and totality of our change into His likeness and image, and the fullness of His incorruptible life in body, soul and spirit.

As the Christ is a many-membered body, so is the shout that issues forth from His mouth. The Word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that Word issues forth as the sound of many waters. I declare to you today that I have heard that sound, I HAVE HEARD H-I-S S-H-O-U-T! In the body of Christ, through many members of teachers, prophets, and anointed ones, I have heard the authority of the Christ's Voice proclaiming that the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand for our transformation, our change, our translation out of corruption into incorruption, out of the carnal mind into the precious mind of Christ, out of our limitation into His omnipotence. This word, this revelation, this proclamation, this Kingdom Message, this SHOUT has sounded throughout the land, echoing from mountain to mountain, reverberating across the valleys and the plains, circling by divine projection the uttermost parts of the globe until there is hardly a city or town or community or hamlet anywhere where its sound has not been heard.

Think, O reader, of the profound depths of truth that lie hidden in these inspired words: "THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN IN A SHOUT!" This opens new and exalted vistas of truth concerning the coming of our Lord, and points us to the time of great battle, the conflict of this dark age coming to its final climax, with the CAPTAIN OF THE HOST descending in a shout of war, to urge on and encourage, ringing out the command, THE TIME HAS COME TO POSSESS THE KINGDOM. First of all the saints must possess the Kingdom, apprehending their full inheritance in Christ. Then shall they go forth in the glorious age to come as the invincible and incorruptible ARMY OF THE LORD, strong and doing exploits, pressing the claims of God's Kingdom upon all men and nations, until there be an ending to the reign of sin, death, and evil

everywhere, and the universal establishment of that long-awaited Kingdom of Righteousness over all. A battle will ensue, and the conflict will be dreadful and fierce. The Lord shall descend into the midst of His sons, His army, in a BATTLE CRY, and will UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY. The purpose of Christ coming is not to provide an escape from tribulation for some weak, unspiritual, half-cleansed church which has corrupted itself with the delusions of Mystery Babylon the Great. He comes, rather, as CAPTAIN OF THE HOSTS OF THE LORD (Jos. 5:14). No battle cry is ever given to CHARGE FORWARD that means retreat, or infers any escapism. The Lord is not coming to "rapture" His army off to some beautiful Isle of Somewhere; He is coming to issue the battle cry and to press the battle to the finish RIGHT HERE ON EARTH, completing the great process of redemption, restoration and the restitution of All things, bringing the wonderful fulfillment of the very prayer He taught us to pray, "THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." Amen!

True, as someone has pointed out, we have been in our skirmishes and battles, but the greatest battle is yet to be fought, once God takes to Himself His firstfruits company, those conformed to His image, filled with His Spirit, ruled by His mind, yes, and thoroughly equipped with the full armour that He imparts. All previous and present battles are to train and prepare us for that which is to come, therefore we need to learn our lessons and grow up into Him. "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones ... the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle" (Isa. 13:3-4). "And the Lord shall UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY, for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is very great and terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel 2:11). "The Lord Jesus shall BE REVEALED from heaven WITH HIS MIGHTY MESSENGERS, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. 1:7-8).

Many precious nuggets of truth, rich and encouraging, lie hidden away amidst the verses of the little book of the Song of Solomon. The symbology of the Song of Solomon bespeaks of the riches and glory and honor of the great King and Captain which are conferred upon those elect saints who are called and chosen to be made ONE IN HIM. In the Song of Solomon 6:4 the King (Jesus) speaks to the Shulamite (elect), saying, "Thou art beautiful, O My love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS." "Terrible as an army with banners" means bannered hosts of armies in a fortified city. The Shulamite has just been compared to the two noted cities of the Israelites. The King now extends His description and declares that she is not only as fair as Tirzah, and as beautiful in her unity and perfection as Jerusalem, but she is as terrible as a city full of valiant hosts that have gone out against the enemy and have brought back innumerable banners. These bannered hosts speak of battles fought and won, of hard conflict with the enemy, in which they came out more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

It is wonderful grace from God that enables us to look upon all opposition, all conflict, all persecution, all difficulties, all attacks of the adversary, however they may come, as opportunities to overcome and to add to the precious banners that God has enabled us to take and will enable us to bring to Him. The elect is not represented here as downtrodden by the enemy. They are not represented as a defeated army with no banners, all having been captured by the enemy. They are represented as a mighty, victorious army, as hosts of valiant soldiers of the Kingdom of God, with so many banners floating that the air above them seems to be alive with these trophies of victory. And, therefore, the inference is, that the enemy is utterly routed.

This same description of the elect appears again in the Song of Solomon 6:10. "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS?" At first glance, it would appear that this description is the same as the King gives in the fourth verse; but while the words are the same, we see by the context that the meaning is different. In the fourth verse, the King compares the Shulamite to the most majestic and beautiful of EARTHLY OBJECTS. He looks down upon earth and draws His comparisons from Tirzah, Jerusalem, and a host of bannered soldiers. But in verse ten it is not the King speaking, but another group called "the daughters of Jerusalem." These daughters of Jerusalem look up to the HEAVENS and compare the Shulamite to HEAVENLY BODIES, the sun and the moon. It would be inconsistent for the elect to be compared in the same description, to the dawn, the moon and the sun, and to hosts of earthly soldiers with banners camped in earthly fortified cities. Therefore it is plain that the reference in verse ten is not to the earthly hosts of victorious soldiers, but to the heavenly hosts typified by the sun, moon, and stars. In Rev. 19:14 we are told of the white horse, coming forth out of heaven with One upon him called Faithful and True; "And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure." in Dan. 12:3: "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever." The stars are used as the great symbol of those who rule and reign in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Song of Solomon redounds with references to this truth, and we find a further confirmation of it in chapter 6:12. "Before I was aware, my soul set me among the chariots of the prince." Or, the literal translation is, "made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib." Ammi-nadib is composed of two words compounded; the meaning of the first word is "Troops or a company of people congregated together and made one"; the meaning of the last word is "The prince." The meaning of the two words together is, "The people, or company, that have become one, and are the chariots, or war chariots, of the prince!" In Ps. 68:17-18 we are told, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them as Sinai, in the sanctuary. Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led away captives; Thou hast received gifts among men."

Yet another precious piece of the puzzle is tucked away in the Song of Solomon 6:13. "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were THE COMPANY OF TWO ARMIES." The "company of two armies" is a figure of the Lord's army in two divisions; and we have already seen that one company is in heaven (the invisible realm of spirit), and the other is upon the earth. But the two armies make ONE SHULAMITE, ONE ELECT, ONE BODY. How little we have been aware of the "working together" of the invisible hosts with the visible, that we might come to the fullness of perfection. Not apart from us shall they attain, and not apart from them should we attain - for who can deny that the dealings, purposes, and activity of God continue upon ALL who LIVE UNTO GOD in the spirit, whether they be in the body or out of the body - matters not to God! In the realm of spirit, transcending mere mortal consciousness, the FAMILY IN HEAVEN is working together and growing together and overcoming together with the FAMILY ON EARTH! And we see an application of this truth in Mat. 18:18, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Sometimes we confine our ideas of the army of God to the visible army on earth, but the army on the other side of the veil is just as real and just as alive and active as that of this world; and because of the hosts of God's armies, He is called Yahweh Sabaoth - the Lord

of Hosts. When the king of Syria sent horses and chariots to take Elisha, his servant was filled with fear. And Elisha prayed that Yahweh would open his eyes that he might see. And Yahweh opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. The elect of the Lord is not only terrible as earthly bannered hosts, but is terrible as the heavenly bannered hosts; for He who leads them forth to battle is the Lord of Sabaoth. He is the Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth, of all realms, and before Him and His hosts, all the hosts of darkness must fall back; before the chariots of God, none can stand, praise His name!

From the pen of another ready writer I now share precious insight into these wonderful mysteries. "We are somewhat acquainted with the ministry of the family on earth, with the binding and loosing, but do you know who is supporting this work in the more invisible realms? It is the HEAVENLY FAMILY working with us that brings forth the victory. We haven't beheld them, we haven't always been conscious of them, but on rare occasions some have had their visions of this 'invisible ministry.' And we do read, 'Blessed are the dead which DIE IN THE LORD from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours (earth travail); and their works (service, ministry) do FOLLOW THEM' (Rev. 14:13). We rejoice that their works, ministries, do follow them, and they CARRY ON in the invisible realm, to aid us in every way the LORD bids them to give us aid. Are they not part of the 'ministering spirits, sent forth in the service of God for the assistance of those who are to inherit salvation?' (Heb. 1:14, Amplified). What glorious reinforcements are with us!

"Why haven't we been more aware of the power of this reinforcement? Because we have walked so long in the outer realm of the senses of the flesh, and soul. But the more we move into the realm of the spirit, the more we shall become aware of these messengers who not only stand by, but who are working with us. We are going to see an increased activity of the heavenly host, as they help to bring the rest of the 'earth-family' into the fullness of God, that together we might possess our inheritance, and the perfection appointed us. We see our weakness and lack, and we measure our short-comings and almost weep in despair, but God has not ignored this day, and when the enemy comes in like a flood, He has a standard prepared to raise up against him, visible and invisible.

"The oppression was great, and the adversary was heavy against Israel. Then God moved upon Deborah, and she sent for Barak and encouraged him to gather Israel to battle against the hosts of Sisera, and they did so, but they were not alone, for we read, 'They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera' (Judges 5:20). Not only has our lack of spiritual perception held us back from full recognition of our heavenly family, but also God has been taking us through that DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL where even the stars didn't shine, that He might perfect our faith. But just because we have not seen them, not been aware of them, does not mean that they are not there, and ready to penetrate our darkness again at the time of God's appointment.

"THERE MUST BE A BREAK-THROUGH, and a joining of forces with the heavenly host. The scriptures have much concerning the 'armies of heaven' and also concerning the armies on earth - of which we are admonished to become good soldiers and put on the complete armour (II Tim. 2:3; Eph. 6:11-17). As the zero hour draws near for the climax of this great battle of the ages, there will be a uniting of the visible and invisible. We shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep - that is, who have died physically, and are now in the invisible realm, a part of that heavenly register that is spoken of in Heb. 12:23. But the dead in Christ shall rise, and we shall be joined unto that host, becoming the

FULL ARMY of the Lord. Then the Lord Himself, as Captain of the Host, shall descend with a war cry, a shout of encouragement to press the battle to its finish, to overcome - conquering and to conquer. We have groaned because of the veil which stands between us and the invisible realm, between us and full spiritual victory. Praise God, He shall give us the command, and the victorious word which shall enable us to break through the barriers, and become JOINED UNTO OUR LORD, AND THE HEAVENLY HOST.

"Are you listening for the shout? Within that war cry, that shout of battle, is all the encouragement, direction, undergirding strength we will need to break through the barrier. The words our Lord speaks are SPIRIT AND LIFE, they are powerful and glorious, and HIS MESSAGE TO HIS OWN will be forceful, yes, will lift them up into new dimensions of victory. No man, no program of man will catapult us into divine fullness. This 'catching up' will be the work of JESUS CHRIST Himself. Our part is to be ready, watching and waiting, yielding to the daily inworkings of His grace so that we might be found unto praise at His coming.

"We are delighted, we praise God for each skirmish fought, and battle won, but remember, there is rejoicing in heaven also, for the 'waiting firstfruits' are desirous that we see the consummation of the process, that we, with them, might enter into our full inheritance. 'And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I WILL HEAR THE HEAVENS, AND THEY SHALL HEAR THE EARTH; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezereel (Jah sows), and I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God' (Hos. 2:21-23). The heavens shall hear the earth! There is a drawing together again of that which was separated by so great a gulf. And as the hour of full redemption approaches, we shall find a closeness betwixt ourselves and the rest of those who have been apprehended for firstfruits. The WHOLE FAMILY shall be joined together. And then the new ministry shall begin to be revealed, for the earth shall hear the corn, the wine, and the oil. New life, a new message, food for the hungry - and all flesh shall see the salvation of God" -end quote (Gospel Echoes).

The Lord does not come in silence or gentleness as the Captain of His host, but in a shout - a MIGHTY WORD OF AUTHORITY AND POWER. In these days the Lord will utter His glorious Voice in the midst of His people. Deep shall call unto deep, and there shall be the manifestation and moving of the Lord in GREAT POWER AND GLORY, the sounding forth of His Living Word with life, and blessing, bringing change and transformation to all who hear the Voice of the Son of God. Marvelous indeed is the SHOUT that is sounding into the hearing of God's apprehended ones, a message that is total, complete, for ALL! Truly, when His shout has reverberated down the corridors of your ransomed soul, you will not fear, for it is A JOYFUL SOUND, a battle cry filled with courage, confidence, and victory. You will shout for joy over the enemy, and the LAST ENEMY that shall be destroyed is DEATH. When the Lord has descended into your consciousness in a shout and His message of TOTAL REDEMPTION has filled your being, there will rise up a responsive shout from God's holy hill. Gone will be that defeatist attitude of "pray for me that I will hold out to the end." Gone will be the worries, fears, frettings, doubts, negative attitudes, negative confessions, and weaknesses that frustrate, torment, and defeat. It is a surging, victorious declaration that GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU, THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD. It is His WAR CRY. It signifies that the time has come when HE shall arise to DO BATTLE against all sin, darkness, and death in us, and great shall be the victory. The work begins IN US, and shall then be

carried forth THROUGH US. In the triumph of His life the army of God's sons will be a force against which this world system cannot stand.

I assure you that God's army will not fight in the manner that some fight today. The apocalyptic description of the Christ coming out of heaven on a war-horse, magnificently attired, attended by armies of celestial horsemen, to fight the battle against "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army," portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. It is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer and His heavenly legions confront the banded hosts of earth and hell. The Kingdom of Christ does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. I believe in no such way of deciding the question between Christ and Satan, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of our blessed God. Believing that "the weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL," but "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," I believe the warfare itself to be not carnal. The warfare, therefore, must be SPIRITUAL!

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who is now one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of God. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ - a triumph which is even now proceeding into the city of God.

The Captain of the Lord's army descends out of His place IN A SHOUT. This is He who was in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word" (Jn. 1:1). This is the Word that was God. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "He sent His Word, and healed them." This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In the book of Revelation He is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, indicating that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth - truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapon of HIS WORD. Christ does not come to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His words smite all who hear them. As someone has said, It will smite them with conviction and bless them with conversion. It will kill them (the carnal man) and raise them (the spiritual man) from the dead. The spirit which animates Him is the warrior spirit. His object is the conquest of the world - every man and woman and child who has ever lived. He has formed the resolution never to cease from His campaign until the whole world bows devotedly before Him as its rightful Lord and Master, the only true King.

The army of the Lord is at this very moment in careful preparation. The mountains are full of horses and chariots of fire, which the Captain mustereth for the battle. His great command is FOLLOW ME. He goes on from conquering to conquer. Can you hear HIS SHOUT, HIS ENCOURAGING COMMAND, HIS CALL TO RISE UP AND TAKE THE KINGDOM? Can you hear it? Arise, my beloved, and follow the Captain of the Lord's host

from victory to victory, from triumph to triumph in your own life; then you, who constitute the Lord's army, will move forward beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and TERRIBLE AS AN ARMY WITH BANNERS.

# *Chapter 40*

## *Coming In The Voice Of The Archangel*

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, WITH THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, and with the trump of God" (I Thes. 4:16).

For years the beautiful passage quoted above has intrigued me with its mystery. While the King James Version states that the Lord shall descend from heaven "with the voice of the archangel," that is not exactly the way it is in the original. The Greek uses the preposition EN meaning "in," and Young's Literal Translation correctly renders it, "Because the Lord Himself, IN a shout, IN the voice of a chief-messenger, and IN the trump of God, shall come down from heaven." The Lord does not come "with" the voice of the archangel, but "in" the voice of the archangel. If, therefore, we can know who the archangel is, and are able to recognize his voice, we will have assurance, not that the Lord is coming soon, but rather that He has come and is now present, for we shall have encountered Him in great power and glory in the place where He manifests - I-N THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL!

We must first go back and learn who and what angels actually are. Babylon has told us a lot of fictions about storks bringing babies, and Santa scurrying down the chimney. We, for some peculiar reason, do not believe these tales. But most of us still think that angels are funny things with white nightgowns, bare feet, long flowing hair, voluptuous breasts and wings, beautiful sexless things who fly and flutter and flit here and there.

From every part of scripture come testimonies to the existence of angels. They trod the plains of Mamre, and sang over the fields of Bethlehem. One prepared the meal on the desert sands for Elijah; another led Peter out of prison; a third flashed through the storm to stand by the hammock where the apostle Paul was sleeping. An angel came to Zacharias and Elizabeth with the message that John the Baptist would be born. The angel Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth and told her that she would conceive of the Holy Ghost and bring forth a Son who would be the Son of the Most High God. An angel warned Joseph. "And when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph... saying, Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him" (Mat. 2:13).

After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, the Word says, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Mat. 4:1). When all the severe testings had been accomplished, the record states, "Then the devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him" (Mat. 4:11). God is not helpless in a corner somewhere, but His angels have been sent forth to take care of His people. "Now when the apostles had borne their testimony and preached the message of the Lord, they went back to Jerusalem, proclaiming the glad tidings to many villages of the Samaritans on the way. But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, Rise and proceed southward at midday on the road that runs from Jerusalem down to Gaza. This is the desert route. So he got up and went" (Acts 8:25-27). What was the purpose of the angel telling Philip to travel that particular road at that specific time? So he could meet the Ethiopian eunuch

and introduce him to Jesus! In Gen. 24:7, God sent forth an angel to assist the servant of Abraham in securing a wife for Isaac. In Ex. 23:20 He sent "an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." He sent His angels to clear the way in the going forth out of Egypt. In Ps. 34:7, the Holy Spirit inspired David to write these words, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

## **THE MESSENGERS OF GOD**

Now let us face some facts. We have listened to fairy tales much too long. In the first place we discover that the word "angel," instead of being a translation, is but an evasion, being the English form of the Greek word AGGELOS, which to the average person means nothing at all. The Greek word AGGELOS means nothing more than "messenger." And in every occurrence of the word "angel" in our Bibles, that is the word that should have been given. The word AGGELOS is simply a pure Greek word without any particular meaning except what we choose to give it, and people oftentimes have the notion that it means a man with wings, whereas, if a man did have wings, he has no muscles to move them - a most ridiculous thing! The wings mentioned in scripture are not represented as belonging to man and are just as mythical as the various winged gods of ancient Greek mythology. With the exception of the Cherubim and Seraphim, nothing is said about wings for either men or angels. The words are, "Clothed in shining garments," when referring to the young men who were the messengers at the tomb following the Christ's resurrection, and on the occasion of His ascension. But painters have given them wings, and poets have given them wings, and a great many people get their theology from the poets and painters, and that is the reason they blunder so.

Get the thought, now, that an angel is a messenger and read the word "angels," always with its proper translation, "messengers." The Greek word AGGELOS has just the direct meaning "messenger, one sent with a message, the personal representative of the Sender." It does not identify any particular race or order of created beings. Anyone sent with a message is a messenger - an angel. If there had been Western Union messengers in Bible times they would have been called "Western Union Angels," for angel means messenger. It may mean a messenger from hell, or a messenger from heaven, or a messenger from some man on earth; any messenger sent by a king, or any other person, is in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages, an angel of that person, viz: a messenger. If sent by a human being, the messenger-angel was the personal representative of that one, in the message he was commissioned to bear. Lk. 7:18-28 speaks of the messengers of John the Baptist as angels and in verse 24 we read, "And when the messengers (angels) of John were departed..." These same messengers are called disciples in verse 18. If sent by God, the messenger-angel was the personal representative of God, in the message he was given to bear. In Lk. 7:27, John the Baptist is denominated as an angel: "Behold, I send My messenger (Gr: AGGELOS - angel) before Thy face..." The context always decides whose angel the messenger is. John was filled with the Holy Spirit, to bear a word of God, and accomplish a mission for the Anointed Messiah. In the anointing, the word, and mission, John was an angel of God, the greatest prophet born of women!

When we understand this truth, then we have no difficulty in understanding who the "angels" of the Churches in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Revelation are because that word was commonly used in the early Church, as, "To the angel of the Church in Sardis, write...", "To the angel of the Church in Smyrna, write..." These angels of the Churches

were merely God's messengers to those Churches, the MINISTERS who ministered to the saints. A messenger carries a message, and a messenger of God unto His people bears a SPIRITUAL MESSAGE, and is, therefore, a HEAVENLY ANGEL!

And now we go to the Word to learn something wonderful and exceptional about these creatures who have been described and even pictured so fantastically. And it is a fact completely missed by most Bible students and, I dare say, by ALL Bible scholars!

Abraham was once sitting, in the heat of the day, in his tent door. And he did not fall asleep and have a nightmare. But fully awake, in his right mind, he entertained some visitors. The Word says this: "And he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo, THREE MEN stood by him" (Gen. 18:2). Now we are not studying the book, "Alice in Wonderland." We are not reading about mock turtles, nor March hares, nor hobgoblins, nor ghosts, nor bug-a-boos. We are studying the fully inspired Word of God. And surely none of us are so simple that we need to go to a museum to learn what kind of a creature a man is. All of us are dumb on some subject; I will admit that much. But surely we are not so dumb that when we see a man walking down the street we mistake him for a monkey, or a fairy!

God's Word says that three "MEN" came to Abraham as he sat in his tent door. And there is only one race of beings on earth that is called "men." If we have not enough intelligence to know what kind of beings they are, then we most certainly have no business running loose, but need to be in a padded room where we will be cared for. Abraham entertained these three men who visited him. He hurried in to Mrs. Abraham and got her on the job baking cakes, and had a servant kill a calf. "And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" (Gen. 18:8). Reading on, in Gen. 18:16 we find the following, "And the MEN rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom." In verse 22 we read this, "And the MEN turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord."

That same evening, two of these three men arrived in Sodom. Lot met them, took them in, and gave them their supper. The men of Sodom also saw them, following which there was an unfortunate scene at Lot's house, a result of which was that "the MEN put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut the door" (Gen. 19:10). In verse 12 we read, "And the MEN said to Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." Lot had no success trying to persuade his family to leave Sodom. He himself lingered as long as possible. And then in verse 16 we read, "And while he lingered, the MEN laid hold upon his hand." They forced him to leave, together with his wife and two daughters. And these men were God's messengers, His angels, who both delivered Lot and destroyed Sodom.

Jacob was quite a character, a very human sort of person. And one day he had a harrowing experience. He must face his brother Esau, who he had tricked and supplanted. He was afraid of losing his head. Esau was coming toward him with four hundred men. So Jacob figured it all out how to appease his brother's wrath. First he sent drove after drove of livestock as a present to his brother, then he sent his own herds and servants and family, but he stayed behind. Then that night, as Jacob remained alone on the other side of the river no doubt shivering in his boots, we read this, "And Jacob was

left alone; and there wrestled a MAN with him until the breaking of the day" (Gen. 32:24). Quite a wrestling match, that!

In Judges 13 we read of a man by the name of Manoah, and his wife. God sent one of His messengers to them. And in verse 6 we read, "Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, a MAN of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible." In verse 8 we read, "Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the MAN of God which Thou didst send come again unto us." Then in verse 10 we read, "Behold the MAN hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the MAN, and said unto him, Art thou the MAN that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am." Here this angel of God admitted of being a man. "Art thou THE MAN ... I AM."

Daniel also had some rather startling experiences with God's messengers during his sojourn on earth. And in Dan. 9:21 we read this, "Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even THE MAN GABRIEL, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me." No, it was not the fairy Gabriel, not a nymph, nor a sybil, nor an elf; but "THE MAN GABRIEL." Oh, we have been told a lot of funny stories! But it is high time to awaken, time to begin to face facts! In Dan. 10:1-5 we find Daniel on a fast. And while on this three-weeks' fast, while beside the river Hiddekel, he met another angel or messenger of God. Here is how he described him: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain MAN clothed in linen." In Daniel 10:21 Michael the archangel, or chief messenger, is called, "Michael your prince." I never heard of a prince among men being a funny sexless thing with wings! Did you? In the 12th chapter of Daniel we find some further experiences with God's angels; and in verses 6 and 7 they are called men. "The MAN clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river."

Turning now to the New Testament we find some further startling facts. Our Lord had arisen. And Mk. 16:5 tells us that, upon finding the stone rolled away from the tomb, the women entered. "And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young MAN sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment." Lk. 24:4 in recording the same event says, "Behold, two MEN stood by them in shining garments." Then our Lord ascended. As the disciples stood gazing into the sky, "Behold, two MEN stood by them in white apparel" (Acts 1:10).

Lastly in the book of Revelation we find the capstone as it were, two of the plainest of statements, which identify God's angels as men, two statements that no one but a blind man could miss or a nitwit misunderstand. In Rev. 18:21 we find a mighty angel talking to John, and reading on concerning this same mighty angel in Rev. 19:10, we find he himself stating concerning his identity, "Then I fell prostrate at his feet to worship, but he restrained me and said, Refrain! You must not do that! I am only another servant with you and your brethren who have accepted and hold the testimony borne by Jesus. Worship God!" John's brethren were all men. And further, in Rev. 21:9, one of the seven angels of Rev. 16:1 returns to John to show him some further truths. Then in Rev. 22:9 this same angel has this to say concerning himself. "I am thy fellow servant, and of THY BRETHREN THE PROPHETS." The prophets were all men. This angel was merely one of them who now was serving in a higher realm of spirit, but had appeared for a very special purpose while performing that higher service. An angel in scripture is never a woman - always a man. And finally, of the angel that showed John the glory of the Holy City which came down from God out of heaven, it is said, "He (the angel) measured its

wall also, one hundred and forty-four cubits by a MAN'S measure (of a cubit from his elbow to his third finger tip) which IS THE MEASURE OF THE ANGEL" (Rev. 21:17, Amplified).

Whenever we find the word "angel" in our Bibles, it is a mere evasion which should be translated as "messenger." God's messengers, His angels, may be either men in the flesh, or the spirits of departed saints, or any other order of creature from above or beneath, who bears a message from God. Someone once wrote a book entitled, WHERE ARE THE DEAD? But he did not answer his own question. Neither he, nor any of his kind, are qualified to answer that question until they have learned their spiritual ABC's and break away from all the fables under which all of us were reared. Those whose bodies are asleep in Christ, those who are apprehended of the Lord, those who are called and chosen as a part of God's firstfruit company, those who are faithful - continue to serve, though veiled from our view except on rare occasions, when they may appear visibly to men still in the flesh.

## **THE ARCHANGEL**

In Old Testament times the Lord often appeared to men through the manifestation of "the angel of the Lord" (Jud. 6:20; II Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5-7). In Joshua 5, the children of Israel had just crossed over the Jordan and were ready to invade the promised land. There in full view of the new camp, stood the strong walls of Jericho. Joshua went out to look at the city; and he saw a man all armed coming toward him. Joshua walked boldly up to the man and said to him, "Are you on our side, or are you on the side of our adversaries?" If an angel were to tell believers today what this man told Joshua, they would probably be depressed, because this angel said, "Wrong on both counts! I'm not with your enemies, and I'm not part of your army. I'm part of another army, and I have come with orders from God. Standing all around me and behind me in great and mighty columns, are myriads of angels (messengers). You can't see them, Joshua, but there is a host of them, and I'M THEIR CAPTAIN!"

Then Joshua saw that he was the angel of the Lord; the Captain of the Lord's host; and Joshua, bowing down before him, said, "What word has my Lord unto His servant?" And the Captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, "Take off your shoes from your feet, for it is holy ground where you are standing." Joshua did so, and the Lord said to him, "I have given you Jericho and its king and its mighty men of war; and I will destroy the city of Jericho before you." Then the angel of the Lord told Joshua the way in which the city should be taken; and Joshua went back to the camp of Gilgal and made ready to march as God commanded. During the next seven days all that was done was according to the word spoken by the angel of the Lord to Joshua. And you, dear reader, know the rest of the story!

Oh yes! God has an army, a great and strong and fearful army, and His army has a glorious and invincible Captain. In view of the many passages of scripture which speak of THE ARMY OF THE LORD, and their exploits to soon be revealed, this brings new meaning and depth to God's purposes in His people. "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones...the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle" (Isa. 13:3-4). "And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel. 2:11).

I have stood in spirit and by the inspiration of the Almighty beheld the nations of the world and the peoples of all the earth. There is a bewildering and gigantic struggle going on between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness - between Christ and antichrist - between truth and error - between righteousness and unrighteousness. The antichrist forces in nearly every phase of life have been going from one victory to another. Through deceit, delusion, and brazen wantonness they have weakened and destroyed almost all who have stood in the way of their conquest. No age in world history matches in crisis and tragedy, in the debacle of nations, in moral degeneracy, in godlessness, in the stamping out of individual liberty and freedom, in the germs of complete destruction of civilization and the planet, as the age in which we live. On any moral chart, on any graph of religious and spiritual decline, on any schematic delineation pin-pointing the loss of the last vestiges of that which stands high in righteousness, THIS AGE IS THE HOUR HORRENDOUS. In the spirit I have witnessed the various efforts of those laboring in opposition to the manifest darkness of this hour - and all these efforts combined are about as effective as a feather in the wind! Religious, social and political organizations, with their myriad programs, committees and movements struggle against the evils and corruption of this day - but I do not hesitate to tell you that all the carnal methods of denominations and governments are totally useless in this battle, and pitiful when contrasted with the order of the Kingdom of God into which we are now entering.

Ah, I have some good news for you, my friend: GOD HAS AN ARMY! And God's great army has a CAPTAIN! The plans are laid, the preparation is in progress, and the strategy is determined. Even now, a manifestation of the glory of God of world-wide dimensions is in the making. This is not a revival of evangelistic crusades, but the marching forth of the army of God in the power of the invincible weapons of the Holy Spirit. Already bright clouds are gathering on the horizon. The sky rivers are running full, and the manifestation of the sons of God is about to break forth upon the earth. This is the time to gird up your loins, O child of God, like Elijah of old, and run before the chariots. Let your heart be lifted high, for God is on the move, and this can be your hour of victory.

The Lord Jesus Himself is the Captain of His army, and it is none other than He who shall descend from heaven in a WAR CRY, in the VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, as Captain of the Lord's host! This points us to the time of great battle, the conflict of this dark age coming to its final climax, with the CAPTAIN OF THE HOST descending to lead His army of overcomers into battle. The sons of God shall go forth in the glorious age to come as the invincible ARMY OF THE LORD, strong and doing exploits, pressing the battle through the very gates of hell itself, until there be an ending to the reign of sin, death, and evil everywhere. The battle will rage, and the conflict will be tremendous and severe. But the Lord, the mighty Captain, shall descend into the midst of His sons, and will UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY, for His army is very great. He is coming in truth, in righteousness, in judgment, in mighty spirit power and in great glory, to press the battle to the finish right here on earth, bringing deliverance and restoration and redemption everywhere and to all men, praise His name! What a day! What a day! And the wonder of it all is that this day is even now breaking in the earth. The crisis hour in the history of the world has come, and God is not silent. Many who read these lines have heard the call to join this army - and have, in fact, been CONSCRIPTED and made keenly aware that the Lord's army is at this very moment in careful and diligent preparation.

The army of God is not something one enters into as a vocation, a way to make a living, etc. You cannot volunteer your services of your own free will, for GOD CHOOSES WHOM HE WILLS, and if you are chosen you can only respond in humility and holy

brokenness, for it is a commission from God, not a calling self-assumed. Those who volunteer themselves to be messengers of God in the religious systems of this age are mere hirelings of Babylon, and will fall with the system in the hour of judgment.

An army speaks of combined strength, and as we are brought under the disciplines and training of the Father we go from strength to strength, built into a strong and effective people armed with His power within. "The Lord shall utter His voice before His army." "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in the voice of the archangel." God's strong ones, His disciplined ones will have His voice to lead them on and back them up, preparing the way before them. God's elect is becoming the army of the Lord, His visible force to be manifested in the earth. You, my beloved, may not feel like you are a part of any conquering army today, because you measure your own strength by past experiences, previous performance, prior accomplishments, and self-made standards. But I say to you today, Despise not the day of the taxing rigors of "boot camp," nor the exhausting drills imposed by your Commander, which seem to drain your strength and deplete your resources. HE does the calling, HE does the training, HE equips His own, until they are HIS INSTRUMENTS, and then it is HIS POWER manifested as He thrusts each into battle.

Undergirded and supported by the Voice of the Lord, now we can understand more when it says, "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be AS GOD (Michael!), as the angel of the Lord before them" (Zech. 12:8). Those who have been growing stronger through their processings, and like David have learned to overcome their obstacles, they shall be AS GOD, maintaining the victory over all their difficulties and obstacles, OVERCOMING ALL THE WAY, trailblazing the way through every problem and power, that others might follow and be blessed thereby as well.

The Captain of the Lord's army is the same One who in the Old Testament times revealed Himself as "the angel (messenger) of the Lord." The angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar, spoke as though He were God, and was called God by her (Gen. 16:7-13). The Bible says that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, but then says that God Himself talked to Moses out of the bush (Ex. 3; Acts 7:30-38). The angel of the Lord appeared to Israel in Judges 2:1-5 and spoke as God. Judges 6:11-24 describes the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon and then says the Lord looked on Gideon. The Deity of this unique "angel" is proved by the fact that He is identified as God (Gen. 16:7-13; 18:2-13; 22:1-18; Ex.-3:2-18; Jud. 2:1-5; 6:11-16); is recognized as God (Gen. 16:9-13; Jud. 6:22-24; 13:21-23; Gen. 32:24-30; Hos. 12:4); is also described in terms befitting the Deity alone (Ex. 3:5-14; Josh. 5:15); calls Himself God (Gen. 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-14); receives worship (Josh. 5:14; Jud. 2:4); and finally speaks with divine authority (Jud. 2:1-5).

Recently, as I waited before the Lord, a precious and hidden truth began to be opened before the eyes of my understanding. The Spirit of God in His own singular way shined His light of revelation upon an incident in the life of Jesus. The Spirit brought to my attention, the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane on that horrendous night when the mob stormed into the solitude to arrest our Lord, and Jesus declared that He could call for TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS to come to His rescue. But He refused to summon them because He was born to die for the sins of the world and the scriptures must be fulfilled.

I wondered why "twelve legions" when there were INNUMERABLE COMPANIES of messengers comprising the heavenly hosts (Heb. 12:22). If in the Spirit of God we can sound the fathomless depths of wisdom and knowledge that inspired our blessed Lord when He spoke of the "twelve legions" of messengers, I believe we shall have in our possession the explanation of things that have remained secret and have been hidden from our understanding for centuries. It is significant to note that "legion" is a MILITARY TERM, for in ancient Rome a legion was the largest single military division composed of several thousands of foot soldiers, with additional cavalry, under the command of a general. It should be clear, first of all, that when Jesus referred to twelve legions of angels that could be summoned to His defense, He was identifying THE ARMY OF GOD! These were messengers, mighty in power and glory, trained, disciplined, prepared, and equipped for the specific purpose of warfare - to bring deliverance! Then, too, it should be plain that since Jesus had the authority to command these "twelve legions," He Himself was THEIR GENERAL! Can we not see by this that Christ is revealing to us in simple terms that He Himself is "the angel of the Lord," the "Captain of the Lord's host," the COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY OF GOD! John the Revelator beheld with wonder the same truth when in spirit He saw the Christ riding on His white horse of conquest, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, followed by the royal armies of heaven.

Then I was made to know that the "twelve legions of angels" of which Jesus spoke are a symbol for the army of God. This knowledge stirred me tremendously. Think not, dear friend, that Jesus meant that He could call an exact number of angels, for the number of soldiers in a legion was not fixed - it could run anywhere from about 3,000 to more than 6,000 men. Twelve is a symbolical number, a perfect number, signifying PERFECTION OF GOVERNMENT, or GOVERNMENTAL PERFECTION. It is found as a multiple in all that has to do with RULE. Ed Vallowe, in his splendid book KEYS TO SCRIPTURE NUMERICS, has written: "This number, twelve, symbolizes God's perfect, divine accomplishment actively manifested. It shows a COMPLETENESS of a GROWTH or ADMINISTRATION. TWELVE marks GOVERNMENTAL PERFECTION and is used as the SIGNATURE of Israel. The number is used 187 times in the Bible. It is used 22 times in the book of Revelation. TWELVE is the number for GOVERNMENT BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT. Jesus said to His disciples, 'Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon TWELVE thrones, judging the TWELVE tribes of Israel' (Mat. 19:28). The TWELVE apostles shall sit upon their TWELVE thrones and judge and rule in connection with our Lord's rule upon His throne. They will occupy those TWELVE thrones by DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

"Gen. 17:20 states that Ishmael begat TWELVE princes, and in Num. 1:5-16 there are TWELVE princes named over the TWELVE tribes of Israel. 'And Solomon had TWELVE officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household' (I Kings 4:7).

"There are TWELVE months in the year. The sun which RULES the day, and the moon and stars which GOVERN the night, do so by their passage through the TWELVE signs of the Zodiac which completes the great circle of the heavens of 360 degrees or divisions, and thus govern the year. Dr. Seiss, in his GOSPEL IN THE STARS, claims that the TWELVE signs of the Zodiac have been accepted by the astronomers throughout the centuries, and that none of them know where the mapping of the stars started. Some claim that it came from beyond the Flood. In the opinion of Dr. Seiss, it was revealed by the Lord to such men as Enoch and Noah. The TWELVE signs of the Zodiac were

mentioned in the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible. God said to Job, 'Can you direct the signs of the Zodiac?' (Job 38:32). (In the King James Translation the word Mazzaroth means 'The Twelve Signs'). Even the testimony of the stars is numerically in harmony with the Bible. No wonder the Psalmist said, 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge' (Ps. 19:1-2).

"In the book of Revelation we read of the woman with a crown of TWELVE stars, and that the New Jerusalem has TWELVE gates, and at the gates TWELVE angels; and it has TWELVE foundations, and in them the names of the TWELVE apostles of the Lamb; that its tree bears TWELVE manner of fruits; that it lieth foursquare and measures TWELVE thousand furlongs on a side, and that the height of the wall is 144 cubits, or 12 x 12, which symbolizes this truth - that there is nothing in God's city which is not PERFECTED GOVERNED.

"It is also significant that only TWELVE judges - who judged Israel - are recorded in the book of Judges. There are things more startling yet to come, before which the puny minds of men seem as nothing, and the greatness of our God eclipses all things else. In John 19:11 Jesus told Pilate that he could have no power, or authority against Him except it were given to him from above. This was expressed by TWELVE Greek words. Here is the AUTHORITY that comes from above. If it comes from above, then it is AUTHORITY that comes from God. These TWELVE Greek words which Jesus used in telling Pilate that he could have no power, or authority against Him, unless it came from ABOVE, is exactly the number that has been found to stand for DIVINE AUTHORITY" - end quote.

I believe that we can see by the above numerical symbolism that the TWELVE legions of angels are not only WARRING MESSENGERS, but RULING MESSENGERS as well. They are messengers by DIVINE APPOINTMENT, with DIVINE AUTHORITY AND POWER. But beyond this wonderful truth it will greatly aid our understanding and devotion when we see that to be a messenger of God identifies not only a function or service, but a STATE OF BEING as well; it is not just a "doing" but a "being." It is an undeniable fact that it is not what we say, but what we ARE that speaks most loudly to men. There is a three-fold dimension in the ministry of the messengers. (1) We receive the message from the Sender - God. (2) We become the message which we have received. (3) We deliver the message in a STATE OF BEING - THE MESSAGE PROCEEDS OUT OF OUR LIFE. It is time, beloved saints of God, that every man came to hear Christ personally, receiving from Him that message, that spiritual knowledge far beyond what can be taught by men. I have spent more than sixty years of my calling as a teacher and preacher - a messenger (angel) of God - and if I have learned one lesson above all others through these long years, it is this: it is worthless, ineffective and absolutely futile to minister any word that has not been made SPIRIT AND LIFE WITHIN. Pilate inquired of Christ, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38). He would better have asked, "WHO" is truth, for truth is more than a "what," it is a "HIM," even Jesus Christ who IS - the Truth, the Life, the Way, the Door, the Shepherd, the Bread, etc. It is also written, "Thy Word is TRUTH..." But He is the living personification of the Word, so we still see truth in a PERSON. Always the message and the messenger must become ONE.

Only in the measure that He reveals Himself to us, and the revelation BECOMES IN US, do we have a message to declare unto others. Until the Word BECOMES IN US it is no better than a theory - a statement of principles which remain unproven and

indemonstrable as fact. Suffice it to say, with Paul, we need to first be PARTAKER OF THE FRUITS, gaining a firsthand knowledge by experience of the things of God, then that "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" declare we unto you (I Jn. 1:1). The end is not just giving forth a message, but IN BECOMING THE MESSAGE by virtue of what you ARE. The ministry of the angel is the ministry of the messenger of THE WORD OF GOD, delivering THE MESSAGE OF GOD, not of preaching with words, with emphasis on utterances, but rather a manifestation of the thoughts, intents, purposes and will of God. The doing is the result of BEING, for having BECOME HIS MESSAGE, it follows that men will hear from God in the power and demonstration of the spirit, and not in the wisdom of men's words.

Christ comes IN the voice of the archangel. "The Voice of the Archangel" is another striking symbol of great import and significance. We have previously pointed out that angels are not, as commonly represented, beautiful creatures with wings. The word "angel" is not a translation of the Greek word AGGELOS at all, but merely an English transliteration of the Greek word, which means nothing to the average person. The doctrines taught concerning these angels are nothing short of popish ignorance and deception. AGGELOS means merely "a messenger," one possessing power and authority (II Pet. 2:11). Thus, the "archangel" is the CHIEF-MESSENGER. The word "archangel" is equivalent to "PRINCE OF MESSENGERS." And hence, the "voice of the archangel" means the voice or the message of one with supreme authority, the CHIEF-MESSENGER, or the P-R-I-N-C-E OF MESSENGERS. He comes I-N HIS MESSAGE, He comes AS THE MESSAGE, His very presence and word bring light and truth, encouragement and power, illuminating the minds of God's elect, leading them into the greater ministry which is coming upon the end of the age.

And who is this chief-messenger, this glorious Prince of Messengers, this PREEMINENT MESSAGE, this MESSAGE OF MESSAGES, this R-E-V-E-L-A-T-I-O-N O-F A-L-L R-E-V-E-L-A-T-I-O-N-S? With a mouth filled with praise, and a heart of thanksgiving, I answer: CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD! "The LORD HIMSELF shall descend from heaven IN the voice of the archangel." Praise HIS wonderful name!

Permit me to follow that question with another. How many "arch-angels" are there? Nearly all Christians will tell you that originally there were THREE ARCHANGELS: Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer. So-called "orthodoxy" has long taught that Satan was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. The theologians and preachers recite over and over how Satan was originally "the anointed cherub that covereth... the most beautiful and wise and powerful of all God's creation!" This being was, so they say, the ruler and leader of the angelic hosts and apparently led them in their praise of God and shouts of joy... the greatest being God ever created, one who had unequalled strength, wisdom, beauty, privilege, and authority, and was next to God Himself. This blameless, perfect one, named Lucifer, was created without any form of evil and with the greatest intelligence of any created being. Then, we are told, this Lucifer, suddenly realizing how beautiful and intelligent he was, became inflated with power and pride and his heart was lifted up in rebellion against God. According to the story, Lucifer gathered one-third of the heavenly angels to his cause, mustering an army with which he planned to knock God off His throne and supplant himself as king and god of the universe - and there was war in heaven! Luckily, God won, cast Lucifer out of heaven, and he became, instead of an holy angel, the Devil that he is today.

It is nothing short of amazing that such a doctrine could have enjoyed such widespread acceptance in the light of the plain teachings of the scriptures on this subject. Any man who fails to discern between facts and fables, and who opposes or rebels against facts, is a fool. Fools manifest their true state by resisting or ignoring facts. Please remember, there is a world of difference between facts, beliefs, and fantasies. I believe the core of our natural earth is hot, perhaps molten. But no man knows anything about the true conditions down there. There is no possible way of ascertaining or demonstrating the truth or falsity of my belief. So it remains merely a belief: it may be true, or it may be false. On the other hand, if I thought our natural sun were made of red paint, that would be a fantasy, just a highly improbable or irrational idea of my own. But facts are altogether different. They are actualities, realities, whether they can be demonstrated as such or not. Ice is cold. That is a fact which can be demonstrated. The earth is round. That fact has through recent centuries been conclusively demonstrated. It is neither a belief or a fantasy. Fire burns; one must have air to breathe; these are facts, and, only fools will oppose or resist them. Now we are going to state some facts. Let us contrast what MEN say and believe with what GOD says!

Man says that long ago, before the first shimmering light dawned in God's creation, Satan was one of three archangels in heaven. But the Bible nowhere speaks of three archangels. The Bible nowhere calls Lucifer an archangel. There is not one scripture in the entire Bible wherein the mighty angel Gabriel is named an archangel. Furthermore, there is no instance in scripture where the word archangel appears in its plural form "archangel(s)." There is no plurality of archangels inferred anywhere in God's blessed Book. Our omniscient God has nowhere told us that there are more than one archangel, or that there ever were two or three or more archangels. You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces if you teach that! It is an extra-Biblical teaching. It is now time to awake, time to leave the ignorance of the Dark Ages, and begin to face up to the truth. It is time to open wide our hearts to the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God.

Dear reader, whom do you choose to believe? God or ignorant men? Men say there are three archangels, but God declares in the plainest of language that there is only ONE. Jude, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned these meaningful words, "Yet Michael THE ARCHANGEL, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, Yahweh rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Michael is not spoken of very often in the scriptures, but when he is, it is most significant. According to Jude there is only ONE archangel; he uses the definite article: "the" archangel; and "the" archangel is named "Michael." Only one other passage of scripture mentions the archangel, and that is the verse which serves as our text for this message: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL..." That, precious friend of mine, is A-L-L the Bible has to say about archangels! Only two verses in the whole Bible! Incredible, isn't it, after all the fanciful tales and elaborate doctrinal theories we have been given! I have very little time, and less patience, for the kind of offensive ignorance which, because men will not hear what is written, misrepresents these and other plain statements of the Word of God. How we thank God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the illumination of this, H-I-S D-A-Y!

It should be clear to any thinking mind that by the very nature of the case the existence of more than one archangel would be an utter impossibility. The Greek word ARCHO (arch) is a political term which means "to be FIRST in political rank or power." F-I-R-S-T! Do you hear it? How can three angels be FIRST? It is a contradiction of terms; it is a linguistic and grammatical absurdity. It is like a nation having three kings, three presidents, or three

prime ministers! It would be the same as saying that George Bush is THE president of the United States of America, and then adding, "but two other men are also 'THE' president, you know!" In Dan. 10:13 Michael's position is said to be "one of the chief princes," but as Dr. Young has pointed out in his rendering (Young's Literal Translation), the sentence should read, "FIRST of the chief heads." There are other "principalities and powers," but He is "far above all" of them (Eph. 1:21). Of Michael alone it is said, He is "The Angel" and "The Great Prince" and "The First" of the chief heads! (Dan. 12:1; 10:13).

In the book of Daniel "Michael" is expressly identified with the Messiah (Dan. 12:1). In Dan. 10:21 He is called, "Michael your prince." This personal pronoun "your" is of interest. The archangel is definitely a WARRIOR, and His name means "WHO IS LIKE GOD." He defends the celestial realms, exalting the glorious God, yet His ministry is wondrously on behalf of GOD'S PEOPLE. "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people..." (Dan. 12:1). Again, in I Thes. 4:16-17 the voice of the archangel is represented as the voice that awakens the dead. "And the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven... in the voice of the archangel ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first..." Significantly, Dan. 12:1-2 draws the same connection. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people ... and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth SHALL AWAKE..." And whose voice is it that quickens men and raises them out of the death realm into the life of God? None other than THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD! "Verily, verily I say unto you," Jesus asserted, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD, and they that hear SHALL LIVE" (Jn. 5:25). The voice of the archangel, therefore, IS the voice of the Son of God!

Who are the dead? The scriptures reveal many dimensions of death, from the physical death of the body, with which we are all so familiar, to the dead in trespasses and sins, to the death of being carnally minded, on to the death of our self-life as we are "made conformable to His death." Thank God, HIS VOICE shall penetrate into all the realms and dimensions of death, for John continues, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (judgment; process of correction)." There shall come an hour - that day, that age appointed - when ALL shall hear the VOICE and shall live, some made alive at once, others following the process of judgment, but ALL who hear His voice SHALL LIVE, and, blessed be God! ALL SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE.

At the present time we are living in the "now is" - "The hour is coming, and NOW IS" - when the firstfruits are being made alive, and "every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (Jn. 6:45). In due time ALL shall be taught of God, but for the present the emphasis is on the little flock, the firstfruits, - and THEY THAT HEAR DO LIVE. HIS VOICE is the revelation of HIS LIFE, and that is why He was able to say, "The WORDS that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" (Jn. 6:33). Because they are WORDS OF LIFE they produce life in all who hear them. If you HEAR them, you have to live! This is THE VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL!

There can be no doubt about it - the title "archangel" signifies CHIEF MESSENGER and the question follows: WHO IS GOD'S CHIEF MESSENGER? Who else but our glorious Head - the Lord Jesus Christ! The name "Michael" means WHO IS LIKE GOD - an appropriate title for Him who is "the sole expression of the glory of God - the Light-being,

the outraying of the divine - and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature" (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). Certainly, the whole Christ body, all who are made ONE IN HIM, share this glory and image; but here we are speaking of the ministry of THE HEAD, the revelation of Christ to us, rather than the revelation of Christ through us. The voice of the archangel, the chief messenger, represents Christ's authority, command and life, HIS LIVING WORD. This symbol, then, bespeaks of HIS HEADSHIP and represents Christ as coming in the glory of God as the military Leader, the Captain of the Lord's army, as the political Head, the KING of kings, and the LORD of lords!

Yes, the saints are the army of God, and Jesus Christ is the Captain of His army. "And He Himself existed before all things and in Him all things consist - cohere, are held together. HE also is the HEAD OF HIS BODY, the church; seeing He is THE BEGINNING, the First-born from among the dead, so that HE ALONE IN EVERYTHING AND IN EVERY RESPECT MIGHT OCCUPY THE C-H-I-E-F P-L-A-C-E - stand FIRST and be PRE-EMINENT" (Col. 1:17-18, Amplified). A brother has commented on this passage: "Because He is the IMAGE of the invisible God, therefore He becomes the Firstborn of every creature. The word "firstborn" used here is the Greek word PROTOKOS, a technical word speaking of priority to and sovereign over all creation. It does not mean that He is simply the first in a successive line of created beings, though some would like to so limit Him, and rob Him of His deity. John 1:3 declares that 'all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.' He antedates all created things, for He is uncreated, eternal, absolute Deity. And when He would bring forth form, He is the FIRST FORM of all forms, the uncaused First Cause. 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men' (Jn. 1:4). He said, 'I form the light...' (Isa. 45:7), and HE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Whatever the expression of life and light to man, HE is the first, the original expression, glorious" -Gospel Echoes.

Because He is the WORD which was with God in the beginning, and the WORD which was God, He is also the CHIEF MESSENGER, and the CHIEF MESSAGE, and therefore the HEAD of the whole MESSENGER COMPANY; HE is THE MESSAGE which has become OUR MESSAGE, and the message which WE ARE BECOMING, that in all He might have the pre-eminence. To be a message-messenger (angel) awaits the inward revelation of Christ, which results in His supremacy in our life. This alone enables us to declare His message - to proclaim the good tidings - to preach HIM. Many try to preach His Word, to teach His ways, to declare His virtues and excellencies, to extol His beauty and attributes, but only in the measures that He is formed and revealed IN us, can we truly speak forth to others. He must be REAL TO US, REAL I-N US, so that what flows out of us will be HIM, and then is fulfilled the scripture, "Lo, He cometh IN HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF!" (Jude 14).

Then shall be heard the Lord Himself descending from heaven "IN the Voice of the Archangel!" Praise His wonderful name!

# *Chapter 41*

## *Coming In The Trump Of God*

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with THE TRUMP OF GOD..." (I Thes. 4:16).

In the previous two studies in which we have considered the beautiful passage above we have noted that Young's Literal Translation correctly translates the Greek text so that it reads, "Because the Lord Himself, IN a shout, IN the voice of a chief-messenger, and IN the trump of God, shall come down from heaven." The Lord does not come "with" the trump of God, but "in" the trump of God. If, therefore, we can know what the trump of God is, and are able to recognize its sound, we will have assurance that the Lord Himself has descended from heaven and is present, for He comes to us IN the trump of God.

It is strange what odd notions some people get concerning the meaning of scriptures they read in the Bible. For instance, I was brought up under ministries who taught that every word in the Bible was to be taken literally, and that the word "trumpet," as used in our subject, and also in the book of Revelation and elsewhere, referred to the Lord blowing a literal trumpet when He crashes down through the clouds at the end of this age, a trumpet blast so piercing and electrifying that it would actually awaken the dead bodies in the cemeteries. Nothing, of course, could be farther from the truth than such a strange notion. When Jesus said that He was the vine and His disciples were the branches, He certainly did not mean that He was a literal vine and they were literal branches. When He told His followers they were the salt of the earth, He certainly did not mean that they were literally sodium chloride. The Bible is full of symbols and figures of speech, of which these are but a few. The greatest danger, when we come to the Word of God, is not in "spiritualizing" it away, but in "carnalizing" it away! "The words that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE," Jesus said.

On one occasion Jesus said, "Behold, I come as a thief" (Rev. 16:15). Paul explained that the Lord would come in a "shout," also in the "voice of the archangel," and in the "trump of God." Certainly thieves do not blow trumpets and shout, nor did Jesus blow a trumpet or shout when He departed from the mount of Olives; although the scripture assures us that He comes "in like manner" even as He went into heaven. But these are not contradictions. They are but word pictures to help our minds comprehend more clearly some of the great factors in the coming of Christ and what the various facets of His coming mean to us spiritually. We know something about the manner of a thief's coming. We know a little concerning the purpose of blowing trumpets. We are familiar with shouts of command. We know something of the characteristics of clouds and what they specify. When we put all these together and add to them the many other illustrations of the scriptures pertaining to Christ's coming, we begin to understand that what we are to look for is not a human being coming down through the rain-clouds tooting a horn, but a series of MIGHTY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CHRIST IN GREAT SPIRITUAL POWER AND GLORY, shaking everything that is earthly, quickening all that is dead, and transforming men and nations until the prayer is fully answered, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." In each case the language is metaphorical; of necessity heavenly things are described to us under earthly imagery, otherwise we who

have been subjected to this gross material realm, and who speak the language of this world, could not understand them.

The word "trumpet" appears approximately one hundred times in the Bible. In the Old Testament the word is found about eighty-five times while in the New Testament it occurs only about fifteen times. The first use of the term is recorded in Exodus, the last in the book of Revelation. To get the spiritual meaning of trumpets we need to establish something of their typological significance. The meaning of the trumpet is made crystal clear in a number of scriptures. Isaiah said, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up T-H-Y V-O-I-C-E LIKE A TRUMPET, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). Here the voice bearing God's message to His people is likened unto the sounding of a trumpet.

One day as the beloved apostle John trod the burning sands of the desolation of Patmos, he was suddenly caught away in the spirit and immediately, "I heard behind me a great V-O-I-C-E, AS OF A TRUMPET, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" (Rev. 1:10-11). Here, Christ's voice, as John heard it, is compared to a trumpet. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first V-O-I-C-E which I heard was as it were a TRUMPET talking with me; which said, COME UP HITHER, and I will show you things which must be hereafter" (Rev. 4:1). Notice this trumpet-voice told him to come up higher, so he could see the things God wanted to show him. God's trumpet-message is always to come up higher. It is sent because that is the great need of the saints and of all mankind, to come up into the higher realms of the spirit, for we cannot see the glorious spiritual truths nor behold the wondrous heavenly things from the lowlands of our carnal mind and nature. Normally we "hear" a voice, but John said of the trumpet-voice that penetrated his spiritual consciousness, "And I turned to SEE THE VOICE that spake with me. And being turned, I SAW seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks ONE like unto the Son of man..." (Rev. 1:12-13). The One who spoke with a "voice" as of a "trumpet" was IN the trumpet voice, and it was IN THE MESSAGE OF THE VOICE that this glorious One was revealed. I do not hesitate to tell you that this was the revelation of Jesus Christ as He appeared to John IN THE TRUMP OF GOD!

Isaiah foretells many things pertaining to the day of the Lord, this day in which we live. The trumpet that shall be blown is none other than the voice of God sounding forth. It is His word, His message going out to the people. "And He shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mat. 24:31). Now if HE sends HIS messengers with a great sound of a trumpet, it must be HIS TRUMPET they are sounding; His word they are giving out. His mighty message gathers together in the spirit His elect. It brings them from the low places of spiritual experience, to high ones. Oh! think of the power the sound of His trumpet carries to lift men from corruption into His pure divine nature!

"God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the SOUND OF A TRUMPET" (Ps. 47:5). When a rising time is due for God's people, it may be said that God is "gone UP," as taken from the lesson that He moved in a pillar of cloud and fire to lead His ancient people, Israel. "With the sound of a trumpet" signifies that His voice is being heard. God's VOICE and His TRUMPET are one and the same. It is the sounding forth of His Word. Many messengers (His many-membered body) add volume to the sound of that trumpet. Rev. 1:15 says, "...His voice as the sound of MANY WATERS." John also tells us in Rev. 17:15 that waters means multitudes of peoples. So God's trumpet voice is sounding

through many people, "many waters." "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a multitude, and as the VOICE OF MANY WATERS, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:5-6). John heard coming from the throne (divine authority) a message which he said was a voice of a "multitude," of "many waters," and of "mighty thunderings," saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." It was one trumpet message with many voices adding volume to it. It was ONE MESSAGE, but being trumpeted by many voices, so that it became as the voice of a "great thunder." This shows the beautiful unity in Christ and His many-membered body.

There need be no question in the mind of anyone but that God's "trumpet" is a MESSAGE given to a person or persons and sounded out to the people. The word of the Lord came to the prophet Ezekiel saying, "Son of man, SPEAK to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he see the sword come upon the land, he blow the TRUMPET, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the SOUND OF THE TRUMPET, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. SO THOU, O son of man, I have set THEE A WATCHMAN unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me...therefore ... SPEAK unto the house of Israel, saying..." (Eze. 33:2-10).

How clear that the Holy Spirit here equates the VOICE of God's prophet, bearing the Lord's MESSAGE to the house of Israel, with the SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET of the watchman. The trumpet bespeaks a clear word of God from the Spirit appointed and Spirit anointed messengers, His ministers. Trumpets are words, clear words, living words. The trumpet of God is His voice, His voice from heaven, His voice in the saints; even the voice of the Holy Spirit through the consecrated priests of the Most High. The voice of the Lord is the trumpet-sound and the trumpet-voice, the divine message of His truth and life. The trumpet is the revelation of the Lord speaking through His true ministries in an oracle of the Spirit. The sound of the trumpet is simply the PROCLAMATION OF A MESSAGE!

With a simple knowledge like this we should have no trouble at all in understanding that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, is Himself the trumpet, the message, the revelation! In type, Jesus is the trumpet of God, delivering a clear sound, a living word, and introducing us to the reality of the perfection and incorruptible life of which He is the beginning. Praise God, it is the LORD HIMSELF who comes in the trumpet (message), and at the sound of His voice we are CAUGHT UP with Him to share the glory of His sphere of life. The Lord Himself descends out from the highest realms of our heavens (spirit) into the lower realm of our earth. We are the creatures God is creating to express His nature, power and glory unto creation. His purpose for coming out of the realm of spirit into your earth is to catch your whole being up into the realm of spirit, to swallow up all death into HIS LIFE. And He accomplishes this by coming to us IN A TRUMPET MESSAGE. He comes in a shout, in a voice of command, and in the trump of God because though we are hungry for God and desire more of Him, because of our flesh and the control of the carnal mind we are not easily alerted or moved.

Too numerous to mention have been the things God has taught us as we have walked in the light of His ever-increasing truth. Our minds have often been staggered by the

wonderful things we have seen and heard and our ambitions have been raised as we have gazed into the promised land of the Spirit and have seen the innumerable and wonderful glories that lie before us in the fullness of our sonship. We are undoubtedly standing at the threshold of a new dimension in God, a higher realm in the Spirit, and a new level of experience. When we come to a time like this, many will refuse to go on. There is some strange thing inherent in all men that makes them reluctant to leave the security of their fixed abode to press forward into the challenge of the new. They feel that they have journeyed far enough and that the effort to press into the new and more wonderful realm is too great a risk. We tend to become rigid, settled, self confident and crystallized, - fixed in our gaze and in our pose. In order for us not to miss the next phase of the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ, God has to sound a shrill trumpet into our hearts that we might be alerted. God is wanting to say and do a NEW THING. It is time to go forward. It is the hour to arise to the battle and possess our land, our full inheritance in God. It is time to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and GO ON TO PERFECTION. It is time to put on the mind of Christ and be transformed by the renewing of our mind. It is time to live and not die. So the Lord descends from heaven in a battle alarm, in the electrifying sound of a trumpet-message, to stimulate, to arouse, to alert and challenge you to get ready for the battle of the ages and the victory of victories that follows!

Today God is trumpeting a message into our hearing. He is projecting into our thinking a realm beyond the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, yea, beyond anything we have heretofore seen, heard, or experienced. He is projecting the fullness of salvation, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the King-Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, maturity in the nature and power of sonship and the dynamic realities of the Most Holy Place into us. No matter what our spiritual understanding has been, we are finally being made aware that we are now living in the most momentous hour imaginable. There is an awakening among the elect of the Lord that transcends human knowledge. He is putting into the hearts of His chosen people the desire to ready themselves for the sonship prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

The trumpet-message is alerting our minds to the fact that the sons of God who are being prepared to restore creation are not just ordinary Christians with ordinary experiences. We have tasted of the earnest of our inheritance, and it is now time to arise and enter an entirely new realm of experience in God. I am speaking of the realm which is in truth the realm of the fullness of God, the realm far above all heavens, the realm of incorruptible life and glory, and the realm of the Kingdom in authority and power. Furthermore I am convinced that those who have ears to hear the sound of the trumpet in this hour will attain to the glory of that new realm while the rest of the church world go on as usual in the old realm and on the old planes. Jesus is the revelation of this realm of which I speak because He came forth as the Pattern Son and He spoke a clear sounding word. He is the pattern of this heavenly sonship and He is the Alpha and the Omega of it. He is the beginning of the new creation of God, but you and I are following the forerunner, and just as He trumpeted a clear sounding word, you and I are going to trumpet a clear sounding word to the elect in this generation.

We need to take heed to how we hear, and how we speak and what we speak. The order of man is passing. How? BY THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET! By the very word of your mouth, because of Him who speaks out of you. We might compromise the message and bear a message of appeasement to the old order of the religious systems, but what would that accomplish? I hear the voice of the Lord calling and commanding us today,

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand" (Joel 2:1). It has been prophesied that a trumpet would be sounding at this time. If a trumpeter blows an uncertain sound, how will you know to prepare? If the trumpeter has no message, how is he going to speak? God has commanded us to blow a trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in His holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, it is nigh at hand. Our job is to sound an alarm in Zion and awaken His people, arouse His elect and let them know THE DAY OF THE LORD IS HERE!

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUMPET**

In I Thes. 4:16 we are told that the Lord descends from heaven in a shout, in the voice of the archangel, and in the trump of God - a threefold announcement and publicity. In scripture the number three speaks of completeness. The emphasis here is that God is speaking a complete word, conveying a full, total, unfragmented and unimpaired message, truly the FULL GOSPEL! This message will not be received by reason or logic, nor by searching the letter that killeth, nor by might nor by power, "...but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:6). I have wondered betimes when passing through cities and seeing church buildings with the words over the doorway "FULL GOSPEL," whether those who lead or attend really understand those words. The words "FULL GOSPEL" have a far greater significance than most folks realize. The word "full" implies maximum in size, extent and degree And the word "gospel" speaks of GOOD NEWS. There IS such a gospel, praise God! that reaches out to the whole creation with the promise of reconciliation, restoration, and fullness. But few who proclaim that they preach the "full gospel" have ever heard of it.

Trumpets were used as a means of mass communication in ancient Israel, in their camps in the wilderness, and after they were settled in the promised land. The assembly in the wilderness was large and unruly. It was difficult to communicate by voice to upwards of two million people. When the troops were needed to fight, they might be out gathering the daily supply of manna. At night they would be sound asleep in their tents. At times all the people needed to be assembled. At other times only a portion of the people was required, such as the elders or the warriors. To communicate with the entire wilderness people, a clear system had to be devised.

Moses was instructed by the Lord as to the solution. He was to have two silver trumpets fashioned (Num. 10:1-2). From time immemorial, the military organizations of the world have used TRUMPETS because of their shrill, strident, exciting and piercing tones, in marshalling and moving military bands and groups of men. What veteran of the service is not familiar with "reveille," "general quarters," "chow call," and "taps"? A trumpet is far louder and more effective than any human voice. With the use of a system of calls, various portions of the congregation of Israel could be gathered for whatever purpose necessary. The alarm for war could be sounded as well as the announcement of the various feast days. The Israelites could be called to make their journey with clarity of direction sounded by these trumpets. Israel was now ready to move.

The tenth chapter of the book of Numbers deals with the importance of God's people KNOWING THE MEANING of the blowing of trumpets. Each trumpet blast has a spiritual significance. God's people had to become acquainted with each sound so that they would know what to do so there would not be confusion in the time of the blowing of the

trumpets. There were twelve different uses of the trumpets. One purpose of the blowing of the trumpets was for the assembling together of the congregation, calling the tribes together as one nation, proclaiming the principle of unity. Out of their various tribes came the people of Judah, Issachar, Dan, Levi, etc., until they stood as ONE before the Door of the Tabernacle of God, to hear the voice of the Lord through His prophet. And in this hour, God is once again gathering His people together UNTO CHRIST, the Door, to hear His prophet, that anointed ministry that God is raising up to bear the Word of the Lord. This trumpet blast of truth is freeing us from our sectarianism, hypocrisy, selfhood and confusion. This is no time for intellectual sermons and pleasing platitudes ... it is time for God's prophet, the anointed body, to lift up his voice like a trumpet as Isaiah says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). This silver, redemptive trumpet, is washing us with the water of His pure Word, resulting in our being cleansed and sanctified. This trumpet is perfecting us that we may be without spot or wrinkle and clothed in the white linen of the righteousness of the saints. This trumpet is watering and feeding the incorruptible seed in our spirit and causing Christ in us to be formed and arise in us. But many will not hear, their ears are dull, and they remain in the tents of their captivity and refuse to "come out of her, My people."

The second purpose of the blowing of the trumpets was for the Journeyings of the camp. When the cloud moved, the camp moved. Sometimes the camp of Israel would be in one place for just a few days, sometimes for several months. But when God moved on and the cloud moved on, Israel was called upon to move on. The move was announced by a certain blast of the trumpet. And today, beloved, God has a trumpet-message to send forth when it is time for His people to move into new territory. This redemptive message implores us to "follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. 6:3). This trumpet sound commands us to pull up the tent stakes of tradition; fold up the tents of man-made religion; take down the banners of static creeds and dogmas and past experiences in God, and stop camping around this mountain of "kingdom-building" and a partial experience of God. We have camped around this mountain long enough. Let us go on to know the Lord in all of His glorious and eternal reality! Only men who have ears to hear can hear this call of the Spirit, but the trumpet is blowing and many have heard the call. Thank God for the manna which has sustained us throughout our pilgrimage journey, even unto now. Thank God for the water out of the rock, to quench our thirst. Thank God for the Holy Spirit, the cloud that has gone ahead of us, and directed us all through this great and terrible wilderness. But there are better things ahead! What worked yesterday will not work today, and what satisfied yesterday will not satisfy today, and it will not take you on to perfection. There are times in your life when God wants you to move forward in Him. He says you have camped around this mountain long enough. He has a land of promise ahead for you with all its inexhaustible abundance! Let us not settle for a partial revelation of God as through a glass darkly, but let us see Him face to face, to know Him even as we are known of Him. Why sit ye here and die in the prison house of man's program when the very heavens cannot contain the glory of our God, whom the Spirit shall reveal and is revealing in all His fullness, if only we dare to journey on with Him!

The third purpose for the blowing of the trumpets was the calling together of the princes, or leadership of the tribes. Do you know how many times the trumpets blew to call the princes? ONLY ONCE! In this realm God only speaks once. These are the elders of Israel, the disciplined ones, the prepared ones, the experienced ones, the mature ones, the responsible ones who by intense dealings have learned to HEAR and to KNOW God's voice for themselves. These are the FIRSTFRUITS! If you are still of the mentality

that questions, "God, is that really you? Are you sure Lord? I don't know for certain whether this is the will of God, but I THINK the Lord is saying... it seems to me..." then you are not of the princely spirit. In this dimension God speaks only once, with one clear sound, and those whose hearts are circumcised and whose ears are disciplined respond without hesitation or questioning.

The fourth purpose for the sounding of the trumpets was to sound an alarm. This was a warning when there was danger or Israel was threatened by an enemy. All the people could hear these blasts which were prolonged and frequently repeated to alert the people to the danger. This is fulfilled in the life of the believer when the Holy Spirit gives that unquestionable "check" in one's spirit concerning a course of action, a false ministry, a wrong direction, false teachings, etc. This trumpet call fulfills the principle of SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

The fifth purpose of the sounding of the trumpets was the call to war. This trumpet is the redemptive message that beseeches us to put on the full armour of God that we may be able to STAND in THE EVIL DAY (Eph. 6:13). The church systems today are literally filled with carnal, earthly-minded Christians who sit back in ease and self-complacency awaiting a "rapture" that will translate them out of the day of great tribulation and trouble. In the vast majority of evangelical circles the people are taught the tranquilizing doctrine that at any moment all God's people shall be caught up, raptured, to be with the Lord in the air - to escape the great tribulation which shall soon visit the earth. It is not true! Nowhere within the pages of God's blessed Book are we told that we are to be raptured out of trouble - including the "great tribulation." What it does say is that we are to put on the whole armour of God that we may be able to STAND IN T-H-E E-V-I-L D-A-Y. The Holy Spirit witnesses of battle and warfare unto victory, not a massive "evacuation" of the army of the Lord carried out in the face of its greatest challenge. This truth is presented in an especially beautiful and forceful way in Weymouth's translation. "In conclusion, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world - the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore PUT ON THE COMPLETE ARMOUR OF GOD, so that you will be able to stand your ground IN THE EVIL DAY, and, having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD" (Eph. 6:10-13, Weymouth).

"And having fought to the end, to REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD." What a word! We are not instructed to seek wings to fly away to heaven while the devil trods roughshod over the earth and all mankind. We have a helmet and a breastplate, a shield and a sword, but NO WINGS. We are given enough armour to win the victory against the greatest foe, even the principalities and powers in the heavens, for our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. All hell trembles when it hears of this great army of the sons of God, small in number out of earth's teeming billions, but mighty through God. Ah, the saints shall be "caught up" alright; caught up into the throne of God, into the realm of His almighty power and sovereign authority. Arise, sons of God, from the dust of desolation and defeat. Put on your beautiful garments, and the whole armour of God! The trumpet call goes forth in this great hour, calling for a Gideon's band who shall be "more than conquerors" through Christ that loved us. And the band is being prepared, for which we are thankful; an army whose power is not in themselves, but in the Sword of the LORD!

The sixth purpose for the sounding of the trumpets was to announce the celebration of the Feasts of the Lord, the days of gladness, and times of joy and victory. There are three great Feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Trumpets sound for each Feast. There is a trumpet, or a message, that introduces the Feast of Passover. Another trumpet or message sounds for Pentecost. And there is a message or trumpet that brings God's people into the fullness of God in the Feast of Tabernacles. The trumpet message that calls us to celebrate Passover sounds like this: "Ye must be born again; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The trumpet that calls us to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, sounds like this: "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you, and your children, to as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38-39). "...be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mat. 3:11). "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2).

The trumpet-message that calls us to the Feast of Tabernacles sounds like this: "Let us go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1). "Take heed...until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (II Pet. 1:19). "Arise, shine..." (Isa. 60:1). "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:2). "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). "...till Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19). "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). "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32). All enemies shall be put under the feet of the body of Christ, until every enemy has been destroyed, even death! Whether or not you have faith to believe for these great things, does not bother me in the least. For the performance of those things God has spoken does not depend upon your faith, and is not hindered by your unbelief. HE has spoken, and HE shall perform it. The age of sin, sickness, crime, hate, war, pain, darkness, and death is rapidly coming to an end. The door is opening to a new age. The Kingdom of God shall triumph in the earth! Hallelujah! I can hear the trumpet sounding!

The seventh purpose for the sounding of the trumpets in Israel was to gather the people to the solemn assemblies, to show God's people their transgression, and call them to mourning and repentance. The eighth purpose was to announce the beginning of the months, to herald the arrival of a new phase in God's purposes. The ninth was the announcing of offerings and sacrifices, the tenth the anointing of kings, the eleventh the dedication of the temple, and the twelfth the proclamation of the great year of Jubilee, when all creation is freed, restored to their inheritance again.

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD! "In the old covenant, the sons of Aaron blow with the trumpets; and this was an ordinance to the priests; and when they blew the trumpets, the outward Israelites were to assemble themselves before the tabernacle. And when they blew an alarm, then the camp set forward. So they did not gather them together to the door of the tabernacle with ringing of bells, in the old covenant, but with the blowing of trumpets. And in the solemn feasts they blew the trumpets; which was a day of blowing the trumpets, which were outward, in their outward feasts, to their outward gathering to their outward tabernacle. But in the new covenant and testament, which is not according to the old, the trumpets are spiritual and heavenly, which are sounded with the power and spirit of God, in the day of Christ; yea, all the elect in His light, the life in Him, are a royal priesthood, and blow the trumpet. And at the sound of this heavenly trumpet, they gather to this heavenly tabernacle, not made with hands, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, to His

heavenly solemn feast, through the baptism of Christ and circumcision with His spirit, that plunges down and cuts off all corruption; and so all come to drink into one spirit, that put off the body of death and sins of the flesh. And so by these spiritual and heavenly trumpets, ye are gathered to the heavenly feast, and bread, and wine, and honey, from heaven, and the new milk from the living word, that lives and abides, whose heavenly breast is never dry, but is always full of heavenly milk. And so as the heavenly trumpet sounds, the Israelites in spirit move and go, and follow the heavenly spiritual Lamb in their fine linen of righteousness, and keep their feast of the heavenly bread, that cannot be leavened. So the bread, the wine, the milk, the honey, the water, the trumpets, and the tabernacle, are heavenly and spiritual in the new covenant and testament, which are not according to the old, with their outward bread, and water, and trumpets, and outward tabernacle. All those outward things Christ abolished, which served until the seed came to reform it; and in the time of the seed reformation of Christ, the heavenly and spiritual Man, translates His believers and followers out of the natural, outward, and carnal, into the heavenly, inward, spiritual. And so the new and living way, and the new covenant and testament, and the new time of reformation, are not according to Israel's old covenant and testament, and old order and way." - From the writings of George Fox in the year 1706.

## **THE LAST TRUMP**

In interpreting scripture we are so inclined to interpret all things with our human understanding. When the Word speaks of the sounding of a trumpet, our carnal mind envisages a loud blast akin to the sound of reveille, but such is not necessarily the case. In I Cor. 15:51-52 we have this significant statement: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The scripture is clear: we shall be CHANGED at the LAST TRUMP! The Bible speaks of many trumpets, each with its own signification, but I think all will agree that there cannot be any trumpet sounding after the LAST TRUMP. There may be other trumpets of different orders, but the Last Trump is always the final trumpet to sound in any series.

It is significant to note that in the book of Revelation, chapters eight through twelve, we have presented the sounding of seven trumpets. I am confident that this seventh trumpet is the LAST TRUMPET, for after the seventh trumpet there can be no other. Trumpet after trumpet the inworking of God's truth progresses in the spiritual lives of the elect until at last the final trumpet, the last message, the ultimate revelation is ready to complete the process, producing a people in the fullness of the glory of the Lord. So great is the crowning work wrought by this final unveiling that a "strong" or mighty "angel" is dispatched from heaven to sound the trumpet. This honored messenger is seen coming from heaven with a rainbow over His head. A rainbow is formed when pure white light is passed through a three-dimensional object called a prism. As the light passes through the prism it is divided into the color spectrum. Throughout scripture we see these colors associated with God and His throne. Here, it bespeaks of the three-dimensional character of our LORD-JESUS-CHRIST who is "the expression of the glory of God - the Light-being, the outraying of the divine - the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature" (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). The "angel" can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for this is the LAST TRUMP and HE it is, the LORD HIMSELF, who descends from heaven IN the trump of God." As the holy and perfect One descends from the heaven of our spirit into the earth of body and soul at the sounding of the last trump, we too shall

become a perfect three-dimensional prism of perfected and glorified body, soul, and spirit, whose ends are equal and parallel triangles, and whose faces are parallelograms, each equally and perfectly refracting the light of God to creation. As God's nature flows through our triangular being we, too, shall express the nature of God on many levels of His Spirit, such as wisdom, understanding, might, counsel, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord - God's Spirit coming forth as light which is the true expression of life denoting righteousness, peace and joy.

May God grant us wisdom and understanding that we may apprehend the mystery of these things. The number seven gives me the understanding that contained within the seven trumpets is the totality of God's character and the complete revelation of His will and purpose. As the trumpets sound within the lives of God's people they begin to experience the fullness of all that God is. There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the firstborn among many brethren. But now there is a people that has been sealed unto the day of redemption and when God begins to loose the seals and sound the trumpet-messages it will bring forth a many-membered expression of God at the same level of God's fullness. This is the Lord Himself descending.

Rev. 8:1 records the opening of the "seventh" and last "seal." Then "seven angels" appear, and to these are given "seven trumpets." We will not attempt to go into detail concerning the nature of these various messages which are symbolized by the seven trumpets. Suffice it to call attention briefly to the fact that in connection with the "voice" or trumpet of the seventh angel, "when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished" (Rev. 10:7). In verses eight and nine of Rev. 10, this "finished mystery" of God is likened to a "little book," which, when it is eaten is sweet as honey in the mouth, but "shall make thy belly bitter." God's intention is to see His nature inscribed perfectly in the lives of a people. As we take the revelation of God - the present truth - into our mouths, all its wonderful promise and divine potential is sweet as honey to our taste (how wonderful it is!), but as it begins to be assimilated and work within the inner man it becomes bitter by the work of the cross as it leads to purging, processing, breaking, and multiplied changes of mind, heart, confession, and action.

The sounding of the seven trumpets denotes a process. "In the DAYS of the VOICE of the seventh angel (messenger), when he shall BEGIN TO SOUND, the mystery of God should be finished." The words, "In the D-A-Y-S of the voice of the seventh angel" and the words, "begin to sound," speak volumes to me because the complete sounding of that trumpet involves a process in time and shows us that our change which comes with the sounding of the seventh or last trumpet is not to find its total consummation in one specific moment. There is an obvious implication of a prolonged sounding extending through various periods and dealings. Yet at the initial sounding, the "mystery" of God's purpose for His elect shall no longer be hidden. Ah - methinks I have heard this trumpet, for the mystery of God has been revealed in the midst of the saints in these days! In Rev. 12, when we arrive at the final drama, the closing act, the grand finale of the seventh trumpet the MANCHILD is birthed - that glorious company of the sons of God is caught up to God and His throne and given authority to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Hallelujah!

Let me reiterate. John said, "And I saw seven angels (messengers) which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets" (Rev. 8:2). "And the seven angels (messengers) which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (Rev. 8:6).

Then follows the account of their sounding, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, which denotes times and seasons in which new messages come. "But in the days of the VOICE of the seventh angel (messenger), when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:7). When Christ appears in His SEVENTH TRUMPET MESSAGE the mystery of God is finished. "There are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which ARE the seven spirits of God" (Rev. 4:7). "And I beheld...a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns (power) and seven eyes (perception), which ARE the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). The term seven is used to denote completeness, and as seven spirits of God are mentioned, it means that He has a spirit of power that accompanies each trumpet message, and a vision which goes with each particular message, according to the need of the time. May the Lord help us to see these deep and precious truths.

It is time, my beloved, for the mystery of God to be finished. "Finished" means completed or consummated. What is the mystery of God? Eph. 3:2-6 explains the mystery! "How that by revelation He made known unto me the MYSTERY; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." When you follow the word "mystery" through the writings of the apostles it is clear that the mystery is the body of Christ. In Eph. 5:31-32 it is the mystery of the union of Christ with His body.

The body of Christ has been being formed since the conception of the Church on the day of Pentecost. We all understand that when a baby comes forth in a normal birth the head comes forth first, and afterwards the body. Two thousand years ago Christ came forth as the Head and from that day to this He has been forming His body - right down to the feet. When the voice of the seventh and final trumpet begins to sound, precious saints of God, what is going to happen? THE BODY OF CHRIST IS GOING TO BE FINISHED! Not just quantitatively, but qualitatively. That trumpet signifies that the Lord's elect, the sons of God or the body of Christ, have all been transformed into His image and likeness, have partaken of His life, and are also joined to Christ the Head, making one radiantly adorned Christ in the image and likeness of God almighty. The MYSTERY will be completed! The body of Christ will come forth into full birth, full and complete manifestation. This corporate Christ, Head and body, this manchild company, is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Caught up to God and His throne - into His authority. In the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet the mystery shall be finished, the body completed, the long and tedious work of the preparation of God's sons shall at last be consummated, praise His name! The trumpet has begun to sound! There is an increase of God's revelatory word, an intensified trumpet-message, a clear revelation of Jesus Christ! Listen, my friend, for the sounding of the trumpet-voice within your spirit!

If you can hear this trumpet sounding above the hue and cry of rapture, antichrist, mark of the beast, Christmas, Easter, denominationalism, sectarianism, mansions over the hilltop, cabins in the corner of Gloryland, pie in the sky, religious programs, rituals, ceremonies, endless meetings, shepherding, coverings, cunningly devised fables, money raising schemes, false prophets, false healers, lying signs and wonders, and carnal health and wealth and prosperity doctrines; if you can mount up with wings as eagles and soar high above all this carnal, confused, frustrated clamor of noisy gongs and clanging cymbals, and hear the distinct, plain, unmistakable sound of this last trump then it can be said to you: Blessed art thou, overcomer, manchild, hundredfold, firstfruits: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. This is the last

redemptive message and when it is finished sounding God will have made man in His image. What tremendous truths are being blown on this redemptive trumpet! Let not any man rob you of the greatest sound that man has ever been privileged to hear. A sound with such a high and holy pitch, with tones so deep and profound, that only the Spirit can reveal its message to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Do not miss what the Spirit is saying; gird up the loins of your mind with the truth that will fully redeem you, spirit, soul, and body.

When the last trumpet sounds the mystery of Christ and His body is finished. The body of Christ will have appropriated their full inheritance in God. But let not any man imagine that that ends the purposes of God for His creation. No way! It is not an ending, but a glorious BEGINNING! The truth is that out of the seventh trumpet comes deliverance for all mankind! This is the purpose of the Christ body - to restore all things into the life, and light, and love of God. Nothing can be clearer than this in these inspired words of the beloved Seer of Patmos: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world ARE BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned" (Rev. 11:15-17).

In closing this message I share with you a significant vision from a prophet of God of yesteryear. There is neither time nor space to elaborate upon this remarkable vision but I am confident that as you meditate prayerfully upon it the blessed Spirit of Truth will illuminate the eyes of your understanding and interpret its message to mind and heart. The vision is as follows...

"Just before we went to Africa, God came to me in a vision. In it I stood where I could view the whole world, and it was wrapped in darkness. At times I could see great fires springing up on the surface of the earth and the people would gather around the fires to warm themselves. Then, as I continued to watch, fires would break out in other places. But without exception, after a large group would gather around the fire, little evil-looking figures came out of the shadows. Those who were gathered around the fire were so occupied with rejoicings that they seemed wholly unconscious of these little figures. But, from where I stood, I could see these shadowy figures as they came silently out of the surrounding darkness. I noticed that each one was carrying a little, engraved shovel. These they placed in the hands of each one who stood around the fire. In the immediate vicinity, I could see where great fires had burned in by-gone days, but had long since burned themselves out, leaving only great heaps of ashes.

"As I watched, each of those around the fire would go over to the ash heap, fill his little shovel with cold ashes; then, with much dignity - as though faithfully performing a solemn duty - they would scatter the cold ashes very carefully over the fire. This they continued to do until the fire was completely smothered and dead. They then knelt in the ashes and prayed for light and warmth. This procedure was repeated over, and over, and over. The world began to grow darker and colder, and the men continued in their efforts to extinguish every fire, here, there, and everywhere...

"All the fires had long since died out, and the people were weeping and wailing as they prayed for light and warmth. My heart was deeply stirred and I began to pray with a fervency that can only be born in the darkness of the world's Gethsemanes. Then I became a part of the scene, kneeling in the ashes. No longer an interceding observer, I

prayed even more fervently. I stood to my feet and lifted my hands and my face toward heaven. I began to cry with great agony of soul. Louder and louder I lifted my voice, in frantic desperation, until all the other crying around about me was merged into my own desperate cry.

"As I stood there, calling unto the Lord with all the anguish of my soul, I saw a light, 'way, 'way high in the heavens, just a speck of light. It began to come closer and closer, and then, suddenly, it stood by my side - a celestial Being of fire. He was formed like a man and yet he was a Being of fire. In his hand was a trumpet of fire which he handed to me saying, 'Blow!' I stood transfixed, overcome with awe! He placed the trumpet to my lips; I breathed into it, and lo! the sound was amplified until it reverberated over the countryside. As I continued to blow, the creature of fire leaped into the ashes and stirred the smoldering embers until the flames leaped high into the sky. I was now blowing the trumpet louder and louder, and people began coming out of the darkness from every direction. The light from the fire seemed now to light the whole earth, and, as the people gathered, they began to march past the fiery messenger. He stood in the flaming fire, and, when they went by, he would give to each of them a trumpet of fire. They, in turn, would put it to their lips and start out across the earth, blowing with all their strength. As they went, fires were lighted everywhere. It seemed as though the very tones of the trumpets were lighting fires, sending a great wall of flame rolling across the earth. It was consuming everything in its path - burning everything as it went. As I looked, I thought, 'What desolation! What desolation! Everything that we have known is gone.' Then it began to rain, a slow, gentle rain.

"As I watched, vegetation began to spring up - grass, green herbs and trees, and every tree was loaded with fruit. Everything was fruitful, there wasn't one thing twisted, warped or barren. I turned to speak to the messenger, but he was gone. Yet the whole world remained beautiful and serene. The warfare was accomplished, the Kingdom of God had been established in the earth, and peace reigned. The Long night was over, and morning had come.

"I believe that, in this vision, God was showing me the course of these end-time days..." - Thomas Wyatt, in THUNDER BEFORE DAWN.

# *Chapter 42*

## *Caught Up In The Air*

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in the voice of the archangel, and in the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP together with them in the clouds, to MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: and SO shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4:16-17).

In our study of the coming of the Lord we now come to what is to me one of the most exciting truths in God's Word; exciting because it is happening; exciting because the Lord's people have been waiting for it for centuries; the promise has been standing for two millenniums. There are many theories and concepts today about this "catching up" experience. The common thought among many carnal minded Christian professors is that it is a yet future physical event, which could come at any moment. All over the world today there is a growing emphasis on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Bible-believing Christians, we rejoice at this phenomena, yet, sad to say, in almost every case the doctrine of the Lord's return has been mixed with error and spurious theories. This is because the people's vision or understanding has not been quickened to see the reality of spiritual things. So they interpret the scriptures according to the blindness and ignorance of the carnal mind, which understands only the forms of earthly and material things.

Vast multitudes of believers are looking for Jesus to come secretly and "rapture" or "catch away" His Church. Although Church history shows that such a theory has only come into prominence over the last one hundred and fifty years, today it is spreading like wildfire in sermons, books, radio, television, and even films, and accounts for the teaching in 90% of Pentecostal, Charismatic and Fundamentalist Churches and Seminaries world-wide. But, precious friend of mine, if you are looking at the things you can see with your natural eyes, you are missing the point of meaning in the scriptures. When Paul spoke of our being "caught up into the air" he was not looking at the physical bodies of old Adam which are only temporal and return to the dust from whence they came (the first man IS of the earth); he was looking at the inner man, the new creation, the heavenly body, the offspring of the flesh and blood of the Son of God, which is the real person, and which bears the image of the heavenly.

I have no desire to take away your "blessed hope," but would point you to a BLESSED REALITY for the here and now. When Christ comes to lift our inner-man nature UP into the fullness of UNION IN HIM, we certainly do experience a rapture - believe me! While the word "rapture" is not to be found in scripture, there are other words and expressions that bear the same or similar meaning. Paul said in Eph. 2:4-6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, and has RAISED US UP TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS." This passage says that God H-A-S RAISED US UP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST. Our text verse declares that we are to be CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH HIM. It should not be difficult for any spiritual mind to see that in both cases the apostle is speaking of the same experience. In both cases we are elevated to a higher plane in Christ, and with Him. There is a glorious company of these "caught up"

ones. It is a wonderful place of rest, glory, wisdom and power, far above the beggarly elements of THIS WORLD. Reba McMurry told of the little boy swimming in the pool who said to another, "Come on in, the water's fine." So I say to you who are dwelling in the earthlies, tossed by the storms of life, beset by problems, trials, and difficulties, hindered by the flesh and the world, "Come on up higher - there is a wonderful realm above of peace, joy, victory and blessedness!"

We encounter a divine principle here. "The Lord Himself shall descend" and "we shall be caught up." The Lord descends and we are caught up - producing a "meeting" or the experiencing of UNION WITH CHRIST. Most Christians only know the Lord in His descending, not in their being caught up to "meet" Him - made ONE IN HIM. In Ex. 19:13 we read, "When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mount." The people of Israel at Sinai could come up to the mount, as far as the foot of the mountain, but the Lord commanded, "There shall not a hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live" (Ex. 19:13). As the multitude waited there at the base of Sinai, "It came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because THE LORD DESCENDED UPON IT IN FIRE," (Ex. 19:16,18).

They were not processed to ascend the mount, so GOD DESCENDED UPON IT, He came to them, as He now comes to us, right where we are. That natural, earthly, carnal people knew nothing of being "caught up" to meet the Lord, they could experience God only in the realm where GOD MUST COME DOWN and meet them on their level. We, too, have known God on that plane! We sang it in our hymns and choruses: "Jesus is passing this way," "Reach out and touch the Lord as He passes by," or, "Coming down, down, down, the glory of the Lord is coming down." And, praise God, HE DID COME DOWN! We have used our faith to bring God down to heal us where we are and leave us in the same condition of mortality to get sick again. We have brought God down to touch us, bless us, thrill us, provide for us, and meet all our needs on the earth plane. How we rejoice in His faithfulness, in His great condescension and mercy. HE DOES COME DOWN and meet with us on the level of our humanity. This is what religion has done for long millenniums - bring God down to the level of man instead of preaching a gospel that will bring man UP to the level of God. It is IN CHRIST that God and man "meet" - God in Christ "descends" and man in Christ is "caught up." There is a realm beyond God coming down to meet us where we are. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I AM, there YOU may be also." He said, "If I be LIFTED UP, I will draw all men UNTO ME." Yet man continually prays to God to meet him where he is. Ah - we need the wings of an eagle to soar into the heavens, the realm of spirit, where God is.

"He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shakes his hands from holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil; HE SHALL DWELL ON HIGH: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. 33:15-17). The prophet prophesied of a people who would "dwell on high." Oh, thank God! Here is the man who dwells in the high places, on the mountain-top, with mountain scenery, and mountain air, and mountain sunshine. He is above the malaria and the river fog and the miasma of the low-lands. He is above the dust and the noise and the stench and the rattle of this world system. He lives up where the sky is

clear and the air is pure and all is serene. The thunder may mutter and the clouds may swirl at his feet, but the sun always shines where he is. He is where the sun never sets, and where the flowers never fade, and where there is no defeat, decay or death.

A man had a sign on his desk that said, "Keep looking down." Whenever anyone came into his office, they asked him, "Don't you mean, 'Keep looking up'?" "It's all according to where you're seated," he replied. The man said that he could "look down" on everything, because he was seated with Christ in heavenly places. As he beheld life's circumstances, he saw them with a new perspective - that which comes from looking at each situation through the eyes of the REIGNING CHRIST!

## **CAUGHT UP**

As we have pointed out, the word "rapture" nowhere appears in the Bible, although its synonym "caught up" does. The word used in the Greek New Testament is HARPAZO. Its literal meaning is "to take something or someone firmly, quickly, or rapaciously." It is a derivative of HAIREOMAI whose meaning is "to take for oneself." It conveys the idea of an act quickly done by someone of great skill and strength - thus, TO SEIZE. From this Greek word HARPAZO comes our English word "harpoon," an instrument used to catch or seize whales. The English word "rapture" comes to us from the Latin word RAPERE meaning "to snatch." Our word "rape" also comes from this Latin term and is used in English literature according to its proper meaning of "taking by force."

The following are the scriptures where the word HARPAZO is used: "...and the violent TAKE IT BY FORCE (SEIZE IT)" (Mat. 11:12). "...then comes the wicked one, and CATCHES AWAY (SEIZES) that which was sown in his heart" (Mat. 13:19). "...and the wolf CATCHES (SEIZES) them, and scatters the sheep" (Jn. 10:12). "...neither shall any man PLUCK (SEIZE) them out of My hand ... and no man is able to PLUCK (SEIZE) them out of My Father's hand" (Jn. 10:28-29). "...with fear, PULLING (SEIZING) them out of the fire" (Jude 23). "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows:) such an one CAUGHT UP (SEIZED) to the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:3). ". . . and her child was CAUGHT UP (SEIZED) unto God. . . ." (Rev. 12:5). And finally, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be CAUGHT UP (SEIZED) together with them..." (I Thes. 4:17).

HARPAZO does not of itself indicate any particular direction, such as being caught UP, but, of course, the context of the passage under consideration does lend it that meaning by adding the qualifying words: "Caught up IN THE CLOUDS, to meet the Lord IN THE AIR." The message is clear - we do not ascend, we are CAUGHT UP, SEIZED, SNATCHED, LAID HOLD UPON by a power beyond ourselves. This is not a self-projection into the "spirit world" as the soulish psychics and metaphysical people try to do it, nor can we in any way force ourselves to be spiritual or unilaterally overcome the lower realms. You cannot self-induce experience with God or make yourself have a revelation. There are no formulas for man to operate for lifting himself up by his own bootstraps. It is written, IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN US BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE, and it is that sovereign action initiated by HIM that shall catch us up into new dimensions of divine life and glory. We must be so completely SEIZED BY OUR LORD, with such divine power, that we never again respond to the gravitational pull of the flesh.

The preachers love to proclaim that Jesus is coming to "rapture the saints to heaven" or to "catch His waiting bride away." But the Word of God never says that. Nowhere within the pages of God's blessed Book are we told that the return of Jesus is to evacuate His people off of planet earth to relocate them in some astral location far above the Milky Way where there are no battles, no tribulation, and no antichrist. When the Bible speaks of being "caught up," it is not speaking in terms of miles or light-years away. Let us consider II Cor. 12:1-4. "It is not expediate for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows:) such an one CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN. And I knew such a man, how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Where did this friend of Paul's go? Physically, his body went nowhere. He said he was "caught up" to the third heaven; but remember this: when he was caught up into God's glory, he was actually right here on the earth. He never left the ground for a minute, and thus I think it will be for all God's elect people. So completely overwhelmed was he, so utterly were his faculties under the control of the Holy Spirit that he was not sure whether he was "in the body, or apart from the body." God carried him into that realm of life that is known as paradise, the third heaven. Heaven is not a location, but a realm of spirit in which we touch, experience, and know God. The first heaven corresponds to the first gate or entrance into the Tabernacle that brings us to the brazen altar, where Christ the Lamb is slain for us, giving to us His life. This is our initial "salvation" experience. The second heaven corresponds to the door into the second realm of the Tabernacle, the sanctuary, wherein dwells the candlestick and the golden altar of incense. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit brings us into this second supernatural heaven in Christ where the Holy Spirit fills us and becomes the light of our life, as the oil fills the candlestick and gives light to the Holy Place. It is there we truly partake of the bread of God and offer up the incense of spiritual praise and worship unto God. This is our second experience in God, the second heaven God has brought us into.

The man of whom Paul wrote had already ascended into the first two heavens in regeneration and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But now "in spirit" the Lord carried him for a brief moment into that realm of life, that dimension of glory, that third heaven of HIS FULLNESS which is our inheritance in Christ, typified by the Shekinah Glory of God beyond the veil in the Holiest of all. Moffatt's translation says, "In the body or out of the body? I do not know. I simply know that in the body or out of the body (God knows which) this man was caught up into paradise and heard sacred secrets which no human lips can repeat." In this marvelous experience it was not important to him to know whether or not his body was caught up into that higher realm. But he had been into that third heaven. He knew it was there. And he knew that in God's due time he would have an abundant and permanent entrance into that realm of glory, by the resurrection power of Christ, CAUGHT UP.

There is abundant truth in Eph. 1:3 where we read that God has blessed us with "all spiritual blessings IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST; according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." That's a heavenly place. And the heavenly places are not out beyond the stars somewhere - they are IN CHRIST. No need to purchase a ticket on a jetliner or book passage on a spaceship to get there, my beloved. When the Bible says that "He has raised us up together, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS," it speaks not of a physical ascent into space, but about a spiritual ascent. Our

hearts are often filled with unbelief and carnal ideas about physical bodies soaring through the rain clouds because of the errors tradition has taught us. How much more real and blessed the precious truth: "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and H-A-S TRANSLATED US into the Kingdom of His dear Son" (I Cor. 1:13).

How much more beautiful and meaningful it all becomes when the blessed Spirit of truth opens our eyes to see the truth as it is, that physical rapture, which figures so largely in modern preaching and teaching, is simply a figment of the imagination, without foundation in scriptures, and without purpose or meaning in God's great plan. Many spiritual realities are beyond the witness of the flesh. For example, Jesus said the new birth cannot be evidenced by the physical senses of man (Jn. 3:8) but no believer would, on that basis, deny the REALITY of it. Alas! vast numbers of saints entertain the mistaken and foolish notion that the only reality is PHYSICAL. Just the opposite is the truth. Reality is SPIRITUAL. To be "caught up" is to be lifted to a higher realm in the Spirit, a realm of spirit life where all is glory and life abundant.

Through many years and deep dealings God has been changing me. He has transformed my ministry into an instrument that is designed to lift people out from an earthly consciousness into a heavenly (or spiritual) consciousness. As a result of this, God is quickening great numbers of saints and making them aware of His emphasis in this hour to cause our consciousness to be raised to the level of understanding we had in our beginnings. Before ever man was lowered into this gross material realm and here made a "living soul" (Gen. 2:7), he had been created in pure spirit essence in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). That is man's true and original state of being, and the revelation of God's eternal heritage for him within and without himself, prior to the time he was separated from it. History is replete with the record of wars, hatred, bloodshed, suffering, sorrow, famines, pestilences, sin, sickness and death. Truly God has lowered us into the bondage of corruption, but not without a promise of restoring us into a full God-consciousness and state of being of wholeness again. This is what redemption is all about!

Peter Demetris has penned the following words of truth and wisdom: "Canaan represents the realm of the Spirit. In the past Canaan has been taught incorrectly. Canaan was always taught as some place people died to go. This philosophy has to be wrong. If heaven is a place we either have to die to go to or be raptured to, then our earthly existence is only to be one wilderness wandering after another, where we constantly go through trial after trial, suffering after suffering, only to die and finally make heaven. I believe it's this very lie that has been robbing people of living a Spirit-filled existence now. God is opening up to us an understanding of heaven. Heaven is the realm of spirit, in which we are joined to the Lord, a realm we become more aware of, partake of and live out from as we grow in Christ. As we live out from that inner, heavenly realm, He comes forth through us into our earthly experience. Jesus said pray that the Kingdom of God will come on earth; as it is in heaven so let it be in earth. Canaan represents the fulfillment of what's been promised, our inheritance, something you and I can now enter into, partake of and have manifested through our lives.

"The tragedy I see among God's people today is they live so far below their privileges which have been purchased for them. Religion has failed to teach that through Jesus Christ there is no longer any limitation put upon us. One who understands that the veil has been rent, that the way into the Most Holy Place is now open, begins to come to an end of all limitations and to partake of the provision of that realm.

"There was an experiment performed in which flying insects were placed in a jar and the jar was covered. For a while the insects flew to the top and tried to get past the lid on the jar, but after struggling for a time, they stopped trying and only flew as high as they could. Offspring born to these insects now residing in captivity never saw their parents fly above a certain level. Later, when the lid of the jar was removed, even though the insects could have flown out of the top of the jar (normally their nature), they didn't. They were born into captivity and never knew they could fly above that one realm of their existence. This is how it has been for two thousand years in the Christian Church. We have had certain traditions handed to us by our parents who have been in captivity, and have never thought to look beyond the experiences they passed on to us. But now God's people can rise above that into which they have been programmed. This message is written to raise your awareness, to let you know you don't have to live at the low level at which Christendom wants to keep you. Canaan is available! You can partake of it and it will change you from death to life, from natural to spiritual, from earthly to heavenly" -end quote.

I Thes. 4:16-17 deals with death and dying. Paul speaks of the war cry, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet-message sounding for those who are dead in Christ and their coming forth into glorious manifestation of resurrection power, and our being changed. Whether this amazing process takes one minute, five years or a thousand years makes no difference if we understand by the spirit instead of the letter of the Word. The point I wish to make clear is that the purpose for this "catching up" is first of all to transform us from the natural to the supernatural, from the earthly to the heavenly, from humanity to divinity; we ascend from dishonor to glory; we are "raptured" from weakness to power. We completely miss the point when we try to fit it into a time frame or turn it into an historical event. This doesn't mean the raising of those who have died from their physical graves, but the raising of us ALL up into heavenly realms, seated with Him in the sphere of His power, glory and majesty. I am not writing here about physical bodies rising to a location several thousand feet above the ground, but of a RAISING UP to be joined unto the Lord in a new relationship and reality in the heavenlies. I do not believe in the old "rapture" teaching; it is as unscriptural as anything can be; but a RAISING UP, a CATCHING AWAY, a GATHERING TOGETHER unto the Lord. There is to be a gathering together unto Him by all of the tens of thousands of overcoming saints of God, from both this side and the other side of the veil. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him" (II Thes. 2:1). Hallelujah! What a day is this! What an hour to be living in! Let us not think as the manifestation of our sonship draws nigh that those who have died and are in their graves have missed something. In the hour of manifestation we will all be RAISED UP together. Yea, "In the third day He will RAISE US UP, and we shall LIVE in His sight" (Hos. 6:2). The next verse says, "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).

## **IN THE AIR**

"We ... shall be caught up together with them... to MEET the Lord IN THE AIR: and SO shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thes. 4:17).

Elwin Roach has pointed out, in one of his excellent articles, that the word "meeting" (apantesin, Grk.) appears four times in the New Testament (Mat. 25:1,6; Acts 28:15; I Thes. 4-17), and carries the thought of a CONFERENCE, an ASSEMBLY, or a

CONVOCATION. It signifies much more than merely coming into contact with our Lord and standing in His presence. In essence, we are called to a HOLY CONVOCATION, to participate in the high activities of a HOLY ASSEMBLY that is "caught up" into a high place in God, a sphere of exaltation, influence, and authority. All through the scriptures it is common to find natural elements of the earth that represent spiritual realities. Truly, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the "air," and the word "air" is AER in the Greek, meaning "to breathe," and its usage throughout the New Testament consistently indicates the "atmosphere" surrounding the earth.

Several years ago, while meditating upon this precious passage of scripture, the Spirit unfolded in my consciousness the significant truth that our catching up "into the air" can never be properly understood apart from the inspired words of the apostle Paul in Eph. 2:1-2 wherein he states, "And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, the SPIRIT that now WORKS IN the children of disobedience." There are several key words and terms that unlock the storehouse of truth contained in these verses. Consider - PRINCE, POWER, AIR, SPIRIT, WORKS, and IN. According to these plain statements of scripture there exists a "power of the air." This "power of the air" is a "spirit," and this spirit is located "in the sons of disobedience," wherein he "works." Can we not see by this that the "prince of the power of the air" is not something or someone outside of us, but a spirit-power that operates right here WITHIN MAN. Furthermore, this spirit-power that works within man also emanates from man, exerting an influence throughout the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, giving motivation to the myriad activities and events that transpire in the world. Thus, it is called the "POWER of the AIR."

Dr. Charles Price wrote a little book entitled MADE ALIVE in which he shares this instructive information: "Every atom of matter - every piece of mineral - indeed everything which is the result of God's creative intelligence is surrounded by an 'AURA' or an emanation which is identical with and corresponds to the NATURE of the substance from which it comes. There is a sense in which personalities are possessed with this 'emanation' and 'extension' of themselves into their surroundings. It is a radiation which can be felt when someone walks into a room in which you may be seated. Our personality becomes affected by their personality. They have power to elevate or depress" -end quote.

I would like you to really get a grasp of this thought. We ALL know people who by their very presence can lift us up, and impart a sense of well-being, who can lift our spirits up to heights of joy and happiness. Others can leave you feeling depressed just by spending a few minutes in their presence. The thought I want you to get is the fact that every atom of created material, in fact every created thing, has this aura surrounding them, which is a radiation of their nature and personality into their surroundings. It is an extension of themselves into their environment. This "aura" or emanation is identical with and corresponds to our nature, and is our nature and feelings radiating from us into our surroundings, and it affects everything around us. It is a radiation that flows from our spirits, and the stronger our spirits are the greater the radiation. If you find it difficult to believe the very atmosphere or air waves are charged by the emanations of energy, positive or negative, then go directly from a worship service where the saints are worshipping in the spirit, and enter a night club where ungodly men and women are drinking, cursing, laughing and singing, and the difference you feel in a very real way is the difference between the positive and the negative life force.

Grasp it! A hundred years ago we could not have understood as we do now how communication by sound and picture can be broadcast instantaneously THROUGH THE AIR. Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are voices and perhaps music IN THE AIR around you. A radio or TV set tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you. You may not have realized it, but the spirit in every man is both a receiver and a transmitter. You may be tuned in on the wavelength of the Holy Spirit or you may tune in on the wavelength of Satan, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. You don't hear anything with your natural ears because spirit does not broadcast in words or sounds. Spirit broadcasts in thoughts and attitudes. Satan broadcasts in thoughts and attitudes of lust, greed, vanity, jealousy, anger, envy, fear, competition, strife, hatred, violence, bitterness, debate, etc. Here is the real cause of all the world's evils! The people hear no audible voice, they do not see a visible Satan, and they comprehend not from whence come such attitudes, impulses, and desires.

The center of this activity lies within the very heart of man, the core of his being. A friend has shared the following enlightening thought: "It is interesting, then, to read the words of Jeremiah who said under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that 'the heart is deceitful ABOVE ALL THINGS and desperately wicked. 'Who can know it?' (Jer. 17:9). The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE WORLD! When the Pharisees criticized the disciples of Jesus for eating with unwashed hands we hear Jesus say, 'That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man. For FROM WITHIN, OUT OF THE HEART OF MEN, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come FROM WITHIN and defile the man' (Mk. 7:20-23). Every sin-category imaginable is contained in this discourse. Everything that a man could ever do or think that is evil is said by Jesus to come - not from outside of himself, but from WITHIN!

"In our consideration of this passage, there is one all-important phrase that we must be careful to note. Jesus said, 'for from within, out of the HEART OF MEN...' It is imperative that we notice the grammatical number of the two words here. The word 'heart' is singular being in the Greek in the genitive SINGULAR case. The word 'men,' however, is plural being in the genitive PLURAL case. We have then, ONE HEART - but MANY MEN! For want of a better word, I have called this one heart of all men the 'cosmic heart' - cosmic being from the Greek word 'kosmos' which relates to this world system. This 'cosmic heart' or 'cosmic mind' is the common possession of all men - one great subconscious mind shared by all the inhabitants of the world. It is the mind of Adam - shared with his many-membered body. Prodding, goading, tempting, whispering, the subconscious mind makes its subtle suggestions to the conscious mind and man's will bows before it. FROM WITHIN, out of the HEART OF MEN - the subconscious mind - proceed all these evil things!" -end quote. Can you now understand how it is that the apostle, when speaking of the "prince of the power of the air," identifies him not as a funny creature in a red suit with horns and a pitchfork, but as the inward motivating SPIRIT I-N M-A-N! "The SPIRIT that now works (energizes) IN the sons of disobedience."

Let us explore this thought of the SPIRIT that WORKS IN MEN, which is also the POWER OF THE AIR. We must understand that life (spirit) is ENERGY. This means that you as a person, a personality, are ENERGY. Energy has many forms, but it is not something that you can see or hold in your hand. You can think of energy as something that can make things change. For example, a moving object has energy because it can change things by crashing into them. Heat is another form of energy. It is a sort of

motion, too - the disorderly motion of the tiny atoms and molecules that make up all materials. Heat energy can melt ice, changing it to water, and heat it more, changing it to vapor. It can run the engine of an automobile, jet plane or rocket. There is another kind of energy, called chemical energy. It is in the coal or oil that heats buildings. It is in the food that nourishes your body and keeps you active. There is atomic energy which can be set free from the atoms of some materials. And then there is the energy carried by light waves, called electromagnetic energy. It is the electromagnetic energy in sunlight that warms the earth. Light waves, streaming out of the sun, carry energy to us across nearly a hundred million miles of space. When the energy of the light hits the earth, part of it changes to heat.

Another kind of energy which we, as the people of God, are aware of is SPIRIT ENERGY. In physics energy is known as the capacity for doing work. The Greek word for energy is ENERGEIA or ENERGEIO. These words are used in the Greek New Testament a number of times. Because of the association between "doing work" and "energy," the words are generally translated into English as "working." Since so much has been learned about energy in recent years it would now be far better to translate the word for just what it means - energy or energize. Let us look at a couple scriptures. "That you may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the WORKING (Grk: energeia, energizing) of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:18-20). Yes, it was ENERGY, GOD'S ENERGY, which RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD! And the record further states that He was raised up by the SPIRIT of God! And not only did Paul say that it was God's energy that raised Christ up, but he went on to say in Eph. 3:7 that it was that same energy of God which transformed his own life and made him a minister of Jesus Christ. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual WORKING (energizing) of HIS POWER." Then on top of this Paul declares that it is this SPIRIT ENERGY of God which is working within us to bring us unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. "From whom (Christ) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual WORKING (energizing) in the measure of every part" (Eph. 4:16). And finally, this energy of God shall so work in us, shall so CHANGE US, that we shall be changed even in the atomical structure of our bodies, as it is written, "Who shall CHANGE our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the WORKING (energizing) whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:21). All spirit is ENERGY, and exerts a force, or influence, upon our lives. God is the supreme source of energy - the highest and purest form of energy!

These principles show us that God is a Holy Spirit BEING, possessing Holy Spirit CHARACTERISTICS, and exerting Holy Spirit INFLUENCES. The influences of God are no less God than is the personality of God. The characteristics of God: His nature, virtues, attributes, power, mind, etc. are no less God than the personality of God. God Himself is supreme energy - able to influence and change ALL THINGS! But the characteristics and influences of God are likewise energy, spirit energy. The Bible declares that God is LOVE. It doesn't say that God has love, but God IS LOVE. That is His nature. Did you know that love is energy? You won't have to think about that very long to realize that it is true. Love is a powerful force that can influence and CHANGE THINGS. Love is invisible, like the wind, but it is powerful! And love can be transmitted, invisibly, from person to person, even as light rays are transmitted from the sun to the earth. The qualities of love can be received by those around us even as the life-giving qualities of the sun are utilized by every living thing on earth.

We read in Rom. 14:17, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Do you believe peace is real? What does peace look like? Is it round? Is it square? Can you measure it? Can you buy a bottle full of peace, or a truckload? No! Peace is invisible, isn't it? And peace is powerful, isn't it? Peace is SPIRIT! And spirit is ENERGY! You can know when peace is present. You can sense peace, experience peace, speak peace, manifest peace and minister peace. How about joy? You cannot put joy in your pocket or roll it up like a wad of bills. Joy is SPIRIT! Joy is ENERGY! Righteousness is SPIRIT! Righteousness is ENERGY! Righteousness is attainable on this earth now because of the RIGHT SPIRIT, the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit. I have good news for you - you can receive a new spirit, a new ENERGY FORCE, Holy Spirit, Holy Energy, and as a result attain a walk in righteousness. HOLY ENERGY - this is what God IS!

The above characteristics all qualify as SPIRIT for they are realities which are both invisible and powerful. They all qualify as ENERGY for they are real, invisible forces that can MAKE THINGS CHANGE. How we need a receptivity to these influences in the world today! Thank God, He is bringing to pass such a receptivity in a firstfruit company of His chosen ones in this hour! We experience this receptivity by means of a RAISED OR ACTIVATED CONSCIOUSNESS. If there were no receptivity in the trees and flowers and shrubs, we should have a desert around us. These things spring to life because of their quiet receptivity to the energy of the sunlight and moisture poured upon them. What they receive they utilize. That is why the primary function of all creation, animate or inanimate, is receptivity. Your basic function, and mine, is the same - simply to receive of that essence of God which is so bountifully shed upon us by the Spirit! Then we must become TRANSMITTERS of that which we have received!

On the other hand, Satan is a SPIRIT and possesses an un-holy spirit mind, disposition, nature, will, etc., and exercises an un-holy spirit influence through various channels and agencies. Therefore, Satan is ALSO ENERGY - misdirected energy, negative energy, destructive energy. I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this! Each characteristic of either God or Satan is a FORM OF SPIRIT ENERGY. This energy can be transmitted to our conscious mind, to produce its power within us, just as electricity is transmitted from a battery to an engine to make it function in a certain way. When the "spirit of holiness" is transmitted to us we begin to function in our personality in that characteristic of God's holiness, thus becoming holy. When the "spirit of wisdom" is transmitted to us we cease from our own natural reasonings and commence to act in accordance with the higher wisdom of God.

In the same way it is clear that there is another spirit mentioned frequently throughout the scriptures, and in opposite terms, namely, the "spirit of fear," the "spirit of bondage," the "spirit of the world," the "spirit of error," the "spirit of antichrist," the "spirit of jealousy," the "spirit of slumber," etc. No one thinks that these various definitions would justify the thought that there are two, or ten, or one hundred or more SATANS! These terms signify in general the WRONG SPIRIT - the spirit, nature, disposition, power and will which has its personification in that one that we call Satan, and which emanates from all whom HE ENERGIZES. This is the spirit that now works in (energizes) the sons of disobedience, and is the POWER OF THE AIR.

Never forget, dear reader, that all of the attributes and characteristics of the Holy Spirit and the Un-Holy Spirit ARE SPIRIT, and therefore ENERGY - POWER! In the area of will, attitude, nature, emotion, mind, disposition, actions, etc. there is ALWAYS A

TRANSMISSION OF ENERGY. Haven't you noticed that one persons attitude will "rub off" on to another person? One can begin complaining and soon everyone is complaining. One begins to be argumentative and soon everyone in the room is in a heated argument. Someone vents their anger on you and within seconds you are angry and screaming back at them. Or, a whole group of people may feel frustrated and hopeless in a situation, and just one person can enter the room with a smile on his face, radiating the attitude of confidence and assurance, speak a positive word of encouragement and victory, and soon the whole atmosphere changes, becoming charged with this new expectation, the spirit of the entire group being raised up into hope and anticipation. What is this? It is the work of SPIRIT: invisible, intangible ENERGY - POWER! Invisible, but very real. And very powerful! There is constantly in this world a definite transference of spirit energy from person to person, from group to group, from nation to nation, positive or negative, as the case may be. The rise and success of false religions, communism, rock music, immorality, etc. are the direct result of negative satanic spirit influence transmitted to the masses through faithful ministers of unrighteousness who have become filled with the UN-HOLY SPIRIT, and consequently transmitters of the same, producing a SURCHARGED ATMOSPHERE. THIS, my beloved, IS the "power of the air!" Satan has a large elemental power. He is named the prince of the power of the air, meaning that he is the INVISIBLE RULER, which activity and authority he exercises IN and THROUGH men!

The word for "air" in the Greek language is AER meaning "to breathe." The "power of the air" is thus the ENERGY OF BREATHING! Thoughts from the unconscious realm BREATHED OUT - expressed in words in the conscious realm and lived out as deeds in the physical realm - go forth as energy, power, spiritual influence in the atmosphere of earth. These are not MERELY thoughts or MERELY words, for the spirit of man is tapped into the timeless sphere of eternity wherein is that which is called by the scriptures "the powers of the heavens." This is the realm of PURE ENERGY, and the unconscious mind of man is tapped into this vast supply of ENERGY, and not only tapped in, but when the mouth is opened, the energy is brought forth from the conscious realm and released into the atmosphere of man's physical world, carrying a very real power capable of either blessing or cursing mankind.

Hannah Hurnard has written, "There is another very important thing about our thoughts and words. It really seems true that, as we breathe and speak them out, they set in motion a vibration or current of spiritual energy which gravitates to, and unites with, the same sort of thought-energies being breathed out by other people. 'Like gravitates to like.' God-inspired thought-and-word energy gravitates to all the other God-inspired thought-and-word energies which other men and women are breathing out, and uniting with them, help to build up tremendous forces and influences for good in the world. Our thoughts and words unite with "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" of which the apostle Paul writes. Isn't that challenging!

"But our wrong, self-inspired thoughts and feelings, and the resentful, jealous, unloving, impure ones, when they are breathed and spoken out, gravitate to the same kind of wrong spiritual energies and influences, and, alas, help to strengthen the powers of evil and hate in the world. In that way, without realizing what we are doing, we actually help to increase the destructive forces which are at work in this fallen world of mankind. Our unforgiving thoughts wing their way like birds of prey to the same kind of thoughts; or like dark clouds of evil influence which pile up into huge masses and make it more difficult for people everywhere to forgive and love each other. The impure thoughts and

imaginings, inspired by the things we read, look at, and listen to, are also breathed out, and gravitate to the same kind of thoughts, and help to create the dreadful atmosphere in different places where vice and all sorts of unclean things are practiced. Our angry, revengeful and covetous thoughts, as we breathe them out, gravitate to, and unite with, the dark powers which urge men to crimes and violence and murder. How dreadful it is, that we can, if we are not careful, be really responsible for helping to kill someone else. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, warned us of all this when He told us that whoever becomes angry with his brother is guilty of murder, and he who lusts in imagination is guilty of adultery; simply because, those evil thoughts, imaginings, feelings and desires have strengthened the dark powers which urge men to express these dreadful things through their bodies. But when we begin to experience a transformed thought-life and transformed speech-habits, then, by the grace and power of God, we can cooperate all the time in strengthening the forces or influences of righteousness in the world, and of helping men and women to do good and noble and sacrificial things" -end quote.

What a graphic picture of how the "power of the air" operates! Thoughts and words are thus perceived to be spiritual energy, capable of being transmitted and transferred through the atmosphere of earth as influences upon men. The action of spirit on spirit is inappreciable by the senses; but could we look behind the veil of nature when a crowd is swayed higher and thither by the speech of one man, we should see that the influence exerted was as real and actual as muscular force. From this we learn that words are not mere sounds, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "The WORDS that I speak unto you, they ARE SPIRIT, and they ARE LIFE" (Jn. 6:63). Another example of the power of breathed-out spiritual energy was recorded by J. F. Goodavage: "Dr. Franklin Loehr, a minister of the Religious Research Foundation, discovered that plants, when PRAYED OVER by his congregation, grew 75 times faster than an equally tended and nourished plant that was NOT prayed over."

The message is just this - "the air" bespeaks of the atmosphere of this earth which today is super-charged by fleshly and satanic energy radiating from the cosmic heart of unregenerated men. Truly, Satan IS the "god of this world" and the "PRINCE of the power of the air!" But I have some good news for you, my friend! Satan shall be bound - restrained, restricted, removed from his sphere of influence and authority "in the air!" "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold upon the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him..." (Rev. 20:1-3). What does this mean? It means that when Satan is bound in man and thus removed from his sphere of operation "in the air," THAT POSITION IS NOT GOING TO GO UNFILLED. ANOTHER POWER MUST BE RAISED UP INTO THAT VACATED REALM OF DOMINION TO BECOME THE ENERGY FORCE THAT INFLUENCES THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD, giving direction and motivation to every activity and event wrought upon earth. THAT, my beloved, is what it means for the saints of God to be CAUGHT UP IN THE AIR! As Satan is dispossessed from his position as the prince of the power of the air, saints are caught up or elevated into that place of influence, power and authority. God is now preparing a company to fill that place, that sphere of spirit energy and control that has been occupied by Satan, and thus BECOME the "power of the air," and our blessed Lord Jesus Christ becoming the "PRINCE of the power of the air." Glory! Satan is bound and we are raised up into that realm even now, in the measure that we have appropriated it, but the fullness remains to be revealed. What a prospect! The earth now under the power of the Evil One,

renewed and filled with the glory of God under the power of the Righteous Ones! What changes shall yet be wrought in the earth! What righteousness, peace and joy will flow forth to the peoples of the nations! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

The natural minded Christian is looking to be suddenly snatched up into the air, away from the earth, to inhabit mansions on golden streets somewhere in the blue beyond. The spiritual Christian looks to be LAID HOLD UPON BY A HIGHER POWER and lifted into a realm from which He can do something for this world. The almighty Father is preparing and equipping a people who shall bind the devil and usurp his place of cosmic power in the atmosphere, supercharging the atmosphere with vibrations and influences of health and righteousness and life and light and love! When the Righteous Kingdom is in power, the cruel usurper will be absent; when the Righteous Kings hold sway, and the great tempter is overcome, men's motives to godliness will be unhindered. The present activity of God is devoted to selecting, training, teaching, testing, developing and perfecting this conquering, ruling company. Just think - you have the unique potential to be a transmitter of the LIFE-GIVING ENERGY of God Almighty here upon this earth! You can minister the power and glory of God! All the abilities and characteristics of God can be transferred through you to the world around you thus producing harmony and reconciliation to God.

The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and this glory surrounds Him. As we become partakers of the divine nature, we will also radiate the glory of His nature. This is the real purpose of our calling, and the meaning of being caught up in the air. Recognize, O saint of God, the radiant glory that is even now vibrating from your being, and seek His presence, that the glory and power might be greatly increased for the sake of His body as well as a lost world. Release the Christ within! Praise God, what a day! You can change the atmosphere about you, regardless of how dark or hopeless it may appear. You can radiate with His power and glory, like a blazing light where darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Arise and shine! Your light has come! The glory of the Lord has risen upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you!

# *Chapter 43*

## *His Feet Upon The Mount Of Olives*

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool" (Isa. 66:1). "And I will make the place of My feet glorious" (Isa. 60:13). "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zech. 14:4).

Children in school learn what we call definitions. A definition is an explanatory statement which tells us just exactly what a certain thing is, as "an island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water." God also gives us definitions in His Word. He tells us exactly what certain things are. And, in the scripture just quoted He has told us exactly what heaven is: "Heaven is My throne." Now, let us make this a little plainer. Definitions of men can be given backward. For instance the definition, "An island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water," can be given thus: "A tract of land completely surrounded by water is an island." This is but another way of stating the same thing. It does not, in any way, change the meaning. Now, let us try this on the biblical definition of heaven. "Heaven is My throne" may also be turned around to say: "My throne is heaven." Whether we say that heaven is God's throne or that God's throne is heaven the meaning is still the same. We would do well to remember here that "heaven" is not a place away off somewhere in the ethereal blue, millions of miles distant; but "heaven I-S M-Y T-H-R-O-N-E." God's heaven is the throne from which He reigns over the earth - yea, over all things! And God's throne IS HEAVEN.

Christ is the supreme Ruler of the universe. Christ always has ruled. He always will. The Father has given "ALL things" into His hand (Jn. 3:35). So God's "heaven" is His throne from which He reigns over the earth. The earth is physical and natural; God, on the other hand, is SPIRIT. God rules BY HIS SPIRIT, as the prophet declared, "Not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts (armies)" (Zech. 4:6). The reality of omnipotent power within God's Spirit IS God's throne! It means just this - God rules out of spirit. His power is spiritual power, His authority spiritual authority. The natural realm must always be acted upon by the higher spiritual realm.

The chemical elements in the soil of the farmer's field are lifeless and powerless. It is absolutely impossible for the inorganic mineral to produce any life or raise itself up into the kingdom of the living. The inorganic world is staked off from the living world by barriers which have never yet been crossed from within. No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any form of energy, nor any evolution can endow any single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. Only by the bending down into this dead world of some living form can these dead atoms be gifted with the properties of life; without this direct contact with life they remain fixed in the inorganic sphere forever. The law is: Except a mineral be born "from above" - from the kingdom just above it - it cannot enter the kingdom just above it. Let us UNDERSTAND! How are the inorganic, non-living mineral elements of the earth raised up into the organic kingdom of living things? You begin with a seed. Within the seed is a-germ of life. The seed containing the life is planted IN THE EARTH, in the kingdom of the dead. Once buried in the earth, with all the right amounts of water and air, and the right temperatures, the seed germinates and the life within the seed begins to grow. Finally the shell of the

seed bursts and there takes place a release of the life from the seed. As the life is released it immediately SEIZES UPON the chemical elements in the earth, converts them into food, and then builds up living tissue out of matter that never lived! The inorganic chemicals B-E-C-O-M-E organic tissue! In like manner, the breath of God, blowing where it listeth, touches with its mystery of divine life the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf between the natural and the spiritual, endows them with its own holy and eternal and divine qualities, and produces within them these new and marvelous faculties, by which those who are born of the Spirit are said to SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD and ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Thus heaven, spirit, throne - these three terms are synonymous, bespeaking of the dimension of SPIRIT from whence God is revealed and by which the earth realm is quickened and made glorious. As heaven is God's THRONE - the sphere of His almighty spirit-power - so is earth His FOOTSTOOL the realm ruled over and transformed by the divine action of infused spirit!

God's footstool has been anything but glorious for the past six thousand years: sin, pain, fear, sickness, sorrow and death have made it one vast hell in which now at least seven billions of humanity wait for the time when deliverance shall come, the curse shall be lifted, and life and glory shall break forth upon all nations and all the inhabitants of the world. To this end God has made abundant provision. The apostle Paul speaks of the appointed hour of the manifestation of the sons of God when all creation shall be set free from the bondage of corruption and ushered into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-22).

The first work of the manifested sons of God will consist in MAKING GLORIOUS GOD'S FOOTSTOOL. The earth is God's footstool - not merely that earth out there consisting of rocks, soil, water, and vegetation, but that "earth" which MAN IS, for man is OF THE EARTH, EARTHY: as is the earthy, such are they also that ARE EARTHY" (I Cor. 15:47-48). The richest jewel of the Lord's glorified footstool in that glorious age to come will be mankind in whose deliverance, regeneration, transformation, and likeness to God will be reflected the very image of Divinity, as most gloriously the perfected humanity reveals the honor, wisdom, nature and power of God and His wondrous plan of redemption, reconciliation and restitution of all things. The long age of the reign of sin and death is represented as the time when God "remembered not His FOOTSTOOL in the day of His anger (judgment)" (Lam. 2:1); but following the subduing of the nations unto Himself, the people are prophetically called upon to "Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His FOOTSTOOL, for He is worthy" (Ps. 99:5). This beautifying and glorifying of the Lord's "footstool" will not be completed until our Lord Jesus Christ shall have "put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:24-28).

## **HIS FEET**

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and shall fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zech. 14:3-4).

This prophecy is generally misunderstood, and applied to the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ at His second advent: and indeed, those who thus err generally go farther and

assert that it will be the feet of flesh, pierced with the nails of Calvary; not realizing that now "the LORD is that SPIRIT" (II Cor. 3:17), and "YE are the BODY of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27), and "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also IS CHRIST" (I Cor. 12:12), and it is "Christ IN YOU the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Shall we now become carnal and say that the visible, flesh feet of the man of Nazareth who walked, shod with sandals, along the shores of blue Galilee are again to stand upon the mount of Olives east of Jerusalem? Cannot we see with the spiritual eye that we must discern the Lord's "feet" there in the same spirit and manner that we now discern the Lord's "body"?

The scriptures are positively plain that the glorious Christ of God is a many-membered body, with Jesus as the Head. The whole world is waiting for the manifestation of this new creation Man, God's corporate Son. Long centuries ago the prophet Isaiah peered through the telescope of divine revelation and exclaimed in astonished wonder, "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. 52:7). I would draw your prayerful attention to several things in this verse. First, Paul quotes this passage in Rom. 10:15 and applies it to the gospel messengers of the body of Christ. The word "beautiful" translates the Greek word HORAIOS which is from HORA, meaning hour, day, or season. Dr. Strong explains that HORAIOS means "timely," or "belonging to the right hour or season." Dr. Thayer says, similarly, that it means "ripe" or "mature." The spirit of inspiration is suggesting that the "feet" of him that publishes the gospel of peace bespeaks of a ministry that appears in God's APPOINTED TIME, bearing a SEASONED MESSAGE, proclaimed by a MATURE BODY that has grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. It has nothing whatever to do with the popular distorted and diluted "gospel" proclaimed by the spiritual dwarfs called "ministers" and "preachers" in the harlot religious systems, which promises merely a partial salvation, and that for only a small minority of earth's teeming inhabitants. That only a handful of the billions who have lived and died on this planet will finally make it into the Kingdom of God is certainly N-O-T "good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people!"

Second, this One bringing good tidings, publishing salvation and proclaiming the reign of God is referred to as "HIM" - a singular and masculine. Not a bride, but a MAN. And the beauty of this One will be seen in His feet. "How beautiful are the FEET OF HIM." The same truth is stated in Nahum 1:15, "Behold upon the mountains the FEET of HIM that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" Again it is masculine and singular. And who is this One who brings good tidings and publishes peace? First of all it is our Lord Jesus Christ. "And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the GLAD TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 8:1). "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching PEACE by Jesus Christ: that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee" (Acts 10:36-37). "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to PREACH THE GOSPEL to the poor..." (Lk. 4:18). Now turn to Rom. 10:15 where Paul quotes this Old Testament passage about the "feet of Him," giving us the fuller revelation of what God is saying: "As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of THEM that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!"

I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that Paul was not ignorantly misquoting a scripture. The Holy Spirit is revealing here that the ONE who came two millenniums ago preaching good tidings, publishing peace, and proclaiming the Kingdom is NOW A

MANY-MEMBERED BODY. And just as Jesus was designated Head of this body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22), there is a company of this body that will be known as the feet, the part of the body in contact with the earth - His footstool! In a normal birth, the head is the first and the feet are the last to be born. So it is with God's glorious Christ, Christ the Head and Christ the body. We have arrived at the hour, my beloved, when the feet of the new creation Man are being brought forth into the fullness of His glory. It must be a work and a ministry wrought upon a company of saints still living here upon the earth. It must be the last members of the enChristed ones birthed into the fullness of Christ at the end of this age.

It is this "feet company" that I present to you today. Bill Britton wrote of this company: "The Word is full of this truth, giving the nature, characteristics, and activities of this great people. If the scriptures had so much to say concerning John the Baptist, Judas, and the first coming of Jesus, is it strange that there would be so much written about the people who come to the end of the age and bring forth the manifestation of the sons of God? We have many times read over scriptures that spoke of the Feet, and never gave it a thought. We never realized that God was speaking to us of a company of people that we were to be a part of.

"The great need for those who live here on this earth is that they come to a life of absolute perfection and purity. There can be no true and full manifestation of His glory out of a people who are loaded with sins and evil spirits. The FEET must be washed! Jesus warned Peter that if his feet were not washed, he would have no part in the glory of this Kingdom. He also told him that it was only the feet that needed washing. Speaking of His Church on earth in Eph. 5:26 He says: '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.' That sounds like a perfected company, doesn't it? You see, there is to be a people in the last days who come into a greater knowledge of His Word than anyone who has walked this earth, except Jesus. Even Paul said, 'Now I know in part.' The part shall be done away, and the perfect shall take over. For if we are to be perfectly washed and cleansed, we need a perfect understanding of His perfect Word. This New Creation Man shall be clean, perfect, no longer bearing the image of that earthy Adam. And to bring us to that, we need a strong cleansing agent. His Word, clearly understood, is that agent.

"Not only shall this feet company be cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word, but out of them shall flow a fountain of living waters to bring life to this world. The nations shall sit at His 'feet' to learn wisdom. This world will be set free from the bondage of corruption, and the rulership of principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Then the world will sit at His 'feet'. That is they will learn from and be governed by a people living on earth who have come into the fullness of Christ. The glory of this people of God is spoken of by the prophet in Isa. 60:13-15. 'The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I WILL MAKE THE PLACE OF MY FEET GLORIOUS. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down AT THE SOLES OF THY FEET; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.' Can you believe that? It's in the Word!

"All the glory of heaven is going to be manifested on this earth. 'I will make the place of My feet glorious.' Did not Jesus pray, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it

is in heaven'? My friends, let me tell you something: God is calling an end to this wicked age wherein man has rebelled against God and Satan has run rampant through the earth. But God has not given up on His creation, not even this physical ball of mud we call earth. HE IS GOING TO MAKE IT GLORIOUS. God has a surprise for the people of this world, and He is just about ready to spring it on them. Glory to God! What a Saviour! Did you know that the body of Christ will rule and reign on this earth? Are you aware that a living people are going to overcome all enemies, and that even the nations of the world shall be subdued under them? 'He shall subdue the people under us, and THE NATIONS UNDER OUR F-E-E-T' (Ps. 47:3). So the feet company of this glorious body of Christ shall bring the nations under subjection to the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords! But first we must be brought completely in subjection to Him.

"There is a Babylon system to be overcome. We know that God has already decreed its fall, and as far as God is concerned, it is already overcome. But He is going to let His "feet company" tread down Babylon. This system shall be destroyed by a people manifesting the fullness of the Spirit right here on earth. In Isa. 26:1 we read: 'In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation shall God appoint for walls and bulwarks.' Now we understand that this is not a natural city spoken of, that this is the people of God, the bride of Christ, the Holy City. But notice in verse 5 that he speaks of another city, even Babylon: 'For he bringeth down them that dwell on high (Babel); the lofty city, he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust. THE F-O-O-T SHALL TREAD IT DOWN, even THE F-E-E-T of the poor, and the steps of the needy.' Who are the 'poor' who shall tread down the 'lofty city'? In Lk. 4:18 Jesus said, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.' And in Lk. 6:20 Jesus said, 'Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God.' Yes, it is that glorious 'feet company' in the last days who hear the everlasting gospel of the Kingdom, and who press their way into that Kingdom, that shall tear down Babylon's walls and set her captives free! Don't expect an angel to come from heaven to perform this great task. This victory and this honor has been given to saints of God living here on this earth. And I can assure you that the saints who went on by way of the grave shall rejoice with the 'feet' in this glorious triumph (I Cor. 12:26). Notice what it says in I Cor. 12:23: 'And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have MORE ABUNDANT COMELINESS.' Yes, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET!" -end quote.

## **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES**

When the Lord declared that the earth is His "footstool," surely no one will err and get the thought that God possesses a body like unto men and that the Almighty literally rests His feet upon the earth as a footstool! And if the placing and resting of Yahweh's "feet" is symbolic, and signifies His dominion from the throne of the spirit realm expressed through members of His body on earth, so, we may be sure that when the Word speaks of His feet standing upon the mount of Olives, and its peculiar division, its valley, the flight of the people, the waters of life from Jerusalem, etc., all are symbolic statements - word-pictures of grand and glorious spiritual realities.

Your understanding will be greatly enlightened when you are able to grasp the simple truths in this remarkable prophecy. The OLIVE is a symbol full of meaning. In Bible days it was the source of light, its oil being used to light the lamps of God's Tabernacle, as well as the homes of His people. Indeed, in the Hebrew the olive tree was called SHEMEN or

"oil tree." Olive oil was also used as the basis of many of the precious ointments of olden times - such as that used in anointing the kings and priests, typifying the Holy Spirit upon the "royal priesthood" of the New Covenant (Ex. 30:24). And from time immemorial the olive branch has been used as a symbol of peace (Gen. 8:11; Neh. 8:15). If then the olive be the symbol of LIGHT, PEACE and BLESSING through the Holy Spirit, and if mountain be considered as elsewhere in the scriptures the symbol for a Kingdom, the significance here of the term "Mount of Olives" is easily seen to be - the Kingdom of DIVINE ILLUMINATION, PEACE and BLESSING. And the standing or establishment or fixing of Yahweh's "feet" upon it signifies that it is upon and from the ground or base of the Kingdom of God in the Spirit that the feet company shall minister illumination, peace and glory to the peoples of earth. Glory to God!

The anointing is upon the feet! The earth is God's footstool; and I do not hesitate to declare that we are living in the "feet" time of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image (Dan. 2:31-45), as well as the "feet" stage of the development of the body of Christ. The feet company, or the sons of God in preparation in these days, must be anointed with the precious ointment or anointing that came upon the Head of this High Priesthood (Ps. 133:2). We know that Jesus was anointed with the Spirit without measure, that He had the seven-fold intensified Spirit of God (Isa. 11:2; Rev. 5:6), but what about the rest of the body? In the beautiful Old Testament type the anointing oil ran down Aaron's beard, on to his robe, and unto his feet. The Word tells us that we have received only a "measure" of faith, and knowledge "in part." Is it possible that God has ordained for a people living on this earth to be anointed with this same "precious ointment" of the seven spirits of God that the Head received? Yes, praise God! it is.

Mary of Bethany took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet as well as the head of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. The ointment was worth some three hundred pence (Jn. 12:1-5; Mat. 26:6-13). Martha was there too, rattling pots and pans, still moving on the serving realm of good works and religious efforts, while Mary sat at the anointed feet of Jesus receiving something that would never be taken away! Think, dear reader, of the profound depths of truth that lie hidden in the great value of the precious oil that anointed the feet of our Lord! - three hundred pence. Three hundred is the number of divine deliverance, as shown in Gideon's army, Noah's ark, Moses' tabernacle, Solomon's shields, etc. The wonderful truth here revealed is that the "feet company" of the body of Christ receive the same unique anointing as the Head - the anointing for the deliverance of groaning creation! When the feet are anointed there is a beautiful and wondrous result - "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment" (Jn. 12:3).

Ah - the putrid stench of the death realm, a world filled with walking dead men performing twice-dead works, will be changed when the anointed feet of the many-membered Christ stand in power and glory upon the Mount of Olives, the heavenly Kingdom of light and peace and blessing. The awful stench of evil, fear, hatred, deception, greed, lies, murder, unfaithfulness, pain, torment, war, sickness, sorrow and death will be replaced by the exhilarating fragrance of the precious ointment upon the "feet" of the Christ. By the power of the spirit the whole atmosphere of the world shall be perfumed by the heavenly aroma of the righteousness, peace and joy emanating from the anointed sons of God. The fragrance of His glory, His truth and His love shall fill and permeate the whole earth! God is anointing His feet in the world today, not with the literal ointment or oil, but with the seven-fold intensified Spirit of God.

The triumphant, victorious sons of God shall stand upon the Olive Mountain (Kingdom) and in the power of the anointing do battle with all the forces that oppose the Kingdom of God; they shall enter into every battlefield of human life, breaking every foe and conquering every enemy. They shall walk on tops of the mountains (kingdoms). "He maketh my feet like hinds feet: and setteth me upon my high places" (Ps. 18:33). Praise God, how beautiful are the feet! How we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that we are privileged to live in this great hour of the manifestation of the sons of God, the bursting forth of God's incorruptible life through His many-membered Son. Be encouraged, children of God! Press on, saints of the Most High! Jesus is coming! And HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE HIS FEET!

## **THE VALLEY OF BLESSING**

In this passage of scripture (Zech. 14:4-8) so pregnant with meaning the inspired prophet has told us of the deep and profound events that mark the great and wonderful day which lies before us in these strange and remarkable words: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be."

I would draw your attention to what takes place, a mighty upheaval of nature before which the people flee and, as if to tell us the natural cause underlying the upheaval, we are told that it is "as before the EARTHQUAKE in the days of Uzziah." This upheaval results in the splitting of the mountain and the formation of a very great valley; the land is turned into a plain and the light becomes dim, then brighter, until at evening it is brilliant as the noonday. And what causes it all? HIS FEET STANDING UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES! Yes, the earth is His footstool.

Here we see, then, that the TWO HALVES of the Mount of Olives (Kingdom of the Anointing) signify TWO ASPECTS or PARTS of the Kingdom of God, distinctly separated according to a divine order or arrangement. The separation indicates no opposition between the two ministries of God's Anointed Government. It is, on the contrary, for the purpose of producing the "Valley of Blessing" between - to which all who desire divine aid may flee and find delivering and transforming grace under the blessed ministry of both the Kingship and Priesthood of the sons of God. The removal of one part of the mountain to the north and the other part to the south is wonderfully significant. The original Zion, with its fortress of the Jebusites captured by king David, and made into his palace and throne, was located just to the south of Mount Moriah. On Mount Moriah to the north the priesthood served in the temple. On Mount Zion to the south David the king reigned gloriously. The Mount of Olives is located just across the Kidron Valley to the east, directly facing both Moriah and Zion. To remove to the north relates to Mount Moriah, the temple, and the priesthood. To remove to the south relates to Mount Zion, the throne,

and kingship. Praise God, this ANOINTED KINGDOM is a Kingdom of both KINGS AND PRIESTS!

It is the glory of Christ and His many brethren as KING-PRIESTS that Melchizedek so wondrously prefigures. A new order has arisen in Jesus Christ. He is a King-Priest. And He has made us to be Kings and Priests, yea, a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God. "They shall be PRIESTS of God and of Christ, and shall REIGN with Him" (Rev. 20:6). The principal idea attached to the title "king" is that of authority and rule; to the title "priest" that of mediation, mercy, ministry and reconciliation, drawing men nigh unto God, and God nigh unto men. Why is Jesus seated as a priest upon the throne of the heavens? It is that men may be blessed, and that God may be glorified in man. As priest He lives only for others, to bring them near to God. He lives as king only that He might reveal the Kingdom - the power, authority and glory - of God in and through us.

JESUS IS PRIEST AND KING. The Lord Jesus is a Priest who is ever merciful and compassionate. He will and does meet the needs of man, but He is also the King who demands your obedience to His wise and sovereign will. Surely He will meet your needs, but He will also demand your obedience. We must learn about BOTH dimensions of the Melchizedek ministry. We cannot project a loving Priest apart from the firm discipline of His Rulership. And we cannot preach the Gospel of the Kingdom without the mercy and compassion of His Priesthood.

Do you want to be an overcomer? Then learn that the firstborn Son is Priest AND King. There is a great error abroad in the land today. There is a projection of a one-sided gospel to the multitudes that appeals to the flesh. This is how it comes across: "God loves you, God wants to forgive you, bless you, heal you, deliver you, solve all your problems, prosper you, fill you - God wants to meet all YOUR NEEDS." And that is tremendously true! But if that is our sole emphasis, if that is where our message stops, if that is all we tell God's people, then we are in trouble! If we make that priestly truth our priority, we will produce a race of spoiled spiritual brats who are immature and selfish, takers and not givers. And when the clouds of adversity and trouble roll in, when the storms of tribulation and fiery trial break in unbridled fury upon their land, as they surely shall, these poor folk will be frustrated, fearful, upset and angry with God when He doesn't come running when they quote their favorite "faith" scriptures. An unbalanced presentation of truth will produce unbalanced saints. And the land is filled with these today! They are all excitedly awaiting the "rapture"! Jesus Christ wants to reveal Himself not only as King, not only as Priest, but as KING-PRIEST. He is the King eternal and invincible. He is the Priest for the ages full of compassion and mercy. He shall yet arise in glory in His NEW MAN FOR THE NEW AGE and reveal Himself in a people as the great and conquering King and the merciful High Priest, and then all shall know Him. Every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bow and all men shall partake of the blessings that flow from the Mount of Olives, God's anointed Kingdom of King-Priests after the order of Melchizedek.

Let all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship know that the principles of this anointed Kingdom are being established in the lives of God's elect today. The Lord must be King NOW. But He wants to be more than that. We first have to know Him in His Kingship, in His authority, rulership and government. The scriptures call Him a "righteous Governor." We have to first know Him as King. But why does He desire us to know Him as King? Why is it His purpose to set up the throne of His Kingdom in our hearts? So that He can make US to become kings. But that is not the end. He is not setting up His throne within

us, just to make us kings. But He is establishing His throne in us and is making us kings in order that HE may be able to appear and manifest Himself in the midst of the kings as THE KING OF ALL THE KINGS. The world will never know Him as the King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of the kings. Do not think you will be puffed up when you come into kingship - "Ah, when I become a king!" When you become a king, that is just the beginning. It is just the beginning of the opportunity for the revelation of Jesus Christ as KING OF KINGS. He will not reign THROUGH you until first He reigns OVER you. Furthermore, He is a Priest upon His throne. He is priest in our hearts. In this age only the church which is His body knows His wonderful priesthood. But the hour is coming when the priests of the order of Melchizedek shall touch all creation. You are only becoming a priest, my brother, my sister, so He can manifest HIS HIGH PRIESTHOOD through you. May God make this real to you today!

In these wonderful King-Priests the authority of God's law and the mercy and compassion of God's grace are brought together. It was, then, of this priestly kingship that David prophesied when he said, "Surely His salvation is nigh ... MERCY and TRUTH are met together; RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:9-10). Mercy and truth are met together - praise God, what a summit meeting! These words are pregnant with meaning. When one contemplates the very impossibility of such an union, it is an overwhelming thought that mercy and truth are met together. Truth is harsh and demanding; mercy is lenient and lax. Truth condemns and devours; mercy covers and exonerates. Yet here, in the Melchizedek priesthood, these two incompatible forces are MET TOGETHER! Partakers with Him in this heavenly calling, when one actually becomes an ANOINTED KING, he shares that dominion, that power that is derived from the King of kings. And when one actually becomes an ANOINTED PRIEST, he shares that unlimited outflow of mercy, of compassion, of unqualified love that is derived from the heart of our Great High Priest.

The appearance of this DUAL MINISTRY (King-Priest) of the sons of God causes the formation of a "very great valley" known as "the valley of the mountains" - specifically the mountains of Olivet, Moriah and Zion - each symbolizing in its unique way the anointed Kingdom of the sons of God. Olivet bespeaks of the anointing, and the anointing rests upon Zion and Moriah - Kingship and Priesthood. The "valley" thus produced bespeaks of the hope of all mankind for deliverance and refuge from the travail of this dark world; and this valley would be one full of light - free from shadows: for the sun would stream through it from east to west. This speaks of the Sun of Righteousness and His full light of glory, truth and blessing scattering the shadows of ignorance, sin, superstition, and death, and healing and reconciling and restoring all who will flee to this valley of blessings, this valley of mercy and safety - for the Hebrew word signifying mercy is ELAIOS and is derived from ELAIA signifying an OLIVE.

Carrying the picture further, the prophet declares, respecting that day in which gradually the earth shall be made glorious as the Lord's footstool: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT" (Zech. 14:6-7). The day here referred to is in its beginning only partially bright, although in it the Sun of Righteousness arises and shines to scatter earth's miasma of sin, superstition, sorrow and death. Has it not been thus in the experience of God's elect? What LITTLE LIGHT we actually had in our spiritual beginning, when first the consciousness of Christ awakened and dawned within our

hearts! How the light has grown brighter and brighter until today we are dazzled by the brightness of the illumination of His glorious mind! For the masses of humanity entering this day of the Lord it will at first be only partially bright, because it will be dealing with people after people, nation after nation, power after power, system after system, delusion after delusion, evil after evil, as the fallen race is progressively brought forth from the tomb of ignorance, sin and death, from glory to glory ushered into the illumination of God's perfect day.

Ah - it shall also be a day of battle, for in the same hour that the "feet company" are planted on the heights of the Anointed Kingdom, in the authority and power of the seven-fold anointing, WAR BREAKS OUT! "Then shall the Lord go forth and FIGHT against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And HIS FEET shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives ... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. 14:3-5). How shall the Lord, the Spirit, fight? How shall those elect saints in whom He comes, fight? The Word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the Kingdom of God? Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world (order): if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants FIGHT..." (Jn. 18:36). The Kingdom of God is not a Kingdom enforced by might of worldly armaments. The weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (II Cor. 10:4). The weapon of the army of God is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, the sharp two-edged sword of the spoken Word of God - a sword to smite the nations, not with the cruel force of merciless slaughter, but with the life-changing properties of TRUTH AND LIFE. The battle fought on the Mount of Olives, the Kingdom of the Anointing, is a spiritual warfare, combat between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death, between the customs and ways of THIS WORLD and the principles of the Kingdom of God. The anointed feet company of the lovely Son of God does not conquer nations by blowing away millions or with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery.

The apocalyptic description of the Christ setting His feet on the Mount of Olives and engaging in fierce warfare with all the nations that come against Jerusalem, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. How utterly uncharacteristic of our precious Saviour that would be! "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth" (Zech. 14:12). Sounds ominous, doesn't it? Atomic war? No. There are deep mysteries and profound realities in these significant words which the veil of the carnal mind has hidden from our eyes. When the Spirit of God draws aside the curtain of human tradition and interpretation and shines His light into the dark recesses of the understanding, all is made clear. Three beautiful spiritual principles emerge from the letter of the Word: (1) their FLESH shall consume away (2) their EYES shall consume away (3) their TONGUES shall consume away. When the truth of this dawns like a ray of sunlight in the heart, it is a life-changing concept and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that shall come to every man who is the enemy of God that blessed experience in which HIS FLESH (fleshly nature) consumes away before the blazing countenance of God's Christ; his EYES (worldly understanding, carnal vision) dissolve away as he leaps for wonder at the revelation that bursts upon his consciousness from the presence of the Lord; and his TONGUE (speech, confession, outward expression of the inner nature) melts within him as the Living Word is implanted in his heart by the regenerating power of the Spirit, and from that moment grows and develops until its life

consumes his old self completely and he can literally say in absolute truth. "it is not I, but Christ." Thus does God's Christ do battle! What a mighty victory! Hallelujah!

"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be NO RAIN... there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:17-18). There need be no question in the mind of anyone as what the "rain" signifies. The prophet Hosea declared, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE shall come unto us as the RAIN, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos. 6:3). There is a strange and foolish tendency in man to interpret the words of God with the carnal understanding. If you will take time to meditate upon this with the spiritual mind it will become clear that the "rain" in both passages quoted above is the VERY SAME RAIN. It is not the rain from the sky that is withheld from those nations which fail to follow on to know the Lord in His fullness in the Feast of Tabernacles, but the glorious RAIN OF HIS SPIRIT - the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God!

We are looking forward with great anticipation to God's Kingdom dealings with ALL NATIONS. Humanity is thirsting for these living waters from heaven! Let us not sell creation short. Arise, saints of God, and come away with the enChristed to the holy Mount of Olives, the Kingdom of the Anointing, the FULLNESS OF GOD. Can we not see, then, how simple a matter it will be for the overcoming "feet company" to administer help, deliverance and life to a weary and suffering world? For these shall be OVERCOMERS in the fullness of Christ's victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. Sin, sickness, or death shall have no more claim on them. They will be EVEN AS their Lord and Master when He walked upon earth and ministered among men. And more! We can easily understand, therefore, how the glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed in power and great glory throughout the whole earth. There will not be a country, city, village or hamlet on earth that will be closed to THIS gospel of the Kingdom. Glory to God!

How refreshing it is to be assured that in that day of the establishment of the Lord's "feet" upon His footstool, there shall be no more "thick darkness," no more "gross darkness" resting upon the minds and hearts of the vast majority of earth's inhabitants; and at the close of that day, instead of growing darker, the world will have reached the high noon of its "light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord," and its sun shall never set.

The Sun of Righteousness is the arising of the glory of the Lord shining in His full strength and majesty, dispelling the darkness, bringing in the day of victory, life and blessing. This day has already dawned upon us and shone in our hearts, but creation awaits its day. The scriptures are plain that the influence of the Sun of Righteousness - the glory of God upon His people - is destined to extend to the world and beyond to the farthest reaches of creation. "I am the light of THE WORLD," not just of the saints, said Jesus. And again, "YE are the light of THE WORLD" (Jn. 8:12; Mat. 5:4). John on Patmos, beholding with astonishment the glistening glory of the Holy City, New Jerusalem, exclaimed with the voice of jubilation, "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 honour into it ... and they shall bring the glory and honour of the NATIONS into it" (Rev. 21:24,26). To which the prophet Isaiah adds his testimony, saying, "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 ... HIS GLORY

SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE. And the GENTILES (NATIONS) SHALL COME TO T-H-Y L-I-G-H-T, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1-3).

The message is clear - there has been a dawn for us and, blessed be God! there shall be a dawn for all creation. The peoples of our planet will not remain in the icy clutches of an ever-deepening darkness until all hope is gone, until there is nothing but total darkness and death. No, light will appear - more light than the world has ever seen - at the arising of the Sun of Righteousness and the sending forth of His healing rays through the VALLEY OF BLESSING. The whole face of this old world is yet to be changed by the arising of the glory of the Lord within His people! The illuminating rays of glory will fill the earth, your earth, my earth, their earth, until all the shadows and darkness of night have been chased away. All the carnal thinking of man, all the delusions of this gross material realm, all the doctrines of devils, all superstitions, all human creeds and dogmas, all human precepts by which men are taught to fear God rather than to love Him; all political intrigues, all humanistic education and institutions, all the myriad citadels of sin and vice and crime, are to be swept away, replaced by the glorious KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND HIS TRANSFORMING GRACE. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise and arise until there is no more night anywhere in God's vast universe. "It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light" (Zech. 14:7). No man anywhere will be able to escape the glory of God. WE ARE THE DAWN OF IT, the firstfruits, praise His name!

This glorious work commences just as soon as the "feet company" are established upon the "Anointed Kingdom" of God in the fullness of the King-Priest ministry after the order of Melchizedek. "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; and the Lord shall be King over all the earth in that day" (Zech. 14:8-9). Oh! We have understood so carnally, supposing as the natural-minded preachers have taught us, that this glorious prophecy pointed to nothing more than a physical Jesus descending upon the little hill of Olivet at Jerusalem, attended by terrestrial earthquakes and commotions, and natural waters flowing forth unto the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

The reference to the rivers of living waters flowing from Jerusalem during this day of the establishment of the Lord's "feet" upon the government of His footstool, is highly reminiscent of the corresponding testimony of Ezekiel (Eze. 47:1-12) and of John's revelation (Rev. 22:1-2) which, under this same symbol of living waters proceeding from the throne of the Kingdom of God, show us the restoration blessings going forth to all mankind by the overflowing of the spirit of life from the glorified body of Christ on earth. "In the last day, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST (tabernacles), Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive" (Jn. 7:37-39).

Jesus spoke of an artesian fountain of living water that would rise up in the soul, and flow forth to humanity in mighty rivers of blessing and life. It is the healing, life-giving stream that we read about in Ezekiel: "These waters issue out toward the east country (false religion, departure from the truth of God), and go down into the desert (spiritually parched; death realm), and go into the sea (raging, surging masses of wicked humanity): which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, that moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish (people, converts), because these

waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh" (Eze. 47:8-9).

The coming manifestation of God through His sons shall utterly eclipse anything we have ever read about in the Bible or in Church history! This river of life has been flowing under the Mount of Olives and in the City of God, within those elect saints who as a firstfruit have experienced the powers of the Kingdom of God ever since Pentecost; we realize that. But soon it shall empty into the mighty oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing to a dry and parched wilderness where no water is. "Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isa. 43:19). Let it flow, child of God - let it surge forward until it becomes a mighty Amazon in this desert-world of sin, disease, sorrow and death. As one has written: "Said Jesus, 'Out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' We are not looking forward, then, to some strange, foreign power ... some glory or some experience that does not really belong to us. But we are awaiting the RELEASE of the Divine flow which is now locked up in the hearts of God's people. We are 'A spring shut up, a fountain sealed...'" -end quote.

The world is thirsting for these living streams from the ANOINTED KINGDOM. The time is at hand when we may with all confidence expect the mighty EARTHQUAKE that will loose us from our carnal-mindedness and raise our consciousness to walk in the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. From this glorious mind shall flow forth the seven spirits of God into all the earth in that glorious age and ages to come. Therefore, let us even now begin to rejoice in the NEW DAY, as the first rays of hope arise on the eastern horizon; let us arise to plant our feet on the Anointed Mount and drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn! Hallelujah!

# Chapter 44

## *Coming To Receive Us Unto Himself*

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:1-3).

Multitudes today believe Jesus told His disciples that Christians will spend eternity in "mansions" in heaven. Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." There is the assumption by carnal-minded Bible teachers and preachers that the Lord was discussing some material and physical mansions in a far away heaven somewhere; mansions in some bright glory world above that we will move into on "Some Golden Daybreak." The supposition is that these splendid mansions are now being built by Jesus, the master carpenter, on some utopian planet in a far distant galaxy. He has been ardently preoccupied with this monumental project for the past 2,000 years. From what we hear, however, many would be willing to forego their mansion and settle for a shack in some remote corner of gloryland, just so long as they don't have to go to hell!

Did Jesus really say that our reward is a mansion in heaven? Let's see! "In My Father's house," Jesus said plainly, "there are many MANSIONS. If it were not true," He continued, "I would have told you." Let us identify this "Father's house" of which Jesus spoke. Long centuries before these words of promise fell from the lips of Jesus David's holy desire was that he would "find out a place for the Lord, an HABITATION for the mighty God of Jacob" (Ps. 132:5). This holy, spirit-born desire was within him while just a child in his father's house in Ephrata (Ps. 132:6; I Sam. 17:12). The word "habitation" is a plural word, and should read "habitations."

Jesus went up to Jerusalem, entered into the temple, "And said to them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not MY FATHER'S HOUSE an house of merchandise" (Jn. 2:16). "And said unto them, It is written, MY HOUSE shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mat. 21:13). "Everyone that taketh hold of My covenant; even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in MY HOUSE OF PRAYER: - for MINE HOUSE shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:6-7). And yet again Jesus refers to the earthly tabernacle as God's house, when He spoke of David, "How he entered into the HOUSE OF GOD, and did eat the showbread" (Mat. 12:4). Thus, according to the scriptures, the earthly tabernacle and temple in Israel was called "THE HOUSE OF GOD," and served "unto the example (exhibition) and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

Moses built a portable tabernacle, which was followed by Solomon's temple of splendor, and later still by the rebuilt temple of Zerubbabel, all of them to be an EXHIBITION, an earthly display of the greater spiritual habitation that is yet to be assembled, and which is even now in preparation under the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. As we have pointed out, when we come to this phrase, "My Father's House," many of us carry our immature,

childish understanding of "The Father's House" over into our adult thinking. We have automatically, due to former false teaching, conjured up a picture of a park-like place with golden streets and beautiful mansions, with saints flitting about in white night gowns, playing harps. We can readily imagine our mansion over the hilltop where we shall reside in magnificent splendor with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in! But let us look into the Word of the Lord, and let us not partake of the folly of another group of religionists who displayed their ignorance on one occasion when Jesus stood in the temple in Jerusalem and said to them, "Destroy THIS TEMPLE, and in three days I will raise it up again" (Jn. 2:19). Those Jews became indignant and replied that it had taken forty-six arduous years to construct that temple, and would He rebuild it in three days? With their carnal minds darkened, only able to see the natural, not receiving the revelation of His words by the Spirit, they "perceived not that He spake of the TEMPLE OF HIS BODY" (Jn. 2:19-21).

Jesus here states that HIS BODY is the TEMPLE. The revelation that His body was the Temple of God was as difficult for carnal minds as was the revelation that God was His Father. The scriptures clearly reveal that Jesus Himself is the beginning of the TRUE TABERNACLE of God. We must note particularly that beginning with the New Covenant which Jesus came to establish, God no longer dwells in tabernacles made with hands. "But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. However the Most High does not dwell in houses and temples made with hands; as the prophet says ... What kind of house can you build for Me, says the Lord..." (Acts 7:47-49). And again, "The God who produced and formed the world and all things in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in HANDMADE SHRINES. Neither is He served by human hands, as though He lacked anything..." (Acts 17:23-24, Amplified).

When king David desired to build a house for the Lord, God sent Nathan the prophet to him who delivered this message: "Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build Me a house to dwell in: it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired... that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. HE SHALL BUILD ME A HOUSE, and I will establish his throne forever." Now while it is true that Solomon, David's son, did build a house for God in Jerusalem, it is quite evident that neither Solomon nor his temple were the true fulfillment of this prophecy. But when Jesus came He was specifically identified as THE SON OF DAVID (Mat. 1:1). The angel Gabriel, in the annunciation to Mary declared, "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the THRONE of HIS FATHER DAVID: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:31-33). Jesus was even born in the "City of David" (Lk. 2:4,11). So Nathan's remarkable prophecy was never fulfilled until Jesus came. The son of David who was to BUILD THE HOUSE OF THE LORD - is Jesus! Therefore, Jesus Himself is the beginning of the TRUE TABERNACLE of God.

Jesus was the first man on the earth realm to ever build God a habitation where He could live and reveal Himself in His fullness. He did this by possessing His vessel (body) in honor and holiness, in obedience and submission, in love, humility and perfection. This was a place where God could fully live. For the first time since the creation God had a TRUE HABITATION on earth - a temple which was WHOLLY HIS - nothing reserved. Hebrews 1:8-9 says of Jesus, "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with

the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Jesus did not receive the Spirit of God by measure, but was filled with ALL the fullness of God. "For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (Jn. 3:34). "For in Him dwelleth ALL THE FULLNESS of the Godhead BODILY" (Col. 2:9). II Cor. 5:19 states: "It was God personally present in Christ, reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself..." (Amplified Bible). Again, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US." Our Lord Himself declared, "If you had known Me - had learned to recognize Me - you would also have known My Father. From now on you know Him and have seen Him. Phillip said to Him, Lord show us the Father - cause us to see the Father, that is all we ask; then we shall be satisfied. Jesus replied, Have I been with all of you for so long a time and you do not recognize and know Me yet, Phillip? Anyone who has SEEN ME has seen THE FATHER. How can you say then, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in Me? The Father who lives continually in Me does the works" (Jn. 14:7-10, Amplified). So Jesus built the Father a house to live in. He became the beginning, the firstborn of a new and divine species - the TRUE TABERNACLE which the LORD PITCHED, and not man! The Father was even then indwelling His most treasured abode at that very moment in their midst!

But it is not sufficient to know only that Jesus was and is the temple, the dwelling place of God. It was with an expression of wonder that Paul demanded of the Corinthians, "Know ye not that YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE" (I Cor. 3:16-17). And again, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD; as God hath said, I will DWELL IN THEM, and WALK IN THEM; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (II Cor. 6:16). And with still greater emphasis, "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, YE are God's BUILDING" (I Cor. 3:9). The writer to the Hebrews presses the point even further. "Wherefore...consider the apostle... of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all HIS HOUSE ... for every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all HIS HOUSE, as a servant, as a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; BUT CHRIST as a Son over HIS OWN HOUSE; whose house WE ARE" (Heb. 3:1-6).

These are solemnizing truths. Oh, that men and women would cease with their elation over the rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem and rejoice rather in the holy knowledge that WE ARE THE HOUSE OF THE LORD. We have become so accustomed even to calling temporal and transient church buildings made of wood and brick and stone the "house of God" that we are amazed when we are shown that these are NOUGHT BUT BUILDINGS made with men's hands. The fact is, NO EARTHLY BUILDING is sacred or holy, no matter how earnestly you dedicate it to the service of God. Men reverence buildings when they should reverence GOD. No mundane building made with man's hands can ever qualify as the "house of God." All of these carnal, Babylonian buildings that men erroneously call "churches" and the "house of the Lord" shall meet the same fate as the temple of old. Not one stone shall be left standing upon another! Babylon has raised up some fantastic structures, gems of architectural genius, but it is all VANITY and the glory of God dwells in none of them. May the Spirit of God so reveal to us the truth of God that we shall abandon even our perverted terminology acquired in Babylon and no longer call buildings made with men's hands churches and "the house of God." They are no such thing, and we need to correct our speech and sanctify our glossology before God and

speak the truth as it is in Jesus, and refuse to even utter the distortions and foolishness of Babylon. The holy PLACE where our heavenly Father has chosen to put His name is not in any earthly building, nor in a geographical location, but IN HIS PEOPLE! Hallelujah!

Listen to the words of Peter: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, YE ALSO, as living stones, ARE BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE... acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:4-5). Add to this these meaningful words of Paul from Weymouth's beautiful translation: "You are therefore no longer foreigners nor persons excluded from civil rights. On the contrary, you share citizenship with the saints and are MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY. YOU ARE A BUILDING which has been reared on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the cornerstone being Christ Jesus Himself, IN UNION WITH WHOM the whole fabric, truly bonded together, is rising to form a HOLY SANCTUARY IN THE LORD; in whom you also are being BUILT UP TOGETHER to become a FIXED ABODE FOR GOD through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

In the words of Jesus throughout the Gospels we find references to three houses "My house," "Father's house," and "your house." The temple in Jerusalem had been "Father's house" so long as the ministry there moved under the anointing of the Spirit. But when the Lord began His ministry, He said to the people, "But I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple" (Mat. 12:6). And truly, Christ is far superior to the temple and all its trappings, even as He is far superior to the present church order, no matter how good we think some of it is. Jesus saw that "Father's house" had become "your house," so He proclaimed of their house, "Behold, YOUR HOUSE is left unto you desolate." It was no longer "Father's house" for the corrupt priesthood had usurped the glory of God and had made it "their house" with their empty traditions and vain abominations. "And Jesus went into the temple... and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, MY HOUSE shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mat. 21:12-13). Although Jesus drove out the moneychangers, the judgment of the temple was given by our Lord, for He declared it to be A "DESOLATE" HOUSE, or a house devoid of the presence and purpose of God.

## **MANY MANSIONS**

Here now we must ask the blessed Spirit of truth to uncover the hidden things from before our understanding and reveal the things that from the foundation of the world have been kept secret. The word "mansion" is found in only one place in the King James Version of the Bible. "In My Father's house are many mansions" (Jn. 14:2). The word "mansions" is obviously a mistranslation. The Amplified Bible says, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places." The New English Bible and Wuest's translation say the same. The Revised Standard version, Phillips translation, Goodspeed, and the Jerusalem Bible all say, "There are many rooms in My Father's house." Rotheham's Emphasized New Testament reads, "In the house of My Father are many dwellings." The Greek word MONE should be correctly translated as "abodes" or, as the Amplified Bible renders it, "abiding places." In the Father's house are many "abiding places," with no allusion to size or grandeur. Furthermore, the reference is not to the space available inside the house, but rather to the very FRAMEWORK OF THE HOUSE ITSELF. For it is NOT WE who

dwell in the Father's house - it is the FATHER HIMSELF who dwells in and fills the house. We ARE the house!

Read it again. The "mansion" is not for YOU to live in! A few verses later Jesus says, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and MAKE OUR ABODE WITH HIM" (Jn. 14:23). Very beautiful is it to notice that our Lord here employs the same sweet and significant word, with which He began this wonderful series of encouragements, when He said, "In My Father's house are many MANSIONS." "Mansions" in Jn. 14:1 is the same Greek word as "abode" in Jn. 14:23 (MONE). If the translators had been consistent in their rendering vs. 23 would read, "We will come unto him, and make our MANSION with him." The message is clear - God is preparing YOU and ME, beloved, as the place to live and have His abode. OUR mansion is IN GOD and GOD'S mansion is IN US. Glory! The church system has taught us that we have a mansion in the sky. Great singers, before vast crowds of thousands sing, "I've got a mansion just over the hilltop," and the carnal mind gets blessed with the thought that since we don't have much wealth and riches, or many yachts or mansions down here, God has prepared a beautiful mansion for us on that beautiful "Isle of Somewhere." This sounds sweet to the emotional, carnal mind, but how far from the truth it is! This deception is so imprinted in the minds of the people that naught but the overflowing grace of God can ever erase it. They understand not that God's chosen and elect saints ARE that beautiful home, full of life and light and love, where no power of darkness, sin or death can ever invade or operate. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Listen to the words of Paul as he presses this truth home to the heart of the young minister, Timothy. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). What does this term "the house of God" mean? When you refer to "your house," you mean the place where you dwell, where you live, where you work out your life; and that is just the meaning of the house of God. It is not a frivolous term. "The house of God" is the place where God dwells, where He lives, and where He works out His life. It is His address!

This house is none other than the CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD. Notice that the term here is not merely "God," but "the living God." He is so living; and He now dwells in the Church, moves in the Church, lives in the Church, and works out His whole life in the Church. When we say that the Church is the house of God, we must have a very deep realization that God dwells, lives, and works out His life in this house. I speak not of that "harlot's house" which everywhere calls itself "the church" and masquerades as the "house of God," but of that true temple of the redeemed, regenerated and transformed people of God whose feet have been washed from the filth of all of Babylon's abominations, each one a living stone, an eternal abiding place which our God is building for Himself. Within the Church - this group of redeemed, regenerated and transformed people - God dwells; and upon this group of people, there is the reality of the universe. All the reality of the universe is centered in this body of the Christ. If anyone wants to know what life is he must come to this Church and see. If some would like to know what love is, they too must come and see. If anyone wants to touch the manifold wisdom, grace, glory and power of God, the body of Christ is the place to find it. The function of this body is not in doctrine, ceremony and ritual, but in bearing Christ as the reality.

Would God that all the saints might see that since WE ARE THE HOUSE OF GOD, our dwelling place is not inside the house, but in the very framework of the house. Every part

of a building has its specific place to "abide." What would happen to a building were its members possessed of the faculty of speech and the ability of movement? What would happen were the roof to say, "I'm tired of being up here, exposed to the heat of the sun in summer, the beating of the rain, and the chill of winter. I have decided to come inside and abide on the floor!" Or, what if the doors announced, "We're tired of hanging here on the wall, pushed and pulled all the time. Let's go up and rest on the roof." Or, suppose the walls were to declare, "We don't like this position; we're going out and lie on the lawn!" Or if the carpet curled up in the bathtub, or the electric range floated up to the ceiling. Ridiculous! In every house - each stone, board, nail, and furnishing has its unique abiding place. And all together, in perfect order, each fulfilling its place and function for which the architect designed it, they form the complete, perfect building, a place of habitation for those worthy of it.

Ah, we are given the transcendent and glorious privilege of entering into Father's house! Not as a guest, or occupant, but as part of the very substance of the building itself to be DWELT IN, FULLY INHABITED BY THE FATHER HIMSELF! Jesus says that if this were not true, He would have told us. But because it IS wondrously true, He has prepared a place for us in this glorious habitation of God, bringing us into relationship with the Father, that as sons we might be filled with ALL the fullness of God.

In the first reference we have to the temple of God in the book of Revelation, Jesus proclaimed to the seven churches, "Him that overcometh will I make a PILLAR in the TEMPLE OF MY GOD, and he shall go no more out" (Rev. 3:12). A "pillar" is a part of the structure. Just think of that! I doubt not that thousands of saints who read these lines rejoice in the knowledge that they are LIVING STONES in the wall, but here is a promise, given to overcomers, that they shall be P-I-L-L-A-R-S IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD. It is a high and wonderful promise. Only God can reveal such things to us. The pillars bear the weight of the superstructure. One day, when Paul was writing to his son in the faith, he wrote of the house of God "which is the church of the living God, the PILLAR and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). This house of God, in which God dwells, lives, and works out His life, is also the P-I-L-L-A-R OF THE TRUTH. What is truth? Be not deceived into thinking, my beloved, that truth is a doctrine, creed, or correct understanding about God. The most simple definition of truth is - REALITY. Nothing is real in the whole material universe, nothing is truth; everything is but a shadow, all is temporal, illusion, and is passing away. Everything that can be seen, touched, tasted, and possessed is not real, but at best a shadow. Whatever exists in this universe of appearances is but a figure, not the real thing.

What is the real thing - REALITY? "The things which are SEEN are temporal," the inspired apostle says, "but the things which are NOT SEEN ARE ETERNAL" (II Cor. 4:18). The things which cannot be seen by the natural eye are the things of the SPIRIT. CHRIST, the SPIRIT, is the reality of everything! You may think that the human life you have is real, but it is not; it too is only a shadow. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" (James 1:24). Real life is Christ. If you have the Son of God, you have life; if you do not have the Son of God, you do not have life (I Jn. 5:12). If someone sends you a photograph of himself, you will say, "That is uncle Joe, or cousin Mary." But in truth, that is not any person at all. It is merely a picture, an image, a false likeness. REAL things are not found in pictures! The whole universe is but a picture, an image, a likeness. All the types, shadows and figures in the Bible were but symbols and images of REALITY to come, and that reality IS CHRIST. Christ is the truth, the reality of all. In the physical

realm we have food, but Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven. On earth we have great rocks, but Christ is the true rock of ages, the stability that cannot be moved or shaken by anything. We dress our bodies in clothing, but Christ is the eternal robe of righteousness covering the nakedness of our flesh nature. Christ Himself is the truth, and His Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; I Jn. 5:7). Christ is the reality, and His Spirit is the SPIRIT OF REALITY. The people in whom the living God dwells, lives and moves, is the PILLAR OF THE TRUTH, the support upon which reality stands, the buttress that bears the reality. Upon this people can be seen what is the glory of the Lord, the reality of the universe! Upon this people can be seen what is real and true - truth. Upon the sons of God can be seen the reality of life and incorruption, the reality of love, the reality of righteousness, the reality of mercy and goodness, the reality of wisdom and knowledge and power. The sons of God are the PILLARS of God' s temple, the support of the superstructure, the resting place of all truth, the foundation of all REALITY! God is raising up a many-membered temple, all in perfect union with Christ, to be filled with all the glory of God for eternity. And this body, dear ones, IS the FATHER'S HOUSE!

Let me repeat - this time in the anointed words of George Warnock, "When Jesus said, 'We will come unto him, and make our ABODE with him,' He used the very same word for ABODE as He used earlier when He said, 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' The word 'mansion' and 'abode' is one and the same Greek word. This, then, is the real mansion that Christ has gone to prepare for His own. Some might prefer a house of gold or of glistening white marble or pearl. But those things are corruptible; even gold and silver are described by the apostle as being 'corruptible things.' They are not REAL. The real things are the counterparts of gold, and pearls, and sapphires, and emeralds, and jasper. In our finite and limited understanding these natural and earthly things are used to describe our heavenly heritage - because that is the only language that we can understand. But in reality, the glorious realm of the SPIRIT far transcends and outshines any such earthly glory. One glorious thing about the realm of the Spirit is that here there is nothing stagnant or monotonous. Immediately one is introduced into this glorious realm, there is ceaseless progression and activity. Then you are linked up with the infinite and eternal God, whose ways are past finding out, whose depths are unsearchable, and whose heights are unattainable. Therefore the Lord tells us there are many ABODES in Father's house, depending on the level of one's experience, and his spiritual attainment through faith and obedience. 'In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonour' (II Tim. 2:20). There is a resting-place, an abiding-place; but in God the true rest is found in the midst of outward strife and warfare: and the true ABIDING-PLACE is the one that is ceaselessly moving forward and upward into a closer and more vital union with the Father" -end quote.

The door into the invisible world of the Father's house is Jesus Himself. In the drinking of the cup of wine at the "last supper," Jesus told His disciples that He would effect the New Covenant, which promised that within the covenant all men would KNOW the Lord. Jesus, by making the New Covenant for man, would bring man into ultimate communion with the Father, dwelling in His house. This He would go and accomplish for them that night; and having accomplished it, He would return to them by the Spirit that they might share a common life. What a revelation! What a wonderful word this was! What different prospects were being held out from what the twelve had been expecting! Earthly ambitions of Kingdom honors were now on the wane, as wonderfully new and unthought of hopes came upon their horizon. At last the truth was dawning like the brilliant hues of the break of day within their breasts that in the Father's house ARE many mansions,

many dwelling places, many planes of life. On the earth there are many forms of life, beginning with the lowly shellfish on up to man, the king upon the earth. And the Bible tells us that all these are mere pictures of spiritual realities - celestial spheres of life in the eternal and heavenly Kingdom of God. Yes, there are many mansions or planes of reality. There is a house of many mansions - many levels of experience, many dimensions of truth, or a many-faceted wisdom of God. Each realm of truth we embrace and move into brings us higher and higher into the Kingdom of Reality. Each dimension we attain to brings us into a larger degree of KNOWING GOD. Those who truly "follow on" to "know the Lord" thus explore the "many mansions" - these blessed ones discover reality in every room and are still moving forward into UNLIMITED AND INFINITE TRUTH. Praise God! the many mansions are here and now accessible, and they are found IN HIM.

The following vision was received many years ago by a young sister in Argentina. If you can interpret it with a spiritual mind you will see that under the metaphor of "houses" the Holy Spirit has portrayed for us those bright celestial realms IN THE SPIRIT, composed not of cold hard stones, but of living realities possessed by living members of a living temple of living stones who are built up a spiritual house, an habitation of God through the Spirit. The vision is as follows: "The Lord set me free from the heavy oppressions of the enemy and I was enabled to enter into His presence most easily and quickly. Then He carried me away to the sphere where He resides in His great Cloud. When I looked He showed me a great many most wonderful houses but they were not at all like houses down here. They were like great, beautiful arches of light, each by itself distinctly separated one from the other. These treasures were for His people and there they would abide with Him. And indeed they were so beautiful they truly appeared like most wonderful riches for they were like glowing gems of purest celestial light of some material I could never explain.

"There was a marked difference between the houses on the different spheres. Those on the same sphere were more or less of the same appearance and were of a great number, but those on a higher sphere were vastly different and far more wonderful. The highest sphere of all was so gloriously brilliant that I could only behold in amazing wonder without being able to describe it. Each separate sphere was most markedly different, superior, harmonious and far more brilliant than the sphere below it. So great was their light and so glorious their shining that they outshone the sun by far. Nevertheless, I could not ascertain the number of spheres.

"These arches - or domes of light - were not things separate from Him but they were a PART OF HIMSELF. This was the most surprising of all. They were parts of His very person. Each separate sphere was made up of a part of Himself but was such a different manifestation of Himself. Each higher sphere was so much superior and wonderful than the one before. I thought afterwards of an illustration from my own mind to try to describe it: As though a young lady prepares herself in one way to work in the kitchen, in another way to go out to tea, but in still another way she beautifies herself to go out for an evening gala celebration. 'These are the riches of Myself,' He said, 'and are most distinct one from the other. I have offered every one of these dwellings in every sphere to every one of My children. Although I have given to every one the same opportunities, many will be satisfied and will resign themselves to lower spheres because they do not want any more of Me. Each one will reach the place that his heart truly desires which will be given to him. Because some do not want to make the effort to reach out for any more they will have no more for they do not want any more.'

"As He showed me the most glorious mansions on the highest sphere, He said, 'These will be given to those who have sought for Me alone, who have not sought for these riches but have sought to be with Me. Even though they have not sought for any of these I am going to give them as a gift because they greatly desired to be more and more at My side and to be with Me. Those who are conformists and do not want to make any more effort did not really desire to be with Me as much as they desired My blessings and My riches. They have loved Me and I have loved them and these dwelling places are for those who truly desired and sought for Me. This was their will and their desire and it shall be given unto them.' Then He further said that although it was their will it was also His will for them, that He had willed it to be so for them and therefore it was so. He had ordered it to be and therefore it was" -end quote.

## **PREPARING A PLACE FOR YOU**

God nowhere in the Bible holds up heaven as a hope for the future; but He does promise us "THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" (II Thes. 2:14). And all who are hoping for a mansion in heaven are, in their blindness, totally ignoring the jewels of great price and toying instead with an invention of ignorance, which can bring but disappointment and shame and loss at the end of the road. Of course they find statements in the Word which they use as proof for their delusions. So does every crack-pot cult and "ism" on earth. God wrote His Word in such a way that those who do not want to believe the truth can always find mistaken evidence to prove their ignorance. And the one popular obsession and pastime of even Christians today seems to be that of using scripture which they do not understand to contradict and make a lie of scripture which they can understand, but refuse to believe.

They say that heaven must be a place, because Christ is now preparing a place for His own. "I go to prepare a place for you." But has anyone ever found where the One who spoke those words called that place heaven? Let them search! Many eyes have searched for many centuries to find such. And it has not been found. Let Satan's simpletons show us just one statement even, in the Word, which says that Christ is building a mansion for us away up in heaven. Just one statement is all we need to make it true. But there is no such statement to be found in God's blessed Book.

The darkness of religious tradition has blinded the people of God, causing them to become spiritual illiterates, staggering in spiritual stupidities, totally unprepared for and unmindful of God's eternal purpose in His elect. Let us consider seven verses of scripture from the fourteenth chapter of John. To suit our purpose of emphasizing just what Jesus is REALLY saying, in contrast with what most people THINK He was saying, we shall paraphrase all seven verses in keeping with the popular teaching of the church systems. To hear the average Christian expounding the things of God, it would go something like this:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in hell, believe also in heaven. In heaven there are many mansions: you know I have told you this and described its beautiful golden streets many times. I am going to heaven to prepare a mansion just over the hilltop for you, and if I go and build a mansion for you, I will come again and take you to heaven, that where I will then be you may be also. And you all know well that I am going to heaven, and you know the way to heaven. And Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we didn't know you were going to heaven and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man shall ever get to heaven but by Me. If ye had

known Me, ye should have known My Father also: but when you get to heaven you shall know Him and you shall see Him."

Strange as it may seem to those brainwashed by the errors of Babylon, the subject of the fourteenth chapter of John is NOT HEAVEN! Jesus rarely spoke of heaven in the traditional sense during His teaching ministry. For Jesus came, not as the revelation of a geographical or astral location, but as the revelation of a PERSON. And that Person is the FATHER. It is significant to note that the word "heaven" does not appear even once in this entire chapter, whereas the term "Father" appears TWENTY-THREE TIMES! I stand in amazement and wonder at the incredible blindness of the carnal mind and how it twists the pure Word of God into grotesque forms of spiritual nonsense. Jesus did not say, "In heaven there are many mansions," rather, "In My FATHER'S HOUSE there are many abiding places." Jesus did not say, "I am going to heaven to build you a mansion." He said, "I GO to prepare a PLACE for you." Jesus never said, "I will come again and take you to heaven." What He said was, "I will come again and receive you UNTO MYSELF." Jesus never said, "I am the way to heaven." He said, "I am the way... no man cometh UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." Jesus was not talking about a "place" in "heaven." He was talking about a PLACE IN THE FATHER, and in the FATHER'S HOUSE. "Believe Me that I AM IN THE FATHER, and the FATHER IS IN ME...at that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and YE IN ME, and I in you" (Jn. 14:11,20). Can we not understand by this that the key word in John chapter fourteen is "Father" and not "heaven"!

Let us now proceed to examine the profound truth that Jesus the SON is unfolding to those who are called unto sonship in this significant portion of scripture. As a preface to His teaching He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Christ here identifies Himself with God. Christ is setting forth the great revelation of His sonship to the Father, opening to the minds of these wondering disciples a relationship with God that no man had ever understood before. This revelation of sonship was the truth that was so difficult for the Jews to receive. They reasoned that if Jesus was the Son of God, that then made Him ONE with God, EQUAL with God - GOD!

Their carnal hearts comprehended not that GOD WAS IN CHRIST, that Jesus was in very fact the embodiment and personalization of the Father, and that it pleased the Father that in Him should ALL FULLNESS dwell. It is a blessed and wonderful truth that all that the Father is was deposited in Jesus. The body of Jesus housed the Father-Spirit. When Jesus moved, it was the Father moving in Him. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, HE doeth the works" (Jn. 14: 10). When He spoke it was the Father speaking. When He looked, it was the Father looking through Him. When He stretched forth His hand, it was the Father stretching His hand. This, precious friend of mine, is the glorious "place" where Jesus dwelt, this was His plane of existence, His sphere of life, His state of being. When Jesus walked on earth He was the only body-building of God, but one beautiful day He thrust wide the door into that exalted realm and proclaimed that in His Father's house are MANY MANSIONS and that He would go to the Father and prepare A PLACE FOR US. Since Jesus dwelt in a spiritual realm of relationship with the Father, we know that the place prepared for us is a spiritual rather than a natural sphere. It is a heavenly realm. It is the realm of the Father's indwelling. It is a place in Father's house. It is not only a place prepared FOR us, but a place prepared IN us. What has Christ prepared in you? A place where there is perfect peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation... IN ME ye have PEACE" (Jn. 16:33). What has Christ cultivated in your spirit? A place where there is fullness of joy and

righteousness. What has He enjoined you to have? Longsuffering, meekness, gentleness, temperance. What is Christ preparing in you? Goodness, faith, and divine love. What has Christ brought you into? He has ushered us into dimensions of His wisdom, knowledge, power and glory. What a PLACE He has prepared for us!

Evelyn Isaacs wrote, "There are those who are not of this world. They tread the path no vulture's eye has seen, above this mundane sphere, seated in heavenly places with Christ. God has actually lifted a body of people out of this earthly sphere. How suddenly we were awakened to His exaltation and to the revelation of His person within. The light of God's day broke through the prison cell of flesh and we see our way about through an inner illumination. The traveling has seemed a little rough as we have gone from one world of understanding to another, but now we are becoming satisfied with a new satisfaction that we no longer live in this changing world of confusion and revolution. We are so aware that we have been translated out of these passing kingdoms which totter and fall, into the one Kingdom which is eternally secure and cannot be moved: the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Who could want a more beautiful mansion than that one eternally in the heavens of a redeemed mind and state of being? Man says when he dies he will go to heaven and live in a mansion. Why not die to self now and move into a spiritual mansion here in this present world? We can be caught up in perfection in a quickened body, in a new way of life. Entering the Kingdom of God is coming into God's realm" -end quote.

Having ascertained that the Father's house is a spiritual temple, we can easily understand the meaning of there being many mansions, or rooms, or chambers, as we look at the beautiful type of Solomon's magnificent temple. "And against the wall of the house (temple) he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and the oracle: and he made chambers round about: and the nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad. The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs in to the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. And then he built chambers against all the house five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar" (I Kings 6:5-10).

In turning to Jer. 35:2, we read this: "Speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, INTO ONE OF THE CHAMBERS." In the fourth verse of the same chapter, we notice that different chambers were for persons of different rank. Hanan, a man of God, had his chamber or room "By the chamber of the princes...which was above the chamber of... the keeper of the door." The various chambers or "mansions" corresponded to the ranks of the persons residing in them. Each room of the temple - a type of the Father's house - not only designated the RESIDENCE of each official, but also indicated his POSITION OR OFFICE, whether he was a doorkeeper or prince.

Ah - there are many mansions in God's house, many spiritual levels with various elevations and degrees of prestige and honor, and each of us must find his own. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:41-42). The Father's house contains many positions, many glories. Some saints have tried to seize some coveted position as did the mother of James and John on behalf of her two sons, who came to Jesus, "worshipping, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy Kingdom" (Mat.

20:20-21). Jesus did not deny that these positions existed, but He did say, "to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not mine to give, BUT IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO THEM FOR WHOM IT IS PREPARED OF MY FATHER" (Mat. 20:23).

Some desire the position so much that they appoint themselves and claim to be this or that great one, Elijah, the two witnesses, the seventh angel, or an already manifested son; but there are no self-appointed positions in the Kingdom of God. This is a place prepared for a prepared people, and THE SON DOES THE PREPARING. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that bringeth forth fruit He purgeth (pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (Jn. 15:2). The Spirit of God, through the Word, thus testifies or witnesses to us the rule of our heavenly Father's dealing with His sons - chastisements, pruning, taking away of the dross, and a development of life. Our all-wise heavenly Father is preparing a glorious spiritual temple, in and through which the world of mankind is to have the privilege of coming to reconciliation with Himself. We see in the scriptures the great Architect's ideal in respect to this temple - that the ideal of the whole was represented in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, its chief cornerstone, and "top-stone," "laid in heaven." We can see the better what is required of all those who will be acceptable to God as the "living stones" of that temple - to be builded together with Christ the Head, for an habitation of God through the Spirit. And in the light of His glory we discern our own roughness by nature, our inharmony with the graceful lines of the temple, delineated in its "top-stone." We can readily discern that much chiseling and much polishing are absolutely necessary to us, if we would be fitted and prepared for the place in this temple to which, through the grace of God, we are called and chosen. And hence those who find that they are not receiving the blows from the Lord's hammer and chisel, lack this "witness" which the Spirit of God testifies must come to all living stones of His temple: and which even the grand top-stone did not escape. If the Spirit of God does not mark out for us a NARROW WAY with a certain amount of difficulty and adversity, with dealings and processings - if we are simply permitted to rest without trials and testings, super abounding in health, wealth, and blessing, then we may know of a surety that God is not dealing with us as with stones in His temple, because we lack the "witness" of our acceptance and preparation. But if we have this "witness" of chiselings, polishings, prunings, disciplines, chastisements, let us take them patiently, joyfully, appreciatively, as evidences of our Father's love essential to our attainment to our high-calling, knowing that we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, IF SO BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17). We are His workmanship, and the clay does not say to the Potter, What makest Thou? but yields for the outworking of His will.

We do not vie and compete for positions in Father's house, but we rejoice that there is a room for each one. "In My Father's house are M-A-N-Y M-A-N-S-I-O-N-S." Note its ample room! This spiritual house is the reality of which the earthly temple was intended to be the dim prophecy and shadow. A chamber in the great temple waits for each of us, and the question is, Shall we occupy it, or shall we not? The old rabbis had a tradition which, like a great many of their apparently foolish sayings, covers in picturesque guise a very deep truth. They said that, how ever many the throngs of worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the time of the Feasts, the streets of the city and the courts of the sanctuary were never crowded. And so it is with that great heavenly temple. There is room for all! There are throngs, a great multitude that no man can number, but no crowds. Each finds a place in the ample sweep of the Father's house, like some of the great palaces that barbaric Eastern kings used to build, in whose courts armies might encamp, and the chambers of which were counted by the thousand. And surely in that

ample accommodation, you and I and ALL MANKIND shall find a place where we may lodge for evermore.

When God sent forth His Son, Jesus Christ was the projection of the Father, and everything we see revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ is to make known to us the Father, that we might truly come to know Him, and be made partakers of His wonderful nature, character and purpose. Furthermore, the Son must reign - and reign He shall, until everything is subdued, and then "He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father... that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:24,28). And God shall not be ALL IN ALL until everything and everyone has been brought back to the Father. And it is IN HIM that we shall find our dwelling place - the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty, our heavenly Father!

So, my dear friends, if you are looking for a mansion over the hilltop or a cabin in the corner of gloryland you are going to be disappointed. Christ has prepared a place for us alright - a place IN HIM - which is far more glorious and exciting than some tangible, carnal possession. He has raised us up to sit with Him, and in Him, in the higher than all heavens. The place He has been preparing for each one of us is not only a world to come, or a heaven somewhere, but a position, a place of eminence, a place of glory IN HIM – there to reveal all the magnificence of the INDWELLING FATHER to all the endlessness of the unbounded heavens!

# *Chapter 45*

## *Coming To Receive Us Unto Himself*

### *(continued)*

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:1-3).

This is one of the most profound revelations Christ ever shared with His disciples. He was, with words glorious indeed and wonderful beyond the comprehension of the natural mind, showing His disciples a new realm of existence, a new sphere of life, a new dimension of reality they had not touched. He introduced the reality of the Father realm. In essence, Jesus told them, "I am leaving you to prepare a place for you in another realm. I am going to bring you into that new realm - My resurrected, ascended realm. You are going to be united with Me in the power and glory of My Father."

Did these disciples understand? Not any more than we have understood with our natural minds. Consider the incredible blindness of these men who had walked with Jesus and listened for three years to His gracious words of eternal life. God help us to see what the disciples did not! Christ opened up the way for us into a supernatural realm. He ascended up far above all heavens, back into the position of Fatherhood, from whence He poured out of Himself that flow of the Spirit which we need, and whereby we are able to cry, "Abba, Father." He yearns to seat every believer with Him in this heavenly place. He meant it when He said, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." He meant He would bring us to Himself - united with Him in His glory - right now while upon earth. If you "abide" in Him you must be where He is! He is outside of all that of this earth. He is outside of all that is fleshly. He is outside of all that is natural. He is outside of all that is visible. He is outside of all that is temporal. He is outside of all that is evil. He abides in the realm of Spirit. He dwells in the realm of holiness. He lives in the realm of the unlimited. **AND ONLY THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN TAKE US TO WHERE HE IS!**

The disciples heard Jesus' promise, "...that where I am, there ye may be also." But like multitudes today, they could understand it only in carnal, physical, material and geographical terms. "He will come someday, rapture me, and take me to His mansion in heaven," they were doubtless thinking. To them, it was all physical, and it was a future blessing. But Christ meant it to be an immediate reality. He wanted to return in mighty spirit power and quicken them in spirit and raise them up and make them sit together with Him in the heavenly places! How can we miss this intention? How clear can He make it? "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

As we pointed out in our last article, God nowhere in the Bible holds up "heaven" as a hope for the future; but He does promise us "THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST" (II Thes. 2:14). And all who are hoping for a mansion in heaven are, in their

blindness, totally ignoring the jewels of great price and toying instead with an invention of ignorance, which can bring but disappointment and shame and loss at the end of the road. They say that heaven must be a place, because Christ is now preparing a place for His own. "I go to prepare a place for you." But has anyone ever found where the One who spoke those words called that place heaven? Let them search! Many eyes have searched for many centuries to find such. And it has not been found! Let Babylon's simpletons show us just one statement even, in the Word, which says that Christ is building a mansion for us away up in heaven. Just one statement is all we need to make it true. But there is no such statement to be found in God's blessed Book. The darkness of religious tradition has blinded the people of God, causing them to become spiritual illiterates, staggering in spiritual stupidities, totally unprepared for and unmindful of God's eternal purpose in His elect.

It is wondrously true that Jesus promised His disciples to go away and prepare a place for them. And not only so, but that He would COME AGAIN, and receive them to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also. Nothing short of this would satisfy His heart; He delights to do everything for them. Blessed Lord Jesus! But He does not say, as the preachers love to proclaim, that He would come again and take them to heaven but TO HIMSELF. "I will come again and receive you UNTO M-Y-S-E-L-F." It is not the place - but the PERSON, His own blessed, glorious Person that He keeps before His disciples. Hence, the scriptures nowhere speak of the believer soaring away to some far-off heaven somewhere, but always to be WITH CHRIST IN HIS GLORY. Nothing short of this can fulfill the gracious promise of our Lord, or satisfy the purpose of His heart. He would return and receive them unto Himself, and place them in Him in the heavenly Kingdom of God.

Well did George Warnock write, "In the Lord's discourse with the Jews at the Feast we have a glorious promise of that hidden life. He told them, 'Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye can not come' (Jn. 7:34). Where He was, the world could not come; but in this very hidden place the disciples WOULD COME. Did Jesus not promise the disciples concerning the coming of the Spirit, '...Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you' (Jn. 14:17). They knew that the Lord was referring to that hidden life, and the manifestation of Christ within them, for they said, 'Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?' (vs. 22). They were beginning to see and understand that there was to be a real manifestation of Christ in them, where they would be in vital union with the Father and the Son, a place which the world could not invade. And so this hidden place could not be found by the Jews; whereas His beloved disciples would enter into it. 'WHERE I AM, thither ye cannot come,' He said to the Jews. But to the disciples, 'I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that WHERE I AM, there ye may be also' (Jn. 14:3). Where is it? Jesus said, 'WHERE I AM.' That is sufficient. It is a place in the Spirit which no man can invade. A hidden place for those who are in the world, but not of it, in the very sanctuary of the Spirit of God! 'For ye are dead, and your life is HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.' There shall the sons of God be hidden as they work the works of Christ in the midst of a world of wrath and judgment. And then, in God's good time, they shall be MANIFESTED OPENLY. 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with Him in glory' (Col. 3:4)". -end quote.

To what extent those early disciples were able to grasp such mighty truths we may not surely know, but we do know that for us who live at this end of the age these promises

are very wonderful, very precious, and very real indeed. There is something very precious about the word "receive" which the Lord chose to indicate the manner in which He would gather His own to Himself. The Greek word is PARALAMBANO, and according to the Analytical Greek Lexicon means "to take to one's side." And our Lord is just now doing this very thing, for by the moving of His Spirit in these last days He has been gathering His own and placing them by His side. He has been bringing them very near to Himself, into very close communion and vital union with Himself. He has spread a rich feast of truth, has girded Himself and has come forth to serve them. What a glorious thought this is! Our departure from the sects and ways of men has not been to join another sect, as some have supposed, but, rather, that we might be placed by the side of our Lord. What a fellowship! What a place the Son enjoyed! And, astounding grace, the Lord says, "Where I am, there ye may be also!" Yes, even now we are the objects of the Father's love because we are "in the Son." And when we have fully reached the place prepared for us and are sat down to share in the throne of the Son, we, too, shall enjoy that blessed oneness, union, harmony, and love which the Father bears toward the Son. What a blessed assurance and glorious prospect are ours!

A dear friend in California shared the following experience which beautifully expresses the truth of which I now speak. "Several months ago, as I walked about performing my daily tasks - as I lay upon my bed at night - in times of prayer and meditation before the Lord - or caught up in feverish activity - there began to break upon me the vision of a heavenly man. There in my mind's eye, I was beholding with unbelievable realness, the form of a man - gigantic in size - silhouetted against the dark heavenly background. The sky around him was extremely dark, and it was as though I could see through him, for the dark sky could also be seen behind him. But there, etched against the sky, outlined with a brilliant light, was that form, daily impressed upon me, constantly with me, and I began to cry out with much depth of feeling, 'Oh, God. What is it?' Somehow, I was made to know that in some measure I was beholding the resurrected Christ! I am certain that it was only a glimpse of that which is later to be revealed to all those of us who wait for His appearing, but it was a glimpse that lifted my sights to look beyond that which we see in the immediate earth-realm. As that vision was daily presented to me, I began to know within the very depths of my being that that was a resurrection body - and that it was, in fact, the body of Christ which arose from the grave in a glorious victory over death. More than that, I was made to know by the Spirit that somehow, somehow, in some mysterious manner, that it is THAT BODY - that very same body that arose from the grave and ascended to the Father - that we are being fitted into!

"How earthy we have been, for we have looked at the divided, carnal, worldly, ununified camp of believers on the earth and have said, 'Behold, the body of Christ.' Never have I been more convinced of anything than this: that verily we are the body of Christ in that we are the materials that will be fitted into that glorious body! But THAT MAN - that GLORIFIED MAN in the heavenlies - is the body of Christ, and it is as we are fitted into that Man that it can truly be said, 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' 'Let not your heart be troubled,' Jesus said, 'ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house (BODY) are many mansions (MEMBERS). If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and RECEIVE YOU...' WHERE???' 'UNTO MYSELF!'

"That place He has gone to prepare is the place in HIMSELF - in that glorified, resurrected body. Herein lies a great mystery! The writer of Hebrews has said, '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 WHICH IS H-I-S FLESH... let us draw near with a true heart...' (Heb. 10:19-22). How we have thought to enter in through the rent veil of OUR FLESH - but the Holy Spirit tells us plainly that we enter through the veil of H-I-S F-L-E-S-H.

"Thomas Newberry, in his book SOLOMON'S TEMPLE AND ITS TEACHING, points out that in Solomon's temple, which is a type of the New Creation Man, 'there was a two-leaved olivewood, gold-covered door as well as a veil.' Speaking of this door, he said, 'The doors were divided in the center with two folding leaves reminding us of the rent veil, Christ crucified... The one of oil tree, type of Christ risen in His spiritual body.' He further points out that in the temple of Ezekiel, which is another figure of the house of many mansions, the many-membered body of Christ, there was a turning door 'divided in the center, making manifest the way into the Holiest.' The double covering of Solomon's temple, with both the veil and the door guarding the way into the Holiest, speaks to my own heart of a two-fold operation. In the veil, I see the rending of human flesh, both His and ours, in the process of comminuting - and then the entering through the door of HIS FLESH, which is glorified flesh. In order to be placed in our positions in the glorified body of Christ, it is necessary that we pass through the veil of HIS FLESH and have it close behind us or upon us. Thus we are told, 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the (earthly) flesh' (Rom. 13:14). As we enter into THAT FLESH we are immediately CLOTHED UPON with that flesh, and we are IMMERSED in it. Hallelujah! All flesh is NOT the same flesh!" -end quote.

Yes, indeed, Christ is preparing a place for us. And I have news for you, my friend, it doesn't take Jesus 2,000 years to build a mansion! He is building something IN US, and He is building us IN HIM, "that where I AM, there ye may be also." He doesn't say, "where I've been," or "where I'm going," but "where I AM." Now let's see where Jesus was. In the same fourteenth chapter of John, vs. 10 and 11, Jesus says, "Believest thou not that I am IN THE FATHER, and the Father IN ME? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I AM IN THE FATHER, and the FATHER IN ME: or else believe Me for the very works sake."

Where was Jesus? IN THE FATHER! Yet He says in verse 12, "I go to the Father." He was already in the Father and was going to the Father. And it was in His "going to the Father" that He would prepare a place for us. Can we not see by this that the "place" He is preparing for us is IN THE FATHER, "that where I AM, ye may be also." Where was Jesus? In the Father! And - "In that day ye shall know that I AM IN MY FATHER, and YE IN ME, and I IN YOU" (Jn. 14:20). Ah, the place is in Him, a place of communion and relationship and union with God, a place in the Holiest of all, and in the place are many places, for the body of Christ in its corporateness comprises the fullness of Him. The word "place" is so significant. It's where you leave YOUR PLACE and enter into HIS PLACE! There is a place - I have seen it as the Spirit of revelation and understanding has flooded my mind - a place that is overwhelming and almost intimidating - but there is a place where the body of Christ will be made just like Him, to live and do in the fullness of His power and glory and incorruptibleness.

I proclaim to you by the Word of the Lord that God's people are going to be invested with such a nature of holiness and righteousness, with such love and compassion, with such power and authority that the very nations themselves will have to bow in submission. Never did any king, president, prime minister or dictator speak as the sons of God shall

speak. For they shall be literally clothed upon with His divine majesty and authority, and they shall be the living Oracle of God to the Church as well as to the nations. They shall do God's will as God Himself shall direct, and no earthly power will have any power against them. This is the government of God for the age and the ages to come. "Place" means position, office, or rank. Our "place" or "position" in the government of God will depend upon the degree of our relationship and the intensity of our union with the Father. Christ Jesus has FIRST PLACE, for He is "King of kings and Lord of Lords," and "God... hath put ALL things under HIS feet, and gave HIM to be the HEAD over ALL THINGS to the Church, which is His body, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things HE might have the preeminence." But IN HIM is OUR PLACE that He has prepared for us, not only a world to come, or a heaven somewhere, or a mansion in the sky; but a position, a place of eminence, a place of glory IN HIM - there to reveal all the magnificence of the INDWELLING FATHER to all the endlessness of the unbounded heavens!

## **UNTO THE FATHER**

Many years ago Bill Britton wrote, "The Father has a house in heaven, a realm of life, a habitation and means of expression. For heaven is perfect, sinless, and eternal. And this is the only kind of habitation that God could have. But no one had ever built such a house on the earth realm, in the physical world - until Jesus came. Jesus built the Father a house to live in, a life so sinless, so perfect, so full of wisdom and grace that even God could feel at home in it. Everyone has certain requirements for any house they might live in. If you said to me that you had built a house for me, and that it was free and all I had to do was to move in, I would certainly go take a look at it. But if it was just an oversize dog house, no doors, no windows, just one room with straw on the floor, and a hog trough out front to eat out of, I would tell you very quickly that I would not feel at home in such a place. I am not a dog; I like a kitchen in my house, a rug on the floor, a bed in the bedroom, and a few other amenities of life. Then I would feel more at home in the house. God cannot feel at home in a house full of gossip, lust, fears, profanity, and all the other expressions of the carnal nature. The house Jesus built had none of that kind of material in it. His life was a place where God could feel at home!" -end quote.

The Father's house is in us, and our house is in Him. The Son said, "I am the way ... no man cometh UNTO THE FATHER but by Me." How many Christians stop at the Way and fail to go on to the goal which is union with the Father. The Lord said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." But why does He draw us unto Himself? So that He can bring us to God! Many never get past the Way, they come to Christ and that is as far as they go, thinking they have arrived at the place prepared for them. Peter by inspiration declared, "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD" (I Pet. 3:18). The Lord Himself said, "I am the way to the Father." How often we quote scriptures realizing not what they say! I have heard this scripture quoted hundreds of times, and I doubt if one person out of a thousand understood what it said. Listen to what we read in Hebrews about the better hope of the New Testament "by which WE DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD" (Heb. 7:19). Hear what we read in the same chapter, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that COME UNTO GOD by Him" (Heb. 7:25). I have heard preachers by the dozens say how Christ is able to save to the uttermost, when exhorting people to come to Christ, never telling, and not realizing, that the uttermost is only accomplished when we have experientially come unto the Father through the Son. The goal is union, not just with the Son, but being united with the Father in His Fatherhood, so that He can write the name of Yahweh on our foreheads. After all, the life Jesus came to bring us is in knowing the Father, for "THIS is

life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3). It is not enough to come to the Son and know Him, we must also be brought to the Father by the Son and know the Father. This is LIFE. The vast multitude of believers in the church systems who have come to Christ, but have never gone on to know the Father, have never discovered that blessed place that Christ has prepared for His own, neither will they find it in that heaven out beyond the stars where they imagine it exists.

You know there is a great difference between the way to a house and the house itself. I may be traveling through the most beautiful scenery, on a lovely, pleasant day, with delightful company, and enjoying every step of the way, and yet I am not content to stay there always. I have gone into that way to bring me to the end, the object of my journey. Christ is THE WAY. What is the end of the Way? The end is God - the Father. Christ wants to bring us to God. You generally find Christians so occupied with Christ that they never get time for God. You ask me, Is there any difference between going to Christ and going to God? A very great difference! In Christ I have the gracious and merciful side of God's character. But that is not the only side of the divine character I need to know. In Christ I have the condescension of God coming near to me, but the object of that condescension is to bring me to the place where I can come unto Him - to be LIKE THE FATHER in every way. It means the knowing and sharing of His Fatherhood, no longer merely a recipient of grace, but a begetter, a source, to have life in ourselves as the Father has life in Himself. You can never be all that God has purposed until you learn the lesson that Christ is going to win your heart that He may bring you to God, yea, to Godhood. Just think, Christ was not, in Himself, self-sufficient when He was on earth. He lived every day with the thought within Him: There is One greater than I, and My blessedness is to live in dependence upon Him, with a will given up to His will and in a trust that counts upon His working. But now, having ascended up where He was before, unto the Father, into His Fatherhood, upon the throne of universal dominion, upholding all and filling all with Himself, He IS THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY and the source of all. He is no longer the blessed, He is the Blessor. He is no longer just the anointed, He is the Anointer. He is no longer the gift, He is the Giver. And Christ suffered, that He might BRING US TO GOD. What did He suffer? Nothing was too great. He endured all, that He might bring us to God. Are you willing, my brother, my sister, to take time and trouble that you may be brought into union with God? If that has become the object of our desires we will understand the work of Christ far better, and our understanding and knowledge of that work will bring far more abundant fruit.

If I want to be brought nigh to a person I want to know who that person is. If he is a king or a president or a prime minister I approach him in a different way from what I approach a store clerk. Before I married my wife I dated her for a number of months, followed by a twelve month engagement, because I wanted to get to know the girl I was marrying. Before I am brought to the Father I must know who the Father is, and this is what sonship is all about. As I bow before Him I bow before His nature, His will, His word, and His ways. I must say, "He is the Almighty One, the all Holy One; He is Spirit, He is Life, He is Light; He is a consuming fire; He is the All Loving One, and He wants to communicate Himself to me and through me." My soul must bow in lowly stillness and in holy brokenness and in unwavering faith in the absolute knowledge that God is here. In all that He is He wants to impart Himself wholly to me. God is near. And Jesus would bring me to God.

In all spiritual development Christ must be the model. He came into the world as the divine pattern of man's journey into God. Man was to follow His footsteps from the depths of degradation to the heights of glory. As we examine this Forerunner, however, we discover something quite significant. Everywhere we find that Jesus is pointing back to the Father who is the source of all and from whom He Himself came. "My Father is greater than I," He said. Christ came to declare the Father, to reveal the Father, and to lead the inhabitants of earth back to the Kingdom of the Father from which they had become lost. Christ Himself would return to that higher realm, and He would mark out the path before us so that we could return with Him. "I am the way," He proclaimed, "I am the path, the roadmap, the pattern that leads back to the Father."

The following words of inspiration and truth are taken from an article written by Lynn C. Bauman in Sanaa, Yemen, in the year 1975. "All the time that Christ walked among us His deepest desire was to return to His Father, but not alone. He had come to take us with Him and it was this truth which was the core of His message. He spoke of it often, but seldom fully, because we were not yet ready to receive this great revelation. Indeed it was the supreme mystery, the secret locked up in all that had been promised and which was now coming into reality in Jesus Christ. Only He knew its full implications and yet was forced to speak of it mainly in parables. Since His day, however, through the apostles, prophets, saints, and teachers the Spirit has continued to reveal the depth of the message and purpose of Christ, and it is this: At the heart of Reality, at the center of all that is, exists the unmeasured, unimagined, and unutterable Presence of the Father. He is the temple at the center of being, the divine inner sanctum of existence, the still point of the turning world. From Him all things have their source and reality. From Him all things proceed and to Him all things return. There is nothing greater, no wisdom higher, no silence deeper, no light more blinding, no creativity more profound. He is the heart of all, and in Him dwells the Christ who walked among us.

"This (union with the Father) is a solemn and wonderful reality which we are called to experience in Christ. It is not mere words. It is the heart of Christian experience itself. Most of our lives, ministries, and teaching today is devoted to the understanding of how to come to Christ. This is well and good, but there is more. Today, if we will hear His voice, Christ is Himself calling us to grow beyond that stage; to unite with Him so that together we may journey into the Father. He is all the time preparing and readying us so that He can take us with Him into the mystery and bounty of that unfathomable Presence. He desires to save us, to transform us, and to unveil our minds and thus bring us to the point where we can enter into His own spiritual experience with the Father. We are to grow up into Him in all things, to pass beyond all bounds and limitations into fullness, and there to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19)" -end quote.

There is nothing dearer to the heart of God than sonship, for sonship leads to the Father and the fullness of God. Our Father has set in motion a work greater than His original creation, for it is the NEW CREATION, man in the image of God. He is "bringing many sons to glory" - the glory of the Father realm - Fatherhood. The way may be rugged and tedious; but its end is glory. And it is the way along which our Father is bringing us; for, since we have received the Son, we have the right to call ourselves sons of God (Jn. 1:12). And there are many of us. Many SONS, though only one SON. We do not go solitarily along the narrow way. We are but part of a vast multitude known only to the Father. The glory of which we have already spoken, and into which Jesus has entered, is not for Him alone, but for us also. "Many sons" are to be His joint-heirs; reigning with Him

on His throne, sharing His unsearchable riches and His unbounded glory, made one in the Father.

There are many across the land today who call themselves "the manifested sons of God" and make much of their exalted position in the Kingdom. Of course we must take their word for it, for in many I fail to detect either the holiness of character or the awesome power and authority that attends such a high calling. How sickening it is to hear men who have nothing boasting that they possess all things! Sons do not become sons merely by asserting that they are sons. A great evil among those who would be sons today is that they proclaim their own sonship. How often are they merely self-styled and self-appointed sons! The model Son did not proclaim His own sonship. "If I bear witness of Myself," He said, "My witness is not true. The Father Himself, which hath sent Me, HE HATH BORNE WITNESS OF ME" (Jn. 5:31,37).

The apostle Peter tells us in words freighted with wonder how the disciples were convinced of Christ's sonship. "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 HONOUR AND GLORY, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, 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). When a person does actually come to the manifestation of sonship he will never need to declare his sonship, for it is the Father who both sends and announces the sons. There is no need for a manifested son to stand up and tell the people that he is a son of God, or that he is reigning with Christ, or that he will never die, or that he is infallible, or that he is in some mystical way reconciling creation, for the Father Himself will declare him, if indeed he is a son of God; and from that blessed moment forward his word will be with such authority and his actions will speak with such power that there will be no need for him to utter a word concerning himself. Those who gather about will cry, "Truly, this is a son of God!"

What this first Son, Jesus, spoke came to pass. It was impossible for Him to speak a falsehood or to say anything that would not come to pass. He made it very plain that what He was saying to the people was not His own word. But whatever He did speak to them, they could know and understand that it was the word of the Father - THE SOURCE. It was the Father speaking through the Son. Jesus made it plain that He did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father. He did not speak of Himself or out of His own desire or will. It was entirely the will and word of the Father. THEREFORE THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY THAT IT COULD BE WRONG, and therefore the winds and the waves, the diseases and the devils, the elements and all things OBEYED HIS COMMANDS.

Jesus spoke of other sons who would stand in the same position before the world and before the Father in which He Himself stood. They would enjoy the same privileges He enjoyed, but they would also share the same responsibility that He bore from the Father. They would speak the same words of authority and do the same works and show forth their glory in the times when His body would grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. When Jesus said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," this most emphatically was not a reference by Jesus to the so-called second coming or to some golden-streeted city in the sky. Jesus is here telling the apostles, and telling us through them, that they, and we, will stand before God in exactly the same position in

which He Himself stood and stands. Jesus most definitely spake not of going back to heaven, getting a construction crew together and proceeding to build a lot of mansions.

Jesus went further than this. The first begotten Son said He would send the other sons into the world just as the Father had sent Him. We find this in two places (Jn. 20:21 & Jn. 17:18) where Jesus was telling the Father of this, for He said to the Father, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." The same Father or same INFALLIBLE SOURCE; the same INFALLIBLE WORD from the same INFALLIBLE SOURCE to be in the sons as was in the Son. "And in that day YE SHALL ASK ME NOTHING. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever Ye shall ask the FATHER in My name (nature, identity, authority), HE will give it you. At that day ye shall ask in My name: AND I SAY NOT UNTO YOU, THAT I WILL PRAY THE FATHER FOR YOU: FOR THE FATHER HIMSELF LOVETH YOU, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (Jn. 16:23, 27-28). This first Son told the disciples there would come a time when they would ASK HIM NOTHING, and HE WOULD NOT EVEN PRAY FOR THEM! But they were to ask THE FATHER HIMSELF in His name, or in His honor, authority and character. There would come a time when other sons would stand before the Father in precisely the same relationship, the same honor, the same authority and the same character in which He stood. The Father would do whatever these sons asked of Him because the Father loved them in the same way and degree that He loved the firstborn Son.

God has revealed Himself to us in a three-fold manifestation as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and He brings us into relationship with Himself in each of these three manifestations. All Christians have entered into a relationship with God as Son, experiencing Him as SAVIOUR in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be SAVED" (Jn. 10:9). In this "Saviour-saved" relationship we come to know Him in the joy of sins forgiven, and in the blessed reality of justification before God. Jesus as Saviour is the door, the gate of entrance into the Kingdom of God. As we go on in God we experience Him as the Holy Spirit - the ANOINTING, the presence and power of God working in and manifesting through our lives. But ultimately we must grow up to truly know and experience Him as OUR FATHER.

There is a special relationship with OUR FATHER which Jesus gave emphasis to continually, as when He taught them to pray, "Our FATHER, which art in heaven." A recognition, a conscious awareness, when we pray, that it is to OUR FATHER. It is a significant fact that you can tell the difference between a babe in Christ and a SON by their terminology. The babe knows JESUS THE SAVIOUR and is always talking about Jesus, praying to Jesus, praising Jesus, calling on Jesus, Jesus ... Jesus ... Jesus! This is both normal and scriptural; however, as one grows up in Christ He is led to the Father and receives a revelation of the FATHER. When a baby is born it knows nothing of its Father. This understanding comes through growth and development, and becomes more meaningful and precious as time goes on. "And because ye are SONS, God hath sent forth the SPIRIT OF HIS SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6). The cry of a spiritual babe is - JESUS! The cry of a SON is - FATHER! Why? Because our sonship is an extension of CHRIST'S SONSHIP, the spirit of sonship within us is the Spirit of THE SON. The NEW MAN within IS CHRIST. The Spirit of the Son, Christ within does not cry, "Jesus!", because it IS the Spirit of Jesus. This Spirit causes us to cry, not Jesus, but FATHER! A simple truth is this: Is there a spirit within you that cries

"FATHER!" If so, then know, beloved, that you are beginning to enter into your sonship to God!

Let us suppose that a man by the name of John Smith has a son named Mike. When Mike addresses his father he doesn't call him John Smith! Mike doesn't say, "John Smith, may I have a dollar?" or, "John Smith, I love you!" Rather, he will say, "Father - or Daddy, may I have a dollar?" or, "Daddy, I love you!" Only persons who have NO SONSHIP RELATIONSHIP with John Smith will address him as "John Smith" or "Mr. Smith" or simply "John." A son does not address his father by name, but by relationship. A son of God does not pray to an impersonal "God," nor to the Old Testament "Yahweh," nor to the New Testament "Jesus." "And BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, FATHER!" (Gal. 4:6). To all those blessed ones apprehended of God to sonship there is a recognition, a conscious awareness, when we pray, or praise, or worship, that it is to our FATHER...

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the SONS of God" (Rom. 8:14). First we note this word "sons" is from the Greek word HUIOS meaning "Mature sons," a fully developed one, strong to bear the responsibility and position to which he is appointed. There are different words used in the Greek text which speak of the whole range of growth and development from a babe, new born, on through the young lad, till one arrives at maturity. But there is a GROWING UP into Christ, who is the Head, so that "when I become a man, I put away childish things." And God is indeed bringing forth SONS, mature ones, developed and disciplined, conformed to His image, which shall also give expression to HIS NATURE.

How far the average Christian falls short of this in his thinking! The beautiful ANALOGY of our sonship is accepted by everyone. But all this means to the ordinary Christian is that he believes that since he has been saved he is now a "child" of God and doesn't have to go to hell when he dies. With no comprehension of the true implications of sonship to God he just conjures up the nice spiritual feeling of thinking of himself "AS IF" he were literally a "child" of God. Most folk think of being a child of God as sort of an "honorary" relationship conferred upon them by an indulgent God who accepts them as "little adopted human children" to whom He plans to give as their reward for serving Him a beautiful heavenly park - a celestial playground - called HEAVEN. This heaven is for their recreation and enjoyment for eternity... loafing, playing, visiting, running, flying, shouting, rejoicing, playing harps, waving palm branches, and doing whatever sinless thing their spiritually childish hearts may desire.

I once heard the story of a poor and illiterate widow woman who lived far out in the country. She had only one son who was grown and had gone away to a far away city. There her son went into business and made good. Back home, this poor woman barely eked out a subsistence, planting a meager garden and taking in washing from her neighbors, scrubbing the clothes by hand on an old rub-board. The house she lived in continued to deteriorate; the windows broken, roof leaking, steps falling down. Her clothes were faded and patched, her diet improper and monotonous. Each month the poor woman received an envelop in the mail from her son. These envelopes always contained pretty little pieces of colored paper. Being unable to read and understand what these little pieces of paper said she always pasted them up on the wall of her bedroom to remind her of her son. After some years she died, and when the neighbors came in to her house at that time they discovered this large number of MONEY ORDERS made out to

her by her son - all glued neatly to her bedroom wall! If only she had KNOWN WHAT WAS HERS she would have lacked nothing through all those years!

How we need to know what is ours as the sons of God! In Romans, chapter eight, Paul says, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely GIVE US A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S? The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER" (Rom. 8:32, 16-17).

You see, beloved, our Father does not tease us by dangling before us high things unto which we have no hope of attaining. For many thousands of years the English Channel has lain between England and France, stretching out some 350 miles long and from 22 to 30 miles wide. During those long millenniums there was NO MAN that was ever able to swim across that channel. However, in 1875 a man by the name of Matthew Webb successfully swam across the Channel. Because ONE MAN had actually succeeded, many others were inspired and challenged to try. Many have trained themselves and made the attempt. And some have succeeded! The first woman who swam across was an American girl, Gertrude Ederle, in 1926. Now let us suppose that, unbeknown to anyone, Matthew Webb had a rope stretched across the Channel and rather than swimming he had pulled himself across. The whole affair then would have been a farce and a fraud and no matter how hard others tried possibly no one would have ever made it. If Matthew Webb would have had an unknown ADVANTAGE over everyone else, it could have meant that the Channel was really unconquerable to the swimming man.

And likewise, let every reader of these lines understand that if JESUS HAD SOME ADVANTAGE OVER US in His walk in sonship to God, then this whole matter of sonship and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is a FARCE and a FRAUD! If Jesus had an unknown and unfair advantage over us, then there is really no point in our trying to attain to the measure of the stature of HIS FULLNESS - for we shall only fail miserably. But what saith the scriptures? "Inasmuch then as we have a great High Priest who has already ascended and passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession... for we do not have a High Priest who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a fellow feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. Let US then FEARLESSLY and CONFIDENTLY and BOLDLY draw near to the throne of grace... that WE may find grace to help in good time for every need - appropriate help and well-timed help, coming when we need it" (Heb. 4:14-16, Amplified). And again, "Since therefore, these His children share in flesh and blood - that is, in the physical nature of human beings - HE HIMSELF in a similar manner PARTOOK OF THE SAME NATURE, that by going through death He might bring to naught and make of no effect him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and also that He might deliver and COMPLETELY SET FREE all those who through the haunting fear of death were held in bondage throughout the whole course of their lives ... wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 2:14-15; 3:1, Amplified). CONSIDER - Jesus Christ! LOOKING - unto Him! HE is the Apostle of our profession. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. When we consider Him we see that HE, being a man, OVERCAME and has ENTERED IN to the fullness of God. As we consider HIM faith is evoked within us to BELIEVE that we can also attain unto that high realm. ONE has successfully made it

across into that blessed place in God! ONE has ENTERED IN! And He has gone to prepare a place for us, that where HE IS, there we may be also.

The KEY to our entrance is just this: "LOOKING UNTO JESUS the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). A brother I used to hear teach when I was but a boy told of this experience: "When I first learned to plow, I got on the seat of the tractor, pulled the lever that dropped the plow into the ground, and started across the center of the field. After I had gone a few feet, I turned around to look at the furrow and was entranced by the rushing flow of topsoil along the plowshare - rich and black, the soil turned over. Then I turned back to look where I was going. When I had turned around the first time, I had unconsciously carried the wheel of the tractor with my movement and gotten away from the straight line. I pulled the tractor back into line and looked back at the furrow once more. Behind me, wavering across the field, the undulating line of my furrow revealed, as though etched in the earth, the wandering vision that I had had. I soon learned that there was only one way to plow a straight furrow. When you are about to accelerate the tractor and pull the lever that sinks the plow into the ground, you must sight across the field at a distant point and keep the nose of the tractor squarely on the sighting point. You must not turn around to see how the furrow is coming; if you do, give only a hasty glance to see that all is well. Make certain that the fixed point is straight ahead, and bring the eye back to it. Now I can plow across a field and leave a furrow black and straight a quarter of a mile long; because I have learned that when the guide furrow is being laid in the field, the plowman must keep his eye on a fixed point, be it a tree, a barn, a distant hill, or some other point. Woe unto the man who plows his furrow looking aside, or looking behind, or looking at a crow that may fly across his line of vision."

Looking unto JESUS! There is the "fixed point" PAR EXCELLENCE! Never allow your vision, precious child of God, to be diverted to other people, to ministries, gifts, movements, problems, circumstances, your own fleshly weaknesses, or your past blunders and failures. One and all are but crows flying across your line of vision. Faith to enter into God's fullness will never be ministered to you by Brother Eby or by any other ministry or man! We can help, strengthen, and encourage you along the way, but we are not the "fixed point" of your vision because WE OURSELVES are STILL LOOKING UNTO JESUS to bring US in! I do not hesitate to tell you that I have not arrived - should you look unto me you will inevitably see some lack, you will discover some missing of the mark, you will find something LESS THAN THE FINISHED PRODUCT. And what you see will divert your vision from the goal that is found only in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Kingdom-building" preachers will not like these statements; they love to proclaim that the "five-fold ministry" will bring God's people unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and set themselves up as lords over God's heritage, drawing men unto themselves to have a following; but what I say is the truth, nonetheless.

OUR FAITH to enter in is HIS FAITH which we imbibe as we BEHOLD HIM and HIM ALONE. HE it is who said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go I will come again, and receive you UNTO MYSELF, that where I am, there ye may be also." The revelation of Jesus Christ will evoke fullness of faith in the hearts of God's elect. This revelation comes only by steadfastly fixing our gaze upon the proper fixed point - Christ Jesus the Lord. This pathway to His likeness is perhaps nowhere more beautifully set forth than in the graphic words of the inspired apostle in II Cor. 3:18, "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." BEHOLDING ... we are CHANGED!

What a privilege to walk with God, how we rejoice in this hour; the change is on and we are being changed, praise His name!

# Chapter 46

## *Coming To, With, And In His Saints*

Everybody is prophesying the soon coming of the Lord, and they have been doing so for hundreds of years. He didn't come. Not in the way they thought He was going to come. Two millenniums ago the Jews had it all figured out that the Messiah would come as a great military general to crush their enemies and as a king in regal splendor to sit upon the throne in old Jerusalem; but He came as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. He came healing, teaching and preaching on the sun kissed hills of Galilee. He came a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and a Saviour dying ignominiously between two thieves on Golgotha's hill.

According to the popular teachings of our day, Christ will, at any moment now, come in a secret rapture "FOR His saints," take them to heaven for seven years, and then come back again "WITH the saints." The argument is, of course, that since He will come "with" His people (Zech. 14:5; Jude 14; I Thes. 3:12-13), He will have to come earlier "for" the saints. Repeatedly we hear statements like this: "Jesus is coming FOR a church without spot or wrinkle," or "Soon Jesus will return FOR His Church, to take it out of the world," or "The Lord comes in the rapture FOR His saints; after the Tribulation period, He comes with His saints." I just finished reading an article by a well-known personality (now deceased) on the second coming of Christ. In commenting on II Thes. 4:16-17 she says, "When Christ comes in this first stage, this great catching away, He will not touch the earth, He will come into our atmosphere, and the believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air... then comes stage two: the final phase of the Second Coming of Christ. This is the revelation - when Jesus Christ comes back to earth to set up His kingdom."

Since so many Christians are steadfastly looking for Jesus to come FOR the Church, to whisk it away up to heaven somewhere, to sing and shout and eat for seven years, while the rest of mankind are suffering indescribable agonies, we need to take a closer look at the Word and see if ANYWHERE in the Bible we can find this expression "coming FOR the saints." This may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but the Bible NOWHERE speaks of Jesus coming "FOR the saints." Let those who continually use this term show us where it appears in the pages of God's inspired Book. Let them search! It cannot be found! Never! Nowhere! Not even once! Surely then, a teaching which constantly employs an expression that is foreign to the Word of God should be subjected to close examination. I can hear some dear saint saying, "Oh, but the Bible does say that Jesus is coming FOR a Church without spot or wrinkle." No it doesn't! What it says is that Jesus 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" (Eph. 5:26-27). In order to "present the Church to Himself" in a holy and blameless condition doesn't necessitate "taking" it anywhere!

We have all been guilty sometime in our lives of thinking we were quoting scripture, when actually we were merely repeating the sayings of men. Often through the years I have heard people say, "The Good Book says that God helps those who help themselves." But that quotation isn't found in Holy Writ. What about this one: "God works in mysterious

ways, His wonders to perform." It's quite pretty, but it isn't in the Book either. "God will cast your sins into the sea of forgetfulness," people quote. Poetic, but it's not a quotation of scripture. Ever hear this oldie: "Every tub must sit on its own bottom." I have no idea where that saying originated, but it certainly didn't come out of the Bible. And then the most famous MISQUOTE of all time: "Christ is coming back FOR a Church without spot or wrinkle." A popular concept, but I must hasten to tell you, my friend, it's NOT IN THE BOOK! What saith the scripture? "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Why did we misquote this beautiful passage making it say that Christ is coming "for" the Church when it plainly says no such thing? Because the darkness of the carnal mind is predisposed to read into the scriptures what we have been taught. It wasn't there, yet we quoted it. We heard the incessant drumbeat of Christ coming "for" the saints until we thoughtless injected the notion into the Word of God. Once a person has the concept in mind that there will be a special coming of the Lord "for" the saints, he then reads about believers being "caught up" and immediately concludes that they will be caught up to "heaven" somewhere. But that is not what the passage in I Thes. 4:16-17 says at all!

It is almost impossible to show some, who loudly proclaim their love of the truth, the groundlessness of their cherished "Rapture Theory." They are bound and determined that they will "fly away" in spite of the plain statements of the Word of God. Tradition says otherwise, and tradition takes precedence over what the Word, or anyone else, may say. No, tradition lovers have not changed one whit in the two thousand years since the Pharisees were rebuked by our Lord. "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mat. 15:6). Cross their first love (tradition) and they will cast you out, stone you or crucify you. And the church system's traditions about the "second coming of Christ" are the most sacred of all and to be revered as a shrine of truth. What God really says about "The Unveiling of the Christ" couldn't mean less to them. "Tradition be praised! Oh, mighty tradition we love thee! Tradition, we serve and worship thee! Tradition, you are our God! You are our Bible! We follow you blindly, and woe to the person who raises a voice against thee! The King James Bible is the only Bible! My Church teaches it this way and I accept what my Church teaches in spite of what men or the scriptures say! O Mighty Tradition, we are true to you in spite of everything else!"

If the scriptures speak not of the coming of the Lord "FOR" His saints, WHAT DO THEY SAY? It readily appears that His coming is expressed in three dimensions, namely: He will come TO His saints; He will come WITH His saints; and He will come IN His saints. He is coming TO us, He is coming WITH us, and He is coming IN us. When the coming of the Lord has been studied and taught, it has usually been in one of those three, but not all of them. There has, in fact, been some idea that one aspect has been set in juxtaposition to the other to the extent that only one of these concepts is right or valid. But one does not exclude the other; in fact, understood in proper sequence one supports the other, one leads to the other, one prepares for the successive comings of the Lord. It should be obvious to any reader of these lines that the distinction between TO, WITH and IN is not without a difference. His coming TO us is different from His coming WITH us, and His coming WITH us is different than His coming IN us. And rather than contending for one aspect or another our hearts cry in this hour for the "fuller revelation" which will combine and harmonize the many "facets" and bring the new light of His full-orbed and unlimited glory!

## COMING TO HIS SAINTS

The first prerequisite for the coming of the Lord WITH His saints and IN His saints is His coming TO His saints. He cannot come WITH us unless first He has come TO us, and He must come TO us before He can come IN us. As someone has said, Whether He comes to our front door in the form of a man, or beams down a shaft of light brighter than the noon day sun, is not the issue. The point is HE SHALL COME TO US, and HE SHALL BRING TO US that grace which bespeaks the fullness of our salvation. The testimony is sure: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and WE WILL COME UNTO HIM, and make our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23). By His Spirit He comes, yes, in ways, and in dimensions far beyond our present comprehension. How we long to be FULLY INDWELT BY HIM till we overflow with His abundant and eternal life. But He can only indwell us in the measure that first He has come TO US.

There is a coming of the Lord TO His Church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Our authority for this is found in Jn. 14:15-18 wherein Jesus says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; 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), and shall be in you (as the Spirit). I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME U-N-T-O YOU." Now, HE is the One "whom the heavens must receive (retain) until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). He is now in the heavens - the INVISIBLE SPIRIT REALM, from whence also we LOOK FOR Him (Phil. 3:20-21). This word "look" is from the Greek APEKDECHOMAI meaning TO RECEIVE OUT FROM. Ah, He does not forever remain in the invisible sphere, but we RECEIVE OUT FROM the heavens, for HE COMES TO US in mighty spirit power, in the manifestation of Himself. OUT OF THE INVISIBLE comes a visible manifestation. There is not the slightest uncertainty that this is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost when suddenly "there CAME FROM HEAVEN A SOUND as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there APPEARED UNTO THEM cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4). Out of the heavens, out of the invisible came the visible manifestation of His presence. He came, as He had promised, TO them!

God had spoken through the prophet Malachi concerning His coming TO His people in these words, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come TO His temple" (Mal. 3:1). The outpouring of God's Spirit is in the scriptures likened to the falling of rain (Isa. 44:3; 32:15). There are two other scriptures which I will quote from the Old Testament to indicate the Lord's coming TO His people in a latter rain outpouring. The first is Joel 2:23: "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." Then in Hos. 6:1-3 we have the following admonition and promise: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. 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."

We are now in the dawning period of this third day, and the Lord is beginning to come to His people as the rain, praise His name.

There is abundant testimony in the New Testament and all the Christian centuries to the fact that Christ does come in special ways at special times, sometimes quite unexpectedly, both to those who seek Him and those who seek Him not. Take, for example, His striking self-revelation to Saul of Tarsus, as on the road to Damascus, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven," and he fell to the earth for a revolutionary experience. Here we have a man bent with all the intensity of his nature on one course of action, being suddenly thrust upon another. To the day of his death the apostle Paul was convinced, and all his personal history confirmed his conviction, that it was Christ he met that day. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" came the divine Voice. "Who art Thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." The Voice that spoke to him was not identified just as "Christ," which some would conclude was only the Anointing Spirit, but the Voice declared, "I AM J-E-S-U-S." It matters not how those words were conveyed to the intelligence of the man who heard them; they revolutionized his whole career; he had come into contact with Christ Himself, and he knew it with a certainty nothing could ever shake in the years to come, when he suffered the extremity of evil and final martyrdom for the sake of His mighty name. No man does that in obedience to an imperative which is less than overwhelming.

Nor was this all. Three years the new convert spent in silence and seclusion before he began to teach the faith he once denied. Who gave him his message? He says he conferred not with flesh and blood; no man, not even a five-fold ministry taught him what to say! Here is his own account of it: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" (Gal. 1:11-12). No follower of Christ has ever given more emphatic testimony of his assurance of the immediacy of his relationship to his Lord. Christ came to him, to him alone, as though there was none other with whom to dwell, so that in time to come he could say, in recounting his experience before king Agrippa, the words the Lord Jesus had spoken unto him in that eventful day, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I HAVE APPEARED unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I WILL APPEAR unto thee" (Acts 26:16). "I W-I-L-L APPEAR!" Is it not plain to be seen that the appearing of the Lord in Paul's life was an on-going reality from glory to glory? He was TAUGHT by the REVELATION of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Only one who had encountered the Lord in a personal and real way could pen these meaningful words: "For I have RECEIVED OF THE LORD that which I delivered unto you..." (I Cor. 11:23). The Lord appeared UNTO Paul and continued to appear TO him throughout his ministry, imparting the transforming truths he proclaimed.

When, like another Saul of Tarsus, George Fox in the seventeenth century felt that he was at odds with life, and, to use his own words, could find none able to speak to his condition, he heard a Voice which said, "There is One, Jesus Christ, who can speak to thy condition." So sure was this apostle of the inner light, this indefatigable missionary of peace and simplicity of heart - so sure was he of the reality of the possession which Christ took of his whole being from that time forward, that it made him one of the mightiest spiritual forces of his time.

Has there ever been a conversion to Christ which was not a revelation of Christ to the inner man; and has there ever been a spiritual movement which did not originate

somewhere in an advent of Christ to an earnest, seeking soul; and even to those sanctified souls of whom the world knows nothing, and who had never been called to serve God in the open, as it were? Has there ever been an accession of power, wisdom, understanding, comfort, and grace, which was not at the same time a newer and deeper apprehension of Christ? There can be no spiritual experience which is not rooted in an immediate personal knowledge of Christ as Lord, Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, Shepherd, Friend, etc. Sometimes this is so strong, so real, so all-subduing, that it seems to the percipient as though Christ had singled him out for special favor. In some cases the very day and hour of the experience stand out vividly from all the rest of life; in some it is not until long afterwards that the full significance of the spiritual visitation illuminates the consciousness. In either event we say of it: "It was Christ who came to me then, and my whole world has been new ever since." Christ is always coming, coming in ways which the world cannot recognize; coming in sorrow, coming in joy; coming in tumult, coming in peace; coming in judgment, coming in quickening; coming in strange and mysterious visitations, coming in silence and in power and great glory.

It may be in the evening, When the work of the day is done,  
And you have time to sit in the twilight, And watch the sinking sun,  
While the long bright day dies slowly Over the sea,  
And the hour grows quiet and holy With thoughts of Me;  
While you hear the village children Passing along the street -  
Among those thronging footsteps May come the sound of My feet.  
Therefore I tell you, Watch! By the light of the evening star  
When the moon is growing dusky As the clouds afar,  
Let the door be on the latch In your home,  
For it may be through the gloaming I WILL COME.

"Looking for His appearing" does not mean gazing into the skies for Jesus to flash down from heaven on a cloud. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. EACH MANIFESTATION IS ON THE PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PERSON TO WHOM HE APPEARS, AND EACH IS DESIGNED TO MEET A NEED. Understand this truth, my beloved, and you will comprehend a great mystery of the Kingdom of God. Every man and woman on the face of the earth, regardless of spiritual stature, should, on the plane they are on, LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING TO THEM, for men are always transformed thereby. It is impossible to emphasize too strongly the fact that the Christ appears to men right where they are and on a level of manifestation they are capable to receive. He appears to us in greater and greater glory as we walk on in Him.

### **COMING WITH HIS SAINTS**

Jude, the brother of Jesus, who wrote the small book of Jude in the New Testament, quotes a prophecy from Enoch in vs. 14: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh WITH ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." This is in harmony with II Thes. 1:7-8 where Paul states that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven WITH His mighty messengers, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Another passage which shows that Jesus comes WITH His saints is I Thes. 3:13, "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH all His saints." And

again, "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign WITH HIM a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

It is a wonderful truth, as we shall elaborate later, that Christ shall come "to be glorified IN His saints, and to be admired IN all them that believe" (II Thes. 1:10). But it is equally true that we shall be GLORIFIED TOGETHER with Jesus. So Paul says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and JOINT HEIRS W-I-T-H CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED T-O-G-E-T-H-E-R" (Rom. 8:17). Paul makes it clear that Jesus is one son of God and we are also sons. And that first son and all His younger brethren are to be GLORIFIED TOGETHER. This is not the "in" glorification of the Christ, but the "with" glorification. TOGETHER! To be GLORIFIED TOGETHER is the hope that springs perennial within my breast. This glorious experience of being GLORIFIED TOGETHER is a reference to our union with Christ as members of His body, and speaks of a time when this entire company of the sons of God, in union with Christ the Head, shall be GLORIFIED TOGETHER - IMMERSSED INTO THE LIFE OF CHRIST, sharing with Him in that glory. This entire company shall be joined to Christ to share with Him in the blessed glorification experience when we shall partake of His glory, being fully transformed into the body of His likeness. These will be joined to Christ the Head, so that the manifestation of Christ at the end of this age will be a company of the redeemed. This time His appearing will be not only as the Head, but as THE COMPLETED BODY OF CHRIST prepared to execute judgment upon all.

When Christ comes WITH His people "every eye shall see Him." "Behold, He cometh WITH clouds (of His saints); and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). When He is manifested His people are manifested also. "When Christ our life shall appear (or be manifested) , then shall ye also appear W-I-T-H HIM IN GLORY" (Col. 3:4). "For He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are WITH HIM are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14).

In moments of meditation I thought upon this beautiful truth of Christ coming with His saints and in His saints and wondered what exactly was the difference. There is always an element of profound mystery wherever the mind and wisdom of God is concerned. As in spirit I waited upon the Lord for instruction and counsel with the prayer, "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law," the rain of revelation fell upon my understanding and the light of God dawned in my heart. Suddenly, I SAW! The coming of Christ IN the saints is "Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory," whereas Christ coming WITH the saints is WE IN HIM! He comes IN US, and we come IN HIM. He grows up IN US, while we grow up IN HIM. He is manifested IN US, but we are manifested IN HIM. He is glorified IN US, whereas we are glorified IN HIM. Oh! the mystery of it. Oh, the wonder of it!

Of this great and eternal truth George Hawtin has graphically written: "We shall go much farther than this by saying that, great as is the truth of 'Christ in you' and glorious beyond the scope of all but the spiritual mind, the truth that YOU are 'in Christ' is fathomless in its depths and lofty beyond the highest eminence. If 'Christ in you' is the HOPE of glory, as the scripture says it is (Col. 1:27), then 'you in Christ' must certainly be the GLORY. In Christ! In Christ! Think of the glory of the expression! 'God was IN CHRIST:' the Word declares. And now - mystery of mysteries - He is saying that His people are also 'in Christ.' Then we are told, 'God was IN CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself,' and now 'if ANY MAN be IN CHRIST he is a new creation' (II Cor. 5:17). Certainly he must be a new creation, for he has entered the realm where God dwells. No longer is he of the

earth earthy, but one spirit with the Lord from heaven. Herein is the prayer of Jesus fulfilled, 'I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one' (Jn. 17:23). This oneness is no unity of doctrine or belief as the church system would have us think, but individual members baptized into one body and that body THE BODY OF CHRIST.

"In Christ Jesus! What a transforming expression that is! Quoted and read by countless millions, but understood, I fear, by practically none. Let the reader visualize the form of a man, standing with his feet on the earth, so tall that his head reaches the heavens above and so broad that his form fills the universe ALL IN ALL. Then let him examine the scene more closely and his wondering eyes will see that this gigantic man, God's anointed Christ, is a man of MANY MEMBERS just as the human body is one body with many members. Look closer still and you will now see that each and every member in that mighty form is an individual man, a son of God. The Head is the man Jesus of Nazareth. The arms, the fingers, the toes, the heart, the nerves, the blood vessels - every member of Him that filleth all in all is an individual man and every man is a son of God. And, if you will look still more closely, you will see an even greater wonder, for every man, every member, every son in that whole gigantic form is in the exact image of Jesus Christ, the Head, the first begotten Son of God. O, how I hope you can grasp the picture!" -end quote.

And so it is that "in Christ" He cannot come except we come WITH HIM and He WITH US. It is a divine union between God and man, between Jesus Christ and His body. It must have been with the revelation and understanding of the Almighty upon his mind that the hymn writer was inspired to pen these immortal words:

Lo! He comes, with clouds descending, Once for favored sinners slain;  
Thousand thousand saints attending, Swell the triumphs of His train;  
Hallelujah! GOD appears on earth to reign.

### **COMING IN HIS SAINTS**

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, when He shall come to be GLORIFIED I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN all them that believe in that day" (II Thes. 1:7,10).

The moment any man identifies himself with the INDWELLING CHRIST of God he enters into an entirely new realm. He has passed from the limited knowledge of a distant Christ to CHRIST AS HIS LIFE. He has heard the message of the Lord, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man (the individual) hear My voice, and open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, and I will sup with him and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). He comes not to the flesh oriented church of today where the claim is being made, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." He is outside the temples of carnal zeal and fleshly prosperity. He comes not to a vast multitude gathered within the Laodicean church systems of this dark age, but to that "little flock" of footstep followers who have been set aside of the Lord for the most intimate and personal visitation. How wonderful it is when the Christ comes IN to sup with us and us with Him! How blessed we are to have that intimate and sacred communion with the Lord!

Multitudes of sincere believers today are gazing wistfully into the sky, yearning and watching with eager anticipation for Christ to return, riding upon a white charger, appearing in the clouds of the atmosphere, leading the armies of heaven in vengeance upon an ungodly world. But not one in ten thousand has turned aside and taken the

shoes from off his feet as with understanding he has heard the penetrating voice of the Son of God crying, "If any man will open the door, I WILL COME IN TO HIM!" Centuries ago Paul, by the divine wisdom given unto him, wrote these words of truth: "But it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL HIS SON I-N ME, that I might preach Him among the heathen... and they glorified GOD I-N ME" (Gal. 1:15-16,24). Paul is here describing the process of his own conversion and call to apostleship, the light which he saw from heaven. He says that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him. Why IN Him? Why does he not say, "It pleased God to reveal His Son TO me?" Was not the light which he saw an outer vision? Did it not arrest him at midday with a glory above the brightness of the sun? Did it not bar the way to his old nature, and bid his life to holy transformation in the midst of his journey? Surely that appearing of His Lord was a vision to his outer eye. Ah, but can any picture be but a vision to the outer eye? Can a thing be revealed TO me and not be revealed IN me? Is the landscape on which I gaze revealed only to my outer vision? No - or it would not be revealed at all; there could be no beauty without if there were not a sense of beauty within. Is the music to which I listen revealed only to my outward ear? Nay, or I would be deaf to it for evermore; there could be no harmony without if there were not a sense of harmony within. So it is with the beauty of Him who is fairer than the children of men! Often have I envied the lot of those who were permitted to gaze upon His outward form, to see the radiance on His face, to hear the thrill of His voice. Yet was it not to the very chief of these that the words were spoken, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." It was not the eye which saw the radiance, it was not the ear which heard the thrill; it was the soul, the heart, the life, the responsive spirit bearing witness with His Spirit, the deep within that ran out to meet its counterpart, and found in Him its ALL because it found in Him all its yearning and desire.

My God, reveal Thy Son IN ME! I ask for more than an audible voice, because I need more. It would not help me to behold Thy handwriting on the clouds of heaven; it would be but the letters of a book to the child that cannot read. Teach me the meaning of Thy appearing! No description of Thy heavens could declare their glory to the one born blind; no description of Thy Christ could manifest His greatness to the one dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, O Spirit of God, unseal the inner eye, unstop the spiritual ear, that the symmetries and the harmonies of Thy glorious Christ may be revealed. It is in Thy light alone that we shall see light. Only they who are rooted and grounded in love shall be able to comprehend that love of Thine, which, although familiar to all saints, passeth finite knowledge. I shall see the King in His beauty when His beauty shall be revealed in me!

Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming to be glorified IN His saints and to be admired IN the sons of God who by His grace have come into His image throughout the ages. These sons are the body of the Son of God. This is the fullness of the Christ. Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory of the age and ages which are to come! To reign with Christ and with Him usher all creation into the glory of God, which has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the cry of the sons, the purpose of God, and the longing and expectation of ALL CREATION is a prize of far vaster worth than all the power and glory and wealth of all the nations of earth combined. Though God's Christ is One, it will take the ages to come to reveal His manifold beauties and graces. He is the one Christ, yet His body is made up of many redeemed souls. He is the true Vine, yet there are many branches. He is the only-begotten Son of God, yet He is leading many sons to glory. He is the only Saviour, yet He is bringing a whole company of saviours up on Mount Zion.

I bring you good news. YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST; not the "mystical body" as the theologians of Babylon are wont to define it, but you are T-H-E B-O-D-Y of Christ and Christ is IN YOU of a truth, precious friend of mine, to manifest the fullness of Himself. We can think and know and act like God and not like men. Let us pray as did Paul: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, UNTIL Christ be FORMED in you" (Gal. 4:19). The New English Bible says, "I am in travail with you over again until you take the shape of Christ." The Amplified Bible reads "I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is completely and permanently formed (molded) within you!" Wuest's Translation renders, "I am again striving with intense effort and anguish until Christ be outwardly expressed in you."

In looking at a piece of petrified wood we can see this. One time it was wood, NOW IT IS ROCK. For something has happened to it. Certain minerals entered into every cell of that piece of wood and wrought a complete change in it. This process continued until that piece of wood had become rock. Same shape, same size and it has exactly the same cell structure. But what a great change has taken place! THIS IS WHAT GOD IS DOING IN US. Something is happening to us. We do not understand all about it, but we know that there is a change going on in our innermost beings. It is God permeating us with Himself. God is impregnating us with Himself. God is taking over, filling even our very cells with all He is and will be. This change is taking place in our inner selves, in our minds, and even in our bodies. This process shall continue until we arrive at the condition of being saturated with God. God shall so fill us, shall so overwhelm us that we take on the very characteristics of God.

I think the highest privilege that scripture puts before us is surely that Christ will be glorified IN us - that HE will be admired IN US. Think of it, my brethren, so completely has the image of the earthly passed away - so completely is the image of the heavenly gained that CHRIST is seen, CHRIST is admired in us! It is not the believer that is admired, glorified though he be. It is CHRIST who is admired IN HIM. All that the saints are radiates HIS glory. It is in HIS beauty they are arrayed - in HIS glory they shine. The image they wear is HIS - HIS blood has bought them, and HIS hand formed them. They shine as the sun in that heavenly glory, but only in HIS light, and for HIS praise. This is not the hour for any self-exaltation, nor for the promotion of "my ministry" or "my kingdom," for it is HE who is coming to be GLORIFIED IN US. Many think that the call to sonship is for their glorification - but it is not so. While it is true that we share His glory, not until He has shared with us of HIS GLORY do we have anything that is glorious. 'The Christ, being revealed in us, does not exalt us, because we are not the one being revealed, HE IS, therefore this exalts HIM! Little wonder that He is purging, pruning, sifting, bringing us to such absolute nothingness, so that the only one left to be revealed is THE CHRIST. We have dwelt upon this - our hearts have burned within us as we have gazed upon the picture of our future which the Spirit of God has drawn! Blessed day, when every lineament (facial distinction) shall speak the praise of Christ! When His image will be so imprinted upon us that it will be HE who is seen, and HE who is admired, when the universe of God gazes upon the body of Christ.

Though it is wondrously true that it is HE who must be glorified in all, it is also true that HE has purposed to be glorified IN US. Notice - He will not be glorified in Himself, nor in the angels, nor in the scriptures, nor in heaven, nor in the millennium - but IN HIS SAINTS. When Paul wrote to the Ephesian Church, he spoke about "the truth as it is IN JESUS" (Eph. 4:21). But the beloved John amplified the truth in these words, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked. Again, a new

commandment I write unto you, WHICH THING IS TRUE IN HIM AND IN YOU" (I Jn. 2:6,8). Initially, the truth was in God, because He is a God of truth. The truth was recorded for us in the holy scriptures: "Thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). The truth became embodied in Jesus Christ, who said: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6). The truth comes to us even by the Holy Spirit: "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (Jn. 16:13). Finally, the truth must find its embodiment and expression, its manifestation and revelation, in and through the body of Christ. If light is the expression of God in Christ, who said, "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12), if "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105), it must be true in us: "YE are the light of the world, a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." If it is true in Him, it must be true in us. HE was full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14), so we read with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, "and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). If grace is part of the expression of God in Jesus Christ, then it must be the expression of God in us also.

Why tell people things that are only true in Jesus Christ, but which do not work in us? No, if it is true in Him, it must be true in us, for He is the Head of the whole body of the sons. If it is operating in His life, it must come to be operating in our lives. He is come, not only to be our Saviour, but our Lord and our Life. "Be ye holy, as He which has called you is holy." If holiness is true in Him, then holiness must be true in us. "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Mat. 5:48). If perfection is true in Jesus Christ, then perfection must be true in us. "God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Jesus Christ worshipped the Father, Jesus Christ loved the Father, Jesus Christ did His Father's will. Thank God that He did find a man in whom His will, His love, His power, His grace, His truth, His holiness and His life could find a dwelling place and expression. But would it not be sad if there were not a people today, the body of Christ, saved by His blood, cleansed by the washing of water by the word, indwelt by His Spirit, in whom that same thing is true that is true in Him? Jesus said in His prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John: "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn. 17:26). If the love of God is truly expressed in Jesus Christ, then it must be truly expressed in us. If He loves and we do not love, if He is in the light and we are in darkness, if He is expressing the grace of God and we are proclaiming hellfire and damnation then what is true in Him is not yet true in us. Whatever is true in Him, may God make it true in all His sons. Not just for our sakes, but for other's sakes, that they may open their hearts and let God do something in them. They will see the manifestation of Christ in you, and glorify God in you.

I am reminded of the story I heard once about a little seven-year-old boy who went to a gospel meeting. He went on Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night. On Friday night, following the meeting, he ran out to the parking lot following the preacher. The little boy said, "Let me ask you something. You say I have to receive Jesus Christ into my life." The evangelist replied, "That's right." "I'm seven years old. How big is Jesus?" "He's pretty good size because He's a carpenter. " "That's what I thought. If I were to receive Him into me, wouldn't He stick out?" "Son, you've got the message. More and more HE'D STICK OUT!"

To which I would reverently add - you will never in a million years see the Christ coming again until you can see Him coming in His body which is His habitation for evermore. Again I quote: "How we have scanned the media news and sifted through newspapers and journals scratching for tidbits of evidence that the condition of world affairs heralds His soon return. How we have been so furtively 'raptured' and deceived by all the latest

'anti-christ' propaganda, and 'beast' stories, and '666' contrivances in some vain effort to pinpoint His appearing; to say, 'Look here!' or 'Lo, there!' But this, dear saints - the second coming of the Lord Jesus - is not the mystery! The Word is sure that 'this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.' The mystery hidden from ages past, but now made known to His own, is not that Christ is coming again, but that HE IS COMING I-N HIS SAINTS! Walking the earth in His body of flesh and bone! Soon to be manifested in the fullness of His power and glory to subdue every principality and power that would usurp His sovereignty. The Christ who shall sit upon the throne of His everlasting Kingdom to rule all nations with a rod of iron is the Christ that is nigh at hand" -end quote.

God will not allow us to refuse to see the Christ in each other and then look upon Him in some other form. We will have to recognize Him in our brethren. God will not satisfy our carnal nature by allowing us to see Jesus descending from heaven in clouds of glory while we pass by His body on earth and refuse to see Him in them. It is this message that is coming to us today, it is necessary that we see Him in those who are called and chosen and faithful. If I want to see the Christ I look at you because that is where He is forming Himself and manifesting Himself and glorifying Himself. The body of Christ is not something apart from Christ, not just something the Christ has formed as a separate entity. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth IS CHRIST in the earth! When this precious knowledge becomes sweet to our soul we begin to look at one another and BEHOLD HIM. We are looking for HIS APPEARING in His temple, which temple ye are. "And unto them that LOOK FOR HIM shall HE APPEAR..." (Heb. 9:28).

The question is just this, child of God - are you looking for HIM? When you see your brother and sister in Christ, are you looking for HIM? Or do you behold only their flesh? Are you looking at the outward weaknesses, errors, shortcomings; are you looking at an unfinished product and judging it in its present state; or are you LOOKING FOR HIM? You say, "Well, I've looked for Him in my brothers and sisters and I've been so disappointed." I do not hesitate to tell you that you didn't look deep enough. Have you looked deep enough? The truth is certain - unto them that look for HIM shall HE APPEAR! Do you see Christ in your fellow believers? Are you looking for HIM to appear? Are you looking for HIM? As we look at our brethren we are not to look for the faults, the failures, the mistakes and the imperfections - we are to look for HIM! You will see exactly what you look for. LOOK FOR HIM AND HE SHALL APPEAR. If you do not see Him in your brother, speak a word to him, encourage him, impart something of the Christ to him, minister unto him. Then look for HIM to APPEAR. Your vision will become changed and your eye will become single unto the glory of the Lord in His people.

The Christ that we preach is nigh at hand. "He is not far from every one of us," the apostle Paul says. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The Word (Christ) is NIGH THEE, EVEN IN THY MOUTH, AND IN THY HEART" (Rom. 10:6-8). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever." Not one pang or joy of earth Has He forgotten; not one purpose of His life or death or resurrection or ascension has He abandoned. "This same Jesus" who toiled and prayed and wept and suffered is living today as surely as when He trod the earth. Unless we are sure that He is unchanged and unchangeable, that He is right here WITHIN US in every turn of life as really as He was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, unless we live daily in the power of this, our life will never be pure, we will never see His works, we will never be sure that He cares for us, that He wishes to perfect us, that He is

guiding our lives and bringing us unto the Father. Therefore, why strain your eyes to pierce the clouds? The cloud that hides Christ from us is in ourselves, in our love of self, in our blind adherence to traditions, in our devotion to the world. Let us ask God to send the wind of His Spirit, that bloweth where it listeth, to sweep it aside, and then we will see Christ AS OUR LIFE at every step of the journey. Why stand gazing up into heaven for a Christ whom we may find in our own hearts?

"Where is your Lord?  
Seated at God's right hand,  
Captain of Heaven's host,  
Directing campaigns grand  
On some removed coast  
Of eternity's vast sea -  
So far above  
Man's highest love  
He cannot reached be?  
Where is your Lord?  
At God's right hand in sooth:  
Where'er His servants brave  
Are fighting for the truth,  
That all the world may have  
His larger life. 'Tis here  
The Christ is found:  
His accents sound  
Within your soul - so near!  
Where is your Lord?  
Within the daily round  
Of duty. God's command  
For you just now's the sound  
Of the Master's voice. Stand  
To your hard task! Be true  
To your ideal!  
God's will's the real -  
Your Lord dwells there for you."

# *Chapter 47*

## *The Rapture Lie*

"The Rapture"! Many an average person on the street may never have heard of it until watching religious programs on television or listening to conversations by "born-again" Christians. "The Rapture"? What's that? But large numbers of Church goers in various denominations hear all about it - often. They live in constant expectation of it. "Christ may come tonight and snatch the Church away to heaven," the preacher assures in revival meetings, in Sunday Church services and on television. "The trumpet may sound before this meeting is over, or before you wake up in the morning," the evangelist warns. When that happens the cemeteries burst open and the dead saints arise, and those still living go zooming off into the sky to meet the Lord. Such a snatching away or "rapture" of the Church, it is claimed, will be the next great prophetic event. And it may take place at any moment. Millions of believers wonder with great concern, "When will it happen? Will it be in my lifetime? Will I be ready? Who of my loved ones will miss it and have to go through the Great Tribulation?"

It is generally supposed to happen this way: Strife, crime, violence and evil doing in the world will become increasingly worse. Civilization will plunge headlong toward a time of intense trouble. Suddenly, just before the world arrives at a period of calamity called "the tribulation," we are told, Jesus will return invisibly and snatch away - "rapture" - all born-again Christians and take them to heaven, or away up in the clouds somewhere, away from the world turmoil, for seven years. It will be a sudden, yet secret event. No one will see it happen. Only the effects - empty cars, empty houses, empty beds, workers missing from their jobs - will be apparent. Some suggest what the newspaper headlines will be like the day after: "Millions Mysteriously Vanish!" "Graves Found Open and Empty!" "Massive Traffic Snarles Due to Missing Drivers!" "Planes Crash, Trains Wreck As Pilots and Engineers Disappear!" "All Children Have Disappeared!" Pictures have been drawn by artists, and distributed by the multiplied thousands, of Jesus standing on a stratocumulus cloud a few thousand feet in the air, while Christians are being lifted out of a city below. Business of all kinds will be disrupted, while tumult, confusion, misery and terror will reign. The airports, trains, bus lines, and the great industrial plants over the world will be hushed, as so many of the head men, the pilots, engineers, managers, foremen, workers and others will be missing. Families will be separated, one taken and the other left; wives will bewail the sudden disappearance of their husbands, husbands will bemoan the loss of their wives. Parents will search in vain with terror-stricken faces for their children.

They go on to describe how all the people who are left on earth will have to go through seven years of terrible trouble and punishment. During this time the great Antichrist will make his appearance and display his power, the apocalyptic judgments, the unmeasured wrath of God - foretold in the book of Revelation will be unleashed in dreadful fury upon the inhabitants of the world, and there will be a time of unequalled tribulation. Then, at the end of this period, according to the teaching, Christ will return from heaven once again in a great universal public display, bringing all His saints with Him. The reason for this is, they say, because God is far too good to allow His people to go through such tribulation.

The implication is that they are far too weak to survive in the face of such demonic power. So they will be called away to attend the "Marriage Supper in the Sky", receive their "rewards" for their labors here, and have a glorious seven years of feasting, singing and celebration - while their unsaved loved ones, their dear friends and neighbors who had not been born again, and the untaught millions of heathen are suffering indescribable agonies on earth. "Good enough for them!" seems to be the general attitude, "they should have listened and gotten prepared, like me. "

## **THE ORIGIN OF THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE**

That's the way the "rapture" is usually presented. But is that how Jesus announced He would return? Will He come back physically in two phases - one, secret and unexpected, "for" His saints, to rapture them away; and a second, publicly "with" His saints? Is this "rapture" really the "hope" of the Church as the preachers are wont to proclaim? Let me give you the history of how this theory got started.

It wasn't until the early or mid 1800's that there was any significant group of believers around the world that looked for a "rapture" of the Church prior to a seven-year tribulation period. It may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but it is a fact nonetheless, that the "rapture" teaching was NOT taught by the early Church, it was NOT taught by the Church of the first centuries, it was NOT taught by the Reformers, IT WAS NOT TAUGHT BY ANYONE (except a couple Roman Catholic theologians) UNTIL ABOUT THE YEAR 1830! At the time of the Reformation the early Protestants widely held and were convinced that the Pope was the supreme individual embodiment and personification of the spirit of antichrist, and the Roman Church the Harlot System of Rev. 17. This understanding was responsible for bringing millions of believers out of the Roman Catholic religious system. It therefore became expedient for certain Romish theologians to turn the attention of the people away from the Papacy, and this they endeavored to do through a counter-interpretation to that held by the Protestants. This new scheme of prophetic interpretation became known as FUTURISM. Rather than viewing the drama of the book of Revelation spiritually and historically, they would consign it all to a brief period of time at the end of the age. It was a Jesuit priest named Ribera who, in the days of the Reformation, first taught that all the events in the book of Revelation were to take place literally during the three and a half years reign of the Antichrist away down at the end of the age. Thus Ribera laid the foundation of a system of prophetic interpretation of which the Secret Rapture has now become an integral part.

Later, Emmanuel Lacunza, also a Jesuit priest, built on Ribera's teachings, and spent much of his life writing a book titled "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty." Lacunza, however, wrote under the assumed name of "Rabbi Ben Ezra," supposedly a learned Jew who had accepted Christ as his Saviour. With Jesuit cunning he thus conspired to get his book a hearing in the Protestant world - they would not even permit it in their homes coming from a Jesuit pen - but as the earnest work of a "converted Jew" they would consume it with avid interest! Within the pages of this elaborate forgery Lacunza taught the novel notion that Jesus returns not once, but twice, and at the "first stage" of His return He "raptures" His Church so they can escape the reign of the "future Antichrist." His book was first published in Spanish in the year 1812 and soon found its way onto the shelves of the library of the Archbishop of Canterbury in London, England.

Now enter the name of Edward Irving. Born in Scotland in 1792, Irving became one of the most eloquent preachers of his time. In 1828 his open-air meetings in Scotland drew

crowds of 10,000 people. His Church in London seated one thousand people and was packed week after week with a congregation drawn from the most brilliant and influential circles of society. There were some among them who by prophetic declaration announced that the Lord was coming soon, and this idea became prominent in their prophetic utterances and teachings. Out of those prophetic declarations some began to study the scriptures in the light of a physical, literal coming of the Lord. Up until that time the coming of the Lord was understood as a coming of the Lord TO His people, and IN His saints, and there was no sense of His fleshly coming. Irving discovered Lacunza's book and was deeply shaken by it, in fact, fell in love with it, translated it into English, and it was published in London in 1827. And at this very time Irving heard what he believed to be a Voice from heaven commanding him to preach the Secret Rapture of the Saints. Then Irving began to hold Bible Conferences throughout Scotland, emphasizing the coming of Jesus to rapture His Church.

About this same time there began the emergence of a new movement which came to be known as the "Plymouth Brethren." The Brethren movement had its beginning in Dublin in 1825 when a small group of earnest men, dissatisfied with the spiritually lethargic condition that prevailed in the Protestant Church in Ireland, met for prayer and fellowship. Soon others joined the fellowship and associated groups sprang up in various places. Though the movement had its beginning at Dublin, it was Plymouth, England that became the center of their vast literature outreach, thus the name! "Plymouth Brethren" became attached. Although there was interest from the start in prophetic subjects, the center of interest was on the body of Christ as an organism and the spiritual unity in Christ of all believers - in reaction to the deadness and formalism of the organized church systems and the ecclesiastical Hierarchy. A man by the name of John Nelson Darby was the leading spirit among the Plymouth Brethren from 1830 onward. Darby was from a prosperous Irish family, was educated as a lawyer, took high honors at Dublin University, then turned aside, to his father's chagrin, to become a minister.

Thus Irving and Darby were contemporaries, though associated with different spiritual movements. Another series of meetings were in progress at this time, a group of seeking Christians were meeting in the castle of Lady Powerscourt for the study of Bible prophecy. Many clergymen attended, and quite a few who were Irvingites. The Irvingites came to the meetings obsessed with the ideas of the "Secret Rapture" and the future Antichrist, imbibed from the Jesuit Lacunza's book. J.N. Darby and the other Brethren leaders were invited to these meetings and became participators in them. It was there that he was introduced to the Jesuit teaching of the Secret Rapture and the futurist interpretation of prophecy, as well as the famous book by Rabbi Ben-Ezra, or, actually, Jesuit priest Emmanuel Lacunza! Darby was himself a prolific writer and from that time a constant stream of propaganda came from his pen. His writings on biblical subjects number over 30 volumes of 600 pages each. Darby developed and organized "futurism" into a system of prophetic teaching called "dispensationalism." Darby's biographers refer to him as "the father of dispensationalism." And the crown jewel in the kingdom of dispensationalism is, of course, the so-called SECRET RAPTURE!

The Secret Rapture teaching was introduced into the United States and Canada in the 1860's and 1870's, though there is some indication that it may have been taught as early as the 1840's. Darby himself visited the United States six times. The "new" teaching was spreading. A Congregationalist preacher by the name of C. I. Scofield came under the influence of Darby and the Plymouth Brethren. Scofield became a strong promoter of the teaching that had been promulgated by Darby, whom he considered "the most profound

Bible student of modern times." He incorporated this teaching into his SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE. The Scofield Reference Bible was destined to have a tremendous impact upon the beliefs of many, when, three million copies were published in the first 50 years! Through this Bible Scofield shrewdly carried the teaching of the Secret Rapture into the very heart of Evangelicalism. Some ignorant souls look on the "notes" in this Bible as the Word of God itself! I do not doubt for one instant that many who read these lines have been influenced somewhere in their spiritual lives by the "footnotes" in the Scofield Bible!

There is one final link in the chain of the development and spread of the rapture theory that should be mentioned in passing. I would draw your attention again to the SOURCE, the ORIGIN of the rapture doctrine and the chain of contact by which it has been brought down to us today. It began as a Roman Catholic invention! The Jesuit priest Ribera's writings influenced the Jesuit priest Lacunza, Lacunza influenced Irving, Irving influenced Darby, Darby influenced Scofield, Scofield and Darby influenced D. L. Moody, and Moody influenced the early PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT. How? you ask. The Assemblies of God is today by far the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world. When the Pentecostal movement began at the turn of the century and the Assemblies of God held their first General Council in 1914 in Hot Springs, Arkansas they were a small movement and didn't have their own Publishing House. They needed Sunday School and study materials for their Churches - so where do you suppose they got it? They bought it from Moody Press and had their own cover stitched on it! So what do you think the Assemblies of God people believed? They believed what Moody Bible Institute taught! This had its impact on Pentecostal theology, because in the early years there were practically NO PREMILLENIALISTS IN THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT! Most of the ministers in those early days came from Presbyterian, Methodist, or other historic denominations - men who, being baptized in the Holy Spirit and leaving their denominations, joined themselves to the Assemblies of God or one of the other emerging Pentecostal denominations. That is how the Pentecostal movement became influenced and saturated with the "Secret Rapture" doctrine - by a direct chain right back to the Roman Catholic Church! And now, my friend - you know the REST OF THE STORY!

### **THERE IS NO RAPTURE!**

The church systems are literally filled today with carnal, earthly-minded Christians who sit back in ease and self-complacency and await a future rapture that will translate them out of the midst of earth's Great Tribulation at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. To this generation of Lukewarm Laodiceans the Spirit speaks in certain tones of warning: "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light" (Amos 5:18). In the vast majority of evangelical circles we are taught that at any moment Jesus will come and secretly, silently snatch away His elect to a heaven in the far-flung skies - to escape the Great Tribulation which shall soon visit the earth. It is not true. The saints shall be "caught up" all right; but it is not speaking of distance in terms of miles or light years, but to glorious reality in the Spirit. When Christ comes to lift our inner-man nature UP into the fullness of UNION IN HIM we certainly know the reality of being raised up and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. This is not a place in the sky, but a spiritual position of eminence, glory and authority. Paul says that we shall be caught up "in the air," that sphere of influence, authority and spirit-control now occupied by "the god of this world," the "prince and power OF THE AIR" (see Study #42 in this series).

"Rapture" is not a biblical word. Let all of God's people stop speaking of the "rapture." The word rapture is not in the scripture and is at best very misleading. If instead of the rapture we speak of being caught up in the spirit (Acts 8:39; II Cor. 12:2-4; Rev. 4:1-2), translated into the Kingdom (Col. 1:13), raised up into the heavenlies with Christ (Eph. 2:5-6), and caught up into the throne, the spiritual dimension of the Christ's authority, power and glory (Rev. 4:1-2; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 12:5) we will rid ourselves of much confusion and carnal delusion, and we will have a much better understanding of present spiritual realities and the immediate program of God.

Religionists debate loud and long about WHEN THE "RAPTURE" IS TO TAKE PLACE. Some believe in the "pre-tribulation rapture." That means that God's people will be removed from the earth just before the beginning of the tribulation. Thus they will not be here for any of the seven years of plagues, vials, etc. Bumper stickers state: "In case of Rapture, this car will self-destruct". Tracts for airliners say: "In case the trumpet sounds, be prepared for this plane to crash, your pilot may be a Christian." These are fear tactics. Then there are those who teach the "mid-tribulation rapture." They believe that the Bible teaches that the Church will have to go through the first three and a half years of the tribulation while the Antichrist is warring against the saints, but will be raptured and spared the last three and a half years of the intense wrath and judgment of God. Finally there are the "post-tribulation" people. They teach that the Church goes through the entire seven years of tribulation, and that only after the tribulation are the saints "caught up", as according to I Thes. 4:17. They see a Church being empowered by the Spirit of God to survive the worst onslaughts of Satan and pass through victoriously to the other side. This is an admirable concept, and much closer to the truth, but these still embrace the notion of the rapture.

There is a story of King Charles II of England, that he once puzzled the Royal Society (a society of scientists) by propounding the question, Why is a dead fish heavier than a live one? The men of science debated this question with much acumen, and offered various solutions to it. It however occurred to one of them to make sure by experiment that the dead fish was in fact the heavier; and it was found that it was not. Now this trick of the Jesting Monarch is often played upon us by our own minds. We assume, because the preachers and teachers play the incessant drumbeat, that there IS a rapture. But when one carefully examines "the alleged fact" of the rapture he is led to the astounding discovery that in fact there isn't even any such thing!

A German Prince was once visiting a certain city. When greeted by a deputation from the Town Council he expressed great surprise that his arrival had not been heralded by salvoes of cannon. The Burgomaster, who had a sense of humor, replied that there were a hundred reasons for the omission. Asked by the Prince what they were, he began: "In the first place we have no cannon; in the second we - " "Now," broke in the Prince, "your first reason is so good that I don't want to hear the other ninety-nine." That answer comes to mind as one reflects on the theory of the Secret Rapture. We wait in vain for one strong argument that simply compels us to consider their view. Take a searchlight. Take all the suns and moons and stars, break the rim of the Milky Way and pour the compacted brilliance of its infinite depths of light into every crevice of the good old Book; search every page and chapter and verse and line, from Gen. 1:1 through Rev. 22:21, and you can find no trace of it in teaching, in prophecy, in parable or in symbol. The rapture is simply not found in the Bible! That one reason is so good that we have no need to consider any others!

Since so many Christians are steadfastly looking for Jesus to come FOR the Church, to whisk it away up to heaven somewhere, we need to take a closer look at the Word and see if ANYWHERE in the Bible we can find this expression "coming FOR the saints." This may come as a shock to some, but the Bible NOWHERE speaks of Jesus coming "FOR the saints." Let those who carelessly use this term show us where it appears in the pages of God's inspired Book. Let them search! It cannot be found! Never! Nowhere! Not even once! Surely then, a teaching which constantly employs an expression that is foreign to the Word of God should be subjected to close examination. I can hear some dear saint saying, "Oh, but the Bible does say that Jesus is coming FOR a Church without spot or wrinkle." No it doesn't! What it says is that Christ so 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" (Eph. 5:26-27). It says nothing about taking the Church anywhere. In order to "present the Church to Himself" in a holy and blameless condition doesn't necessitate changing the Church's physical location at all! There is no reference to a journey; the description is of a CONDITION. Our Lord's coming "for" His Church is nothing more than an invention of ignorant minds, hatched up by men who are reading into their Bibles many fantastic tales which they use to uphold their delusions. The sleeping Church, of course, can think of little else except a physical ride into the clouds, being whisked away into an ethereal state and experience of their own invention, where they intend to sit around dressed in white nightgowns or something similar, eating - eating - eating what?

But let us forget all this nonsense. Let us come on down out of the clouds and get our feet planted firmly on solid footing, and leave them there. We are not going anywhere: not for a long while, at least. We are not yet ready to go anywhere, in fact. These people who think they are all prepared to be physically caught away to the throne on high and there help God run His universe, are simply manifesting the fact that they are just babes living in a dream-world and are not even capable of eating good wholesome spiritual food. Before we are fitted for running God's affairs and ruling with Christ over His universe, we have got to become proficient at running our little earth. This is our proving ground. And we are going to stay right here until we graduate! Before we are even capable of running an earth we must grow up spiritually and become proficient at living by the principles of the Kingdom and walking out the mind, nature and will of the Father in our own lives. The Church has not yet done even this. The vast majority, including the preachers, are just babies who still need a lot of comforts and soothing syrups, need to have their garments changed quite regularly and their bottle filled and held for them. Of course I know that the Church realizes what a horrible mess she has made of things in general, and would like to run away off somewhere to get away from it all. But she is going to stay right here and face the music, whether she wants to or not.

## **THE GREAT ESCAPE**

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13). There is a strange thing happening today, for most Christians are not looking for the "coming" of the Lord - rather, they are expecting the "going" of the saints! It is hard to convince men of the truth when for years their minds have been set in a contrary direction. The truth is that the "blessed hope" is not the rapture; it is the APPEARING of the Lord. The "blessed hope" is not deliverance from the Tribulation; it is HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING in His people. We are not looking for a rapture to take people out of this old world, but we are looking for HIM TO APPEAR out of the innermost being of His sons to transform His elect so that they will be able to

change the very courses of this world. This is the time of the appearing of Christ in power and great glory. The Lord has confirmed this fact by appearing to us personally, and to others as well. He is coming and has come to us in His spiritual presence and is uncovering Himself within us to appear through us to the world. With each appearing of our Lord we witness greater growth unto maturity and perfection than we have seen in the past, for the Lord is doing that quick work. This is a very significant hour, an hour of much spiritual activity, accomplished by the arising of HIS LIFE WITHIN.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted WORTHY TO ESCAPE all these things that shall come to pass, and TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN" (Lk. 21:36). This verse of scripture has often been misapplied to the rapture theory. However, the words of Jesus are relevant to this hour and should be considered in the light of all present, revealed truth. If the old rapture theory is wrong, as we certainly believe it is, what then did Jesus mean by admonishing us to "pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape" the things that are coming upon the world? Some like to point at Enoch, who was translated that he should not see death, and say that he is a type of those who are raptured before the Tribulation, thus "escaping" the things that are coming upon the earth. But Enoch did not live during the time that judgment was being poured out on the earth in the form of a flood. Enoch had his experience some 669 years before the Flood, and never met Noah. In other words, his translation (and that's another story!) was not for the purpose of helping him escape the flood.

It is NOT Enoch who serves as the type of how one escapes the judgments of God poured out in the earth, but NOAH! Jesus did not say, "As it was in the days of Enoch." He said, "But AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE" (Mat. 24:37-39). How the preachers have distorted and mutilated these wonderful words of our Lord! Songs have been written and sermons preached to urge us to be ready to be "taken" when Jesus comes. The great truth is that Jesus is saying the exact opposite! Let us consider what happened in the days of Noah. Who was taken? Who was left? "For as in the days that were before the flood THEY (the wicked) were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and (they, the wicked) knew not until the flood came and TOOK T-H-E-M ALL AWAY" (Mat. 24:38-39). It was the wicked that were "taken" in Noah's day, for the record states that the flood came and "took them all away." And who was left? NOAH! Noah had spent much time and diligence in building an ark in which to "ride out" the storm. Noah went THROUGH the flood, protected by the ark he had prepared and entered into. When the flood waters abated, and the wicked had been taken away, he stepped out of the ark and inherited the purified earth. He and his family now owned the whole planet! Everyone else who had held a deed to a piece of property was GONE, along with the heirs. Noah inherited the earth and there were none to dispute his claim. The previous owners had been "taken" and Noah alone was LEFT to inaugurate the new age. To which fact Jesus adds this significant statement: SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING (PRESENCE) OF THE SON OF MAN BE!

This great type points to far more than merely the inhabitants of the world being blown off the map and just you and me and a few other elect saints remaining. It points to the way of LIFE instead of DEATH. In this hour God's chosen ones are building an ark of obedience and truth, of wisdom and righteousness, that they might LIVE AND NOT DIE. I

declare to you that there is a people who shall live and not die! This is not an outer ark of gopher wood and pitch, but an inner ark of the mind of Christ and the ways of God in the SPIRIT. Our "hiding place" is in Christ. "Your life is hid with God in Christ" (Col. 3:3). It is the fearful, the faithless, or the wicked, who seek a geographical hiding place. Some want to leave the earth and fly away to heaven, while some cry for the rocks and the mountains to hide them, and yet others are seeking a hiding place in some natural place, a farm, a desert, a wilderness area, etc. But it will not work. It will not work because it is natural, physical, carnal, earthly. You cannot escape from death that way. You can only escape death by LIFE! And you can only find life by sowing to the SPIRIT! It is the life of God in your spirit which will swallow up all death, enabling you to "escape" the things that are coming upon the world.

George Hawtin penned the following words of truth: "The three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace were living types of the elect of God as they will be preserved through the fires of tribulation. The fire will not hurt them and the Son of God, who was with those blessed three, will be with us also. The elect will be right here in the world, yet they will be caught up to a new realm of spiritual glory and power, a realm where nothing of the earth can really harm them. Daniel was thrown into the den of ravening lions because of his faithfulness to God, but because he lived in a heavenly realm far above all his associates, the roaring lions became as docile as domestic kittens in his presence. It is quite possible that he stroked their manes and listened with pleasure to their mighty purring throughout the night when angels came to shut their mouths, yet these same lions tore his enemies to pieces before they could fall to the bottom of the pit. And thus I think it will be for all God's elect people. They will be in the fire, but never feel it. They will be in the lion's den, but find no hurt. Yea, they will be like Noah, who rode through the great waters of the flood, but came down on side to people a glorious new age, which in our case will be the age of the Kingdom."

Those chosen ones who shall be blessed with that promised ESCAPE shall be delivered, not by being removed from the earth, but by a more glorious transformation. They shall escape the things that are coming upon the world by appearing before the Son of man - by standing before the Son of man - by union with Him in the incorruptibleness of His divine life. When anyone among us is blessed to stand before the Son of man we are changed into the same image by seeing Him as He is. But let not any saint of God think that we speak of an outward event, for the Son of man is WITHIN YOU, and it is there that you behold Him, are changed into His image, and stand before Him, your outer man brought into harmony and oneness of life with the inner, praise His wonderful name!

### **COME UP HITHER**

Another scripture used to teach the pre-tribulation rapture is Rev. 4:1-2 where John heard a voice "as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, COME UP HITHER, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven..." They say John was a type here of the Church being caught up off the earth into heaven just prior to the wrath of God falling upon the world in the Great Tribulation. But it says no such thing. Oh, what shame! What deliriums! Men, poor deluded and blind children who know as little of the Christ life and spiritual realities as does the father of lies whom they unwittingly serve, yet parade themselves as angels of light and their carnal imaginings as revelation direct from God! No wonder Paul wrote, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (II Tim. 4:3-4). No wonder Isaiah wrote, "All tables (from which the Church is fed) are filled with vomit and

filthiness, so that there is NO PLACE CLEAN" (Isa. 28:8). God pity the poor victims who follow these wretched blind leaders of the blind, poor nursing infants who know not their right hand from their left, victims of these messengers of the carnal mind, poor helpless babes, who have never, since the day of their birth, had a good square spiritual meal, and who as a result grow weaker and thinner and more anemic spiritually day by day.

A tremendous revelation was given to John on Patmos. John was one of the "three mighties" who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh; he was with Him in the Mount, he lay in His bosom and, above all others, has received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved." It was fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart, should become the depository of His most intimate thought in respect to the course of the Church in this age. And such is the case. This picture is to be found in the book of the Revelation. The seven Churches are saluted by John. He was shown the seven candlesticks "which ARE the seven Churches" (Rev. 1:20). God raised up a prophet that could see and foretell in detail the entire Church age before it could transpire. This is what the messages to the seven Churches in Rev. 2 and 3 are all about.

This prophecy is directed to the seven Churches in Asia as they became the symbolic vehicle by which the Lord quickened a message that is not only to be unto them, but is to be relevant to all Christians throughout the entire Church age. The messages and prophecies that are seemingly directed unto the seven special Churches of Asia actually symbolize and characterize the conditions that have existed in the Church age from the day of Pentecost until now. Seven is the perfect spiritual number of completeness and these SEVEN CHURCHES embody and characterize all the combined conditions that not only existed then, but have existed in one form or another throughout this entire age and are still in some form or another manifested in the Churches today. John beheld the good and the evil of the Church age. He declared the blessings and the curses of this age. He saw the strength and the weakness of the Church. He saw the Church in its beginnings and in its consummation. He beheld the True Church of the Lord Jesus Christ and he exposed the false church systems, the swaggering harlot of this age with her unholy spirit, doctrines, organization and methods. John shows forth the full revelation of all the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church during the Church age and the ages to come.

If you want to know what the Church of this age is like look at the SEVEN CANDLESTICKS! There you have the divinely inspired portrait of the Church painted in awesome detail by the skillful hand of the Holy Spirit. The outstanding fact is that it is a Church of MIXTURE - imperfect, immature, carnal, idolatrous, lethargic, heretical, adulterous - a realm of mixture and duality. Not only is the Church age an age of mixture, but it is an experience of CONTINUED MIXTURE; as in the parable of the wheat and tares, right up to the end of the harvest the field is a MIXED FIELD; it is a field divided between wheat and tares. There is neither time nor space to explore the meaning and fulfillment of all the symbols attached to these seven Churches, but these seven Churches perfectly reveal WHAT THE CHURCH REALM IS IN ITS ENTIRETY, and history and personal experience testify conclusively that John was shown aright! The early Church itself was a mixture of flesh and spirit, truth and error, law and grace, spirituality and carnality, Christ and antichrist. And I do not hesitate to tell you that from that day to this ALL CHURCHES HAVE SO BEEN. They are today! ALL of them! Yes, YOURS too! precious friend of mine, matters not if you call it a "New Testament Church," "Kingdom Church," "Sonship Church," "End-time Church," "New Day Church," or by

some other inventive title if it IS a Church - its portrait is graphically and unerringly drawn in chapters 2 and 3 of the Revelation. Have you been searching for the perfect Church? Forget it! Such a Church does not exist during the Church age. And should this age continue for another thousand years the Church shall not have changed - the Word of the Almighty God declares it! The seven candlesticks ARE the seven Churches and the seven Churches ARE the whole Church throughout the entire Church age. The "New Testament Church" realm can never be different from what John saw in spirit.

Notice now the inspired words that follow: "After this (the vision of the candlesticks) I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, COME UP HITHER, and I will show thee things which must be HEREAFTER. And immediately I was IN THE SPIRIT: and, behold, a THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN, and one sat on the throne" (Rev. 4:1-2). An entrance is given to John into the heavenlies of the Most High. A door is opened unto John into the highest spiritual dimension of the divine eternal domain. At the speaking of the trumpet, the spirit translates John into the higher spiritual and heavenly realm of the THRONE OF GOD. I would draw your reverent attention to the wording: "AFTER THIS I looked... Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be HEREAFTER." H-E-R-E-A-F-T-E-R! After what? Why, bless your heart, after the CANDLESTICK REALM! The promises have already been given, NOT TO THE CHURCHES, but to a class in the Churches - to HIM THAT OVERCOMETH. It is divinely significant that not one promise was ever given to even one Church in these Churches of mixture - every single- promise was made to that Church within the Church - the OVERCOMER - the SONS OF GOD. "HE THAT OVERCOMETH shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be MY SON" (Rev. 21:7). Ah, here is a higher realm, the realm of the OVERCOMER. There is no duality, no mixture in this higher realm, no immaturity or imperfection of any kind. And the message sounds forth like the blast of a trumpet: "COME UP HITHER!"

Is it not plain that John is shown TWO REALMS - the candlestick realm and the throne realm? First John is informed about what the candlestick realm is, then he is shown another realm HIGHER THAN THE CANDLESTICK REALM. It is the realm of the overcomer, of the throne (the Lordship realm), of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. The throne denotes the seat of authority, rulership and dominion. It is the realm of HIS LORDSHIP, and ours with Him. Any person who ever enters into that divine realm of the Spirit in the heavenlies must be in complete and total submission unto that Holy One who sits upon that heavenly throne. And "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). It is interesting to note that immediately following this invitation to the throne John is bidden to leave the candlestick realm of the earthlies and ascend IN THE SPIRIT (not a physical "rapture"!) into this HIGHER-THAN-THE-CANDLESTICK-REALM where the Lamb is in the throne.

This is what the brethren don't want to do! How tenaciously they cling to the candlestick realm with its five-fold ministry, New Testament Order, with its limitation, imperfection, weakness, immaturity, mixture, structures, methods, etc. Even so-called "Kingdom" preachers tell me that unless I am joined to some "New Testament Church" I will never make it into sonship. It is a lie. The truth is just the opposite. COME UP HITHER! Actually, you must leave the candlestick realm and ascend into the higher dimension of the Spirit in order to be a son of God! This revelation was given in A. D. 96. The people in the Churches of John's generation refused to leave the candlestick realm and rise to a higher experience in God and within only a few years the great apostasy set in, by the

third and fourth centuries the apostasy was complete, followed by a dreadful night of great and terrible darkness. If we would be overcomers, pressing into sonship to God, our ears must hear with joy the challenging call, "Come up hither!" We must arise and forsake the limitation of the candlestick realm to become related to Christ in that inner union where HIS LORDSHIP SWALLOWS UP OUR LIVES. Oh, yes, the Lord is still out there in the candlestick realm, for as long as that realm endures there is "One like unto the Son of man standing in the midst." I have seen Him there in the midst of all the delusion, foolishness and carnality, I have beheld Him blessing, moving, speaking, saving, baptizing in the Holy Ghost, healing, imparting gifts, I have heard His voice in the praising, in the preaching, in the prayers. Yes, He is there all right, in the midst, as the light that remains in Babylon, ministering on that level, blessing by His wonderful grace. But, my beloved, I would be remiss if I failed to warn you that He is NOT THERE taking men on to perfection, into the incorruptible life, into the fullness of sonship. The "up hither" realm is where that experience is known. If any man can show me any Church order, including the early Church, or their own, that has ever carried God's people on to perfection and fullness I will recant and gladly join it. If such a Church cannot be produced, then John's estimation of the candlestick realm remains valid and I have no obligation to join myself to that which is totally impotent to minister what is needed in this hour to bring us into the depths of Jesus Christ. Here me now! We are not opposed to gatherings, meetings and ministry! It is just that all these things must be kept in the perspective of reality as the "in part" realm and not over-rated as the vehicle to bring us into fullness.

I hear a Voice, my brother, my sister, bidding me to distinguish between the "dwellers on earth" and the "dwellers in heaven." "Therefore rejoice, YE HEAVENS, and YE THAT DWELL IN THEM. Woe to the INHABITERS OF THE EARTH... for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath..." (Rev. 12:12). In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation we are told that the "dwellers in heaven" are the tabernacle of God. The tabernacle of God is that blessed company of the overcomers - the sons of God. The dwellers in heaven are the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion. The dwellers in heaven are the manchild company "caught up to God and His throne." The dwellers in heaven are the enthroned elders. The dwellers in heaven are the four living creatures in the midst of the throne. The dwellers in heaven are the Kings and Priests after the order of Melchizedek. The dwellers in heaven are the tabernacle of God. The dwellers in heaven are the warriors on white horses who come out of heaven, accompanying the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The dwellers in heaven are the New Jerusalem which comes down from God out of heaven bringing the glory of the celestial Kingdom among men. Yea! and Amen! The more you search the more clear it will become that the "open door" in heaven and the invitation "Come up hither" separates between the candlestick realm in the earthlies, which are the seven Churches, the entire age of Church economy - and the higher realm of HIS LORDSHIP WITHIN, the throne realm!

I say to you today as the trumpet-voice said to John in that long ago, "Come up hither!" We have stood on the sidelines and said, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and rapture us out of this world." And He has sat on His throne and said, "Come, My people; enter into my gates, enter into my glory." We have said, "Come and get us Lord Jesus," and He has said, "Come up hither, My people; come up into the realm of My Spirit, of My reality, of My glory and power." THE DOOR IS OPEN IN HEAVEN TODAY. You may live in the candlestick or the throne. You may be an earth-dweller or a heaven-dweller. You may be a "Christian" or you may be a SON!

## THE TRUE "RAPTURE"

The word "rapture" as used theologically is a misapplied and misappropriated term. Although this word is not found in the Bible, it IS found in the dictionary. The correct rendering of "rapture" has nothing to do with going anywhere. The World Book Dictionary furnishes us with this definition: "A strong feeling that absorbs the mind; very great joy. A feeling of being lifted high in MIND and SPIRIT; being filled with and completely taken up in feeling or delight or bliss." Armed with the true definition of rapture, is it not clear that we have been raptured on occasions too numerous to mention, as we have experienced the life of God in our SPIRIT from glory to glory!

Men gaze steadily into the skies looking for Jesus to come flashing across the heavens to snatch them up and carry them away, but their spirits have never been enraptured with these enlightening words: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH TRANSLATED US into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Is that not an illuminating statement? And while the preachers rant and rave and speculate about a "rapture", displaying their carnal charts complete with pictures of automobiles wrecking, trains derailing, and airplanes crashing while the bodies of the saints soar away through the atmosphere, there are some humble sons of the Most High God who have EYES TO SEE and have discovered a process NOW TAKING PLACE in every believer who is earnestly pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. From the far distant mountain peaks of revelation the inspired voice of Paul clear as the morning song of the morning dove sounds forth the message: "Even when we were dead in sin, He H-A-T-H QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST, and H-A-T-H RAISED US UP TOGETHER, and made us sit together IN HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5-6). Blessed be God!

He who writes these lines testifies to those who read them that we have ALREADY PASSED FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN! My God, my God! What words are these that Thou hast bidden us believe? Since, then, we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son, is it any wonder that we should discover ourselves to be citizens of the true and eternal realm? By His resurrection and ascension we have been raised up and translated. We have passed from the realm where all is earthly and carnal to the realm where all is heavenly and spiritual. Our citizenship in this present age has been revoked and we have obtained a new citizenship in the eternal and undying realm. For this reason Paul wrote, saying, "Your citizenship is in heaven." We were citizens of another land, a dark land of fear, limitation, sorrow, sin and death. We were of different speech and culture, but we crossed over. We have changed our citizenship and our allegiance from one domain to another. We have renounced our existence on the earth-realm in favor of a new life in the heaven-realm. We have renounced our allegiance to this present world system, its customs, life-style, thought processes, wisdom, knowledge, ways, and religion, to become partakers of a new and heavenly citizenship, speakers of its new language, revelators of the beauty of its customs, culture and life-style, partakers of its higher inspiration, its more noble wisdom and knowledge, and manifestors of the wonders of its truth, and the glory of its endless life.

Ah, my beloved, WHAT YOU SEE DEPENDS ON WHERE YOU LIVE. The story is told of a mole who once pushed its head out of the ground and said to a bird who was swinging and singing on the branch above it, "What are you making such a noise about?" Said the bird, "Oh, the sunshine, the trees, the grasses, the shining stream, and the white clouds on the mountainside. The world is full of beauty!" "Nonsense," said the mole; "I

have lived in this world longer than you have, and I have gone deeper into it. I have traversed it and tunneled it, and I know what I am talking about, and I tell you there is nothing in it but fishing worms." If all you can see is sorrow and trouble, pain and distress, sin and evil, crime and violence, lust and greed, wrath and judgment, and antichrist and tribulation, then you are living still in the wrong country! "WOE to the INHABITORS OF THE EARTH!"

A "catching up" is taking place today. There is a transference to a new kingdom and a new kind of experience which we have not known before. Unto transformed men today the Spirit is speaking these magnificent words: "If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). There is a spiritual rapture with Christ and all who partake of it will find that their affections are being set upon heavenly things ABOVE and not on things on the earth. This can be your experience here and now in this present world. 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 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 conspires to do, the world bankers, the trilateral commission, the Pope, the communists, 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, 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. Hallelujah! I've been "raptured"! And to one and all I say, "COME UP HITHER!" I am no longer a citizen of this world, for I have risen with Christ 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!

Come up hither, in the Son realm, No dragon here abides;  
For the sure Word now has conquered, And in Him we have our life;  
As the kingdoms of men crumble, Have no fear, just stand and see,  
That the Kingdom of our Father Is brought forth in you and me!

-Bob & Charlotte Torango

# *Chapter 48*

## *Coming As A Thief*

We must now draw this series of messages, on the appearing of Christ, to a close; and it is with a strong feeling of reluctance that we do so. The theme is intensely interesting, inscrutably profound and abundantly fruitful. Its manifold facets open up an extensive field of vision for the spiritual mind to explore with enlightenment that never flags, because the subject is inexhaustible. However, we must, for the present at least, close our meditations on this most marvelous line of truth and go on to others; but ere doing so, we are moved to call our reader's attention to yet one final thought in connection with our Lord's return - His coming AS A THIEF.

"And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Lk. 12:39-40). "Behold, I COME AS A THIEF. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee AS A THIEF, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3).

There is a coming of the Lord as a thief. That is not a coming or an appearing that is before the public. It is not an unveiling before the multitudes. A thief does not go down to the public square with a trumpet and say, "I'd like to make an announcement. At three o'clock in the morning I'm going to visit the wealthiest man in this town and I'm going to steal everything I can get my hands on." He doesn't do that. He comes at the darkest part of the night. He comes with softest tread, without noise, without light, without warning. He comes as silently and stealthily as possible, unobserved by the sleepers. He comes to rob. He comes to take away everything that he can. He is after gold and pearls and jewels of great price. Men are unaware of the event until he has come and gone and the items of value to the owner have disappeared with him. The Lord Jesus Himself says that HE WILL COME AS A THIEF.

Almighty Lord! in whom dwellest the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, flood our souls with understanding from above. Remove the dark veil from our minds, and flood our hearts with light divine, that we may clearly behold the sacred secrets of truth long concealed in Thee. Our understanding of this beautiful truth will be greatly enhanced once we understand that long ago in Palestine Jesus came as a thief. The carnal mind conceives of Him coming in royal splendor and magnificence, with a band of trumpets sounding, a host of angels announcing His arrival, as He makes His triumphal entry into the world riding in a chariot overlaid with gold, His royal garments glistening with jewels of the rarest kind, and a crown of gold on His head and the omnipotent scepter of His Kingdom in His hand. Perhaps one of the greatest mysteries of all is that Christ came, not to dazzle the world with a spectacular political coup or military overthrow of the kingdoms of the world, but to reveal the Kingdom of God WITHIN MEN, to unveil the internal rule of the spirit by which men and families and communities and cities and nations are transformed from domains of sin, ignorance, fear, evil, greed, lust, sorrow, darkness,

disease and death into shining citadels of righteousness, wisdom, love, joy, peace, health, light and life. He came the first time to an out-of-the-way place, in the womb of a woman, and lying in a manger. He came riding on a little donkey. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9). He came in weakness, in meekness, in obscurity. His coming was shrouded in secret. Very few knew when He arrived in the midst. When Jerusalem and the great city of Rome closed their shops that star-lit night they knew not that the King of glory had come to earth. Even Bethlehem did not know. When He rode into Jerusalem He came not with the flamboyant and dazzling style of an earthly king. There were not legions of angels, no blasting of trumpets, no marching of armies, no royal chariot pulled by lively, prancing, expertly groomed and trained white horses. There was no palace where royal attendants waited to escort Him to His throne, and to await His every command. Our glorious King - yours and mine, beloved - came to the common, ordinary multitude in the most lowly, humble and unpretentious way - riding on a common beast of burden - yet He came in the quiet and hushed movings of His omnipotent Spirit! The kingdoms of the world knew nothing of His coming until it was too late - the feet of iron and clay were smitten by the power of His Word as like a thief He came upon them and spoiled their houses, setting up a kingdom of life and light and love in their midst which shall never be destroyed and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and all the kingdoms of men shall be driven away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor before the wind.

As our Lord came into the world two thousand years ago silently, with softest tread, without fanfare or warning, so does He come to every man. Every well-marked crisis in the life of a child of God is a "coming" or "appearing" of the Christ, whether we know it at the time or not. Many times we encounter Him in the most unthinkable places, and under the most unpropitious circumstances. In places and ways where we least expected to find the Lord, He will meet us face to face. There are times when we are faced with a mountain in circumstances, which appears insurmountable and immovable. This is often the very place where we find Him waiting for us. All the mountains in our lives are raised up through our lack or unbelief, but there are no mountains of difficulty with God.

There are occasions when such appearances of the Lord seem the very opposite of what they are, times when our fate seems to be at the mercy of haphazard influences and accidental events. The greater part of any life-history is unpredictable, and in most cases the really great crises in the experience of any of us are unexpected, take us unaware. If you read our Lord's figurative descriptions of His coming in this light you cannot fail to see how true they are. He says no warning will be given. People will be going about their ordinary avocations in the ordinary way, taking for granted that nothing different will occur from what they have been accustomed to from day to day; outwardly there will be nothing portentous, no sign that the old order of things is at an end; and then, like a thunder clap, the cataclysm will be upon them. "For as the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE."

Is not this exactly what happens in life as we know it now? You have only to look around you to see that these words of Christ are receiving fulfillment every day and hour. It is true of the great movements of history. Consider the events of the past several months in eastern Europe (6-90). What is truer than that great crises prepare themselves insensibly and almost unnoticed, and generally take humanity by surprise? And it is equally so with

the individual, and with the spiritual life. How apparently casual, uncertain, inconsequent, are the things which happen to us from hour to hour as contrasted with the effects they produce for weal or woe! Things look so accidental, of such small account oftentimes, and yet they make all the difference between life and death to the soul to whom they occur. By this time tomorrow your whole world may have been turned upside down, your entire outlook on life revolutionized. What God may have in store for you no man can prophesy; but this I urge you to believe, that it is mercy and not vindictiveness that directs His hand.

Furthermore, we are bidden to look in all the changes of our earthly lot for the appearing of the Lord. This is what the Lord Jesus Himself has told us. He directs and mandates every experience of your life, precious friend of mine, and compels these things, whether good or evil, to be the instruments of His redeeming love, the vehicles of His appearing to, in and through you. In the crises, changes, processings, strippings, purgings and prunings, HE COMES to succour and relieve, to claim us for Himself, to teach us His ways, to inwork of His nature, and transform into His image and likeness. Nothing happens without Him; nothing can reach us which is not directly the token of His presence - or, as I prefer to put it, it is His very own special advent, the parousia, the coming, the appearing of Christ, to the soul thus visited. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Some time ago I read the most enlightening testimony of a man - a Christian teacher and scholar - shared at a retreat for Christian teachers at a great university. The meetings were entirely private and the numbers purposely restricted in order to secure the spiritual intimacy without which the interchange of experience would have been profitless. This distinguished scholar opened his heart to his companions and told of the way in which he discovered the reality of the indwelling Christ - Christ present and active, appearing and manifesting in the inner reality of his own spirit. He said there came a time in his life when everything to which he had hitherto clung fell away from him; it was as though some fiend of hell had been planning his ruin. Up to that point he had believed himself to be an exemplary character; but that was because he had never been tested; he had lived a sheltered life and been fortunate in most of his undertakings. Like so many of us he was rather self-complacent, too easily satisfied with his own standard of being and doing, too sure of himself, too ready to judge others. And then, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came the blow - he did not say what - which destroyed all the vain fabric of his self-delusion. It was not one thing only that went wrong with him; everything went wrong; and, worst of all, he lost all confidence in his own rectitude of principle and strength of will. He could do nothing to save himself, nothing whatever; he found no comfort, no resting place, no anchorage for his soul; his sense of helplessness could not have been more complete. But when things were at their very blackest a miracle took place. For no reason that he could ever divine - no human reason, anyway - he became conscious of a strange unearthly quietude in his heart; something broke in upon him, as it were, from the world beyond; yet, it was not from outside of him, but from somewhere deep within; he became aware of the presence of Christ within, and the omnipotent power and energizing nature of God within his spirit. He confessed that this was the greatest spiritual discovery he ever made, and he was never afterwards able to see that his own will had anything to do with it beyond directing the inarticulate cry for help that went up from his desolate soul and was thus answered. He simply knew that Christ was there, suddenly appearing in glory as a thief out of his own reality, and the surprise of the realization was quickly superseded by the sense of peace and consolation and wholeness that holy presence brought. His trouble fled; he was content to rest from himself and his woes, and to leave

everything to those Almighty hands - not hands in some far-off heaven, but the hands of the reality of the Christ within. Like a thief in the night the Christ stole into the darkness of his state of being and snatched away from him his cherished treasures of his own self-righteousness, self-sufficiency and self-dependency, breaking up his carnal outer house of being. Ah, Christ is always present - yet is always coming - by the manifestation of His presence, the epiphaneia of His parousia, as He steps forth from our inner invisible life in spirit into our outer visible world of consciousness and experience. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

As a thief! Can the natural mind even fathom the depths of a truth so eternal and sublime? This statement plainly indicates the manner of the Lord's coming. It shows that He is present unseen, doing a work of which men are for a time entirely unaware. His working is therefore in a quiet manner, unobserved and entirely unknown until the discovery is made in consciousness of the handiwork He has wrought in secret. His arising steals its way upon us as the dawning of the day. The sun comes up at an early hour in the morning and if you are awake and up at that time you will see it rise, but if you sleep until noon, a great number of important things can transpire ere you are aware. The morning can be over before you know what is going on! Jesus told His disciples that **NO MAN KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR OF HIS COMING**. Certainly not! for He comes "as a thief." If we trust this word of inspiration and truth, then outward symbols and signs indicating a specific time for Christ's return make no sense at all. If the seventy weeks of Daniel, the "seven times" of Israel's punishment, the 1335 days, the 2300 days, the measurements of the Great Pyramid, or any other sign or symbol indicated a date on the calendar when Jesus would return to earth, then our Lord's own words would stand contradicted. This simple yet infallible principle is just the reason why I could proclaim so confidently that "the rapture" would NOT take place in 1988!

The false teaching that the "second coming" of Christ is one singular event limited to a specific date in the future when Jesus Christ will descend from heaven in a body of flesh, with wounds in His hands, feet and side, and that He will flash through the skies, snatching away His faithful followers, carrying them with Him to some far-away heaven somewhere, has given rise to innumerable speculations, predictions, calculations, prophecies and projected dates concerning when this stupendous event is supposed to transpire. The inspiring promises about our Lord's coming have too often been an issue of sensationalism. Men have quarreled and quibbled and fought over a most precious assurance, and have missed altogether the wonderful blessing and the glorious reality. Because of the distorted understanding of this blessed truth many ridiculous theories have been spawned about the "time" and "manner" of His appearing.

In the past few decades, several small groups, devoutly following the leadership of some would-be prophet, abandoned their jobs and professions, sold all their worldly goods, and confidently awaited a precise moment when either the "rapture" would occur, or Jesus Christ would return. All such predictions failed, of course. Usually the news media only inform us of the sheepish admissions of such aspiring prophets that they will have to "re-study the prophecies," but we never hear about the victims of their harebrained schemes who divested themselves of their accumulated goods only to find that the dogmatically trumpeted prophecies were only so much "pie in the sky." Occasionally you will see one of these embarrassed false prophets frantically attempting to discover some alternative explanation as to WHY his confident predictions did not come to pass as he had proclaimed! Over the years I have seen some of the most carefully constructed theories collapse like the proverbial house of cards!

Put away your charts and timetables and calculations and dates, O ye saints of God! for they have all failed miserably and none will ever be right. Thank God that He delivers us from all this fantastic nonsense! And in its place He directs our attention to what HE is doing, yes, that which HE IS BECOMING and FULFILLING in His elect. We look, indeed, for HIS GLORIOUS APPEARING, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory wherein He has appeared unto us, and in the glory in which He shall yet appear in surpassing splendor, praise His wonderful name!

Before the Lord Jesus Christ departed from this visible world, He said, "I will come again." He, as the glorified Christ, repeated these words to John on the lonely island of Patmos. Here He sharpened His promise and delivered it in a dramatic way. "And, behold, I come QUICKLY; and My reward is with Me" (Rev. 22:12). This word "quickly" is from the Greek TACHU meaning shortly, without delay, soon. Why would Christ say He was coming QUICKLY, SHORTLY, SOON AND WITHOUT DELAY if two long millenniums of time were to stretch out between His promise and its fulfillment? If such was the case, He either lied, deceived, or was mistaken. Two thousand years are N-O-T SOON, SHORTLY OR WITHOUT DELAY by the stretch of anybody's imagination. His last word to the Churches is: "I am coming quickly," and this is the testimony of the One who is Faithful and true. He makes His coming to be the "NEXT THING" for the Christian. He sets up neither time nor event between Himself and His body. He takes special pains to assure His people that there is no required delay, no parenthesis of time between Him and the saints. He uses a word which from the earliest days of classic Greek signifies "without delay." When therefore, He says, "I am coming (for He uses the present tense)," He says actually, "I am coming, I am already in the process of coming, and there SHALL BE NO DELAY." It would be impossible to use language which could more adequately, and without reserve, teach that the coming of Christ is a PRESENT AND CONTINUOUS EVENT. An aged minister once said that he did not believe the Lord was coming for 60,000 years. I concluded that he COULD NOT BE WATCHING FOR IT!

As we have pointed out repeatedly in this series, we have been led to think in terms of the first coming and the second coming, whereas the Bible speaks in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. Our God does not talk about the "first coming" and the "second coming" - He talks about the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He states, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Notice His "goings forth." The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of "goings" has to do with the onward marching of God - the unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of the Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever-increasing unveiling of Himself to man.

We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearances. We have limited the comings of Jesus strictly to two because of our unscriptural and extra-biblical terms "first coming" and "second coming," but the truth is that He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He will come; He will continue to come!

Like the sound of many waters, the testimony of the Word of God resounds with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of Christ is not a single event, but includes many different manifestations. His coming to us is a many sided

experience. To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. They invite Him to come "Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus!" And this coming is just as real and meaningful and powerful as was His coming long centuries ago. To many He becomes their salvation but they never venture any deeper to know Him intimately. They have only a superficial knowledge of Him. To others He appears as Bridegroom. These hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. Unto others He appears as Fire, consuming their hay, wood, and stubble, eliminating by the spirit of burning all that is of self and not of God. The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth.

There is a principle in the scriptures concerning the coming of the Lord. That is, we must spiritually discern and respond to His comings in our midst and in our individual lives. Jesus said, "Occupy till I come." In the midst of all our activity we are to ever look for His comings. We must be spiritually perceptive and awake at all times. Thus, recognizing His presence and turning aside from all that would distract, we can move with Him in His visitation. As we respond to His comings, be it in blessing, refreshing, quickening, enlightenment, transformation, Lordship, fellowship, communion, judgment, correction, stripping, purging or cleansing - we shall come to KNOW HIM in all His wonderful reality, and be made like Him as His own in the earth.

Oh, listen for the sound of His comings! When all hope seems gone, we receive His promise, "I am coming!" When our lives are pitched too and fro in the storms of life, when all around the darkness hangs like a pall, we hear His voice of encouragement, "I am coming!" In every situation and experience, negative or positive, there rings out clearly His faithful assurance, "Fear not, IT IS I!" Truly HE is our expectation! He is coming. He is always coming. Ears of faith can hear the sound of His chariot wheels. And in His faithfulness He comes to accomplish what is needful for the occasion. Hallelujah!

### **WATCHING FOR HIS COMING**

"WATCH THEREFORE: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have WATCHED, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mat. 24:42-44). "WATCH ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Mat. 25:13). "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not WATCH, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3).

These significant passages raise the question as to what Jesus meant by WATCHING. For what are the Lord's people to watch? Did He mean that we should relax on some sunny beach, eyes heavenward, until we see some fleecy white cloud bearing Him along? Well, hardly! Obviously, we are not to watch the sky at all. If Jesus were to come in the literal manner suggested by the traditions of the Dark Ages, and if His faithful saints in various parts of the earth were all watching the sky to see Him come, the vast majority of them would, of necessity, be sorely disappointed. Only those within a radius of a few square miles at the most would be able to see, while those outside this small circle - in other parts of the country and the world - would be denied this ecstasy of joy.

Nor does it mean counting dates or de-coding time-prophecies in the Bible. We are so accustomed to thinking of events being fixed by fixed dates, that it seems very difficult to get hold of the fact that the appearing of our Lord is not an event fixed by a date on the calendar. Through the years we have had a lot of SIGN-WATCHERS, though I dare say most of them have missed the meaning of the signs altogether, for they read with the carnal mind, having the understanding darkened. We can be so taken up with the natural, carnal signs of wars and rumors of wars, of financial collapse, of international events, of conspiracies and alliances, political intrigues, of earthquakes and disasters, until we totally miss the real thing that is happening in the realm of SPIRIT, or hearing His voice within, that He might bring us into complete union with Himself, that we might BECOME His salvation unto the ends of the earth. We watch the evening news, and suppose that we are watching for His coming. We hear of the storms, the drought, the crime, the wars, aids, the rise and fall of governments, and our perspective becomes distorted, and fear and doubt seize hold of our souls, until we become more conscious of the darkness of "this world," than we are of the light and glory and triumph of the INDWELLING CHRIST. Any time we are troubled by or anxious about the things coming to pass in the earth, it is obvious that we are WATCHING THE REALM OF DARKNESS rather than LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING. "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, BE YE NOT TROUBLED: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet" (Mk. 13:7). The message is just this: These things, the wars and rumors of wars, DO NOT HERALD THE END! These things must needs be, they always have been in this natural realm and will continue in that realm, but they are N-O-T signs of "the end"! Therefore, BE YE NOT TROUBLED! Let God keep you IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH. All the chaos which staggers the imagination MUST NEEDS BE. God would use all these negative forces to develop our trust and confidence, to drive us inward, that we may find God within as the source of our life, our all-in-all, our total sufficiency.

There are five different words in the New Testament which are translated by our English word "watch." Two of these words, TEREIO and PARATEREIO bear the meaning of "watching" in the sense of keeping the attention focused upon the object of concern. The soldiers at the cross were there for the purpose of keeping watch over Jesus (Mat. 27: 36,54). The Pharisees watched to see if Jesus would perform a miracle on the sabbath (Mk. 3:2; Lk. 6:7). The Jews watched the gates at Damascus that they might apprehend Paul when he attempted to leave the city (Acts 9:24). THESE WORDS WHICH REFER TO THE PHYSICAL ACT OF FIXING ONE'S ATTENTION UPON SOME OBJECT ARE NEVER USED OF THE COMING OF CHRIST. Another word is NEPHO. In I Pet. 4:7 this word is translated in the King James Version as follows: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and WATCH unto prayer." This word, however, which is here translated by the word "watch," literally means "to be sober." The Revised Version of 1900 renders this verse: "Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be SOBER unto prayer." In I Pet. 1:3, even the King James Bible translates the word "be sober" in view of the hope of the revelation of Jesus: "be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." NEPHO does not mean "to watch" but to have a sober mind and character.

The two words commonly used to admonish watchfulness with relation to the Lord's coming are GREGOREIO and AGRUPNEIO. And they have a similar meaning. AGRUPNEIO means "to be sleepless" or "wakeful," and thus "to be vigilant." The noun AGRUPNIA, occurs only twice in the New Testament where it is used to refer to loss of sleep and to wakeful nights (II Cor. 6:5; 11:27). The verb is used of spiritual vigilance in Eph. 6:18, and in Heb. 13:17 it refers to the vigilance of ministries over the flock.

The word GREGOREO means "to be awake, raise, or rise up, as from sleep or death." In the deep shadows of the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus' soul was agonizing in the face of the cross, He longed for His closest disciples to "watch" with Him, that is, to rise up from their sleep to join Him in His spiritual battle and in the exercise of prayer (Mat. 26:38-41). In I Thes. 5:10 the word means "to be alive" in contrast to the sleep of death. The exhortation in Rev. 3:2-3 to the Church in Sardis to watch does not mean that they were not spending enough time gazing into the sky so as not to miss the Lord when He comes. The word refers to their spiritual lethargy and their dead condition. Williams correctly translates the passage "WAKE UP, and strengthen what is left, although it is on the very point of dying...if you do not WAKE UP, I will come like a thief, and you will never know the hour when I came unto you." In other words, they would MISS THE TIME OF THEIR VISITATION! As the historic denominations missed the outpouring of the Lord in the Pentecostal Revival, and as the Pentecostals missed His coming as the rain in the great move of God in 1948, so, if we do not stay awake spiritually, we can miss Him in His comings unto us in this great hour, for ye know not when your Lord doth come. But there was a further aspect of His coming like a thief upon the Church at Sardis, for He came in a spiritual visitation in judgment to strip and purge from them the death of the carnal mind; those outer, earthly things they were cherishing above the SPIRIT of Christ. That is what a thief does - he plunders the house, carrying off those things treasured by the householder! He appears as a thief in the night, and there have often been times that He has stolen out of the dark hour of our ignorance some carnal concept, some religious tradition, some Babylonian garment of exquisite design that we have hidden in our tent of experience. Ah, we must stay AWAKE to joyfully receive Him in His coming to us, His appearing in us; if we fail to do so He will come like a thief, He will come into our world uninvited and unannounced, He will overtake us unexpectedly and break up our life style and smash our religious games, exposing our pretense. Those who are AWAKE TO REALITY do not have their houses plundered. These willingly yield up the things they once prized, which now are counted but dung that they might win Christ.

The word GREGOREO also carries the thought of - to gather all the faculties together, become mentally alert with all forces brought into focus. It points directly to that which pertains to the realm of the SOUL - mind, will, emotion and desire. OUR SPIRIT is quickened by HIS SPIRIT, and he that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT, thus coming into a spirit of life, for indeed, "the spirit IS LIFE" (Rom. 8:10). It must needs follow, therefore, that the life of God IS THE LIFE IN YOUR SPIRIT. All that God is and has is the reality of your spirit. God is closer to you, my brother, my sister, than the air that you breathe, yea! closer even than the blood coursing its way through your veins, for it is written, "GOD dwelleth IN US, and His love is perfected IN US. Hereby know we that we dwell IN HIM, and HE IN US, BECAUSE HE HATH GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT" (I Jn. 4:12-13).

But there is right now a process going on in the soul realm - to where all our faculties are being brought into focus ON HIM - awake to Him, being raised into the higher state of GOD CONSCIOUSNESS. The veil that has hung like a pall over the eyes of our understanding is being removed so that our vision become focused on OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT, that we might comprehend the full implication of the oft repeated truth that it is "Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). As someone has said, It is an on-going process now, that shall yet have a glorious climax, "when reality breaks through."

Millenniums ago the Spirit of the Almighty posed the question to Job, "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). Oh that God might anoint the eyes of all His saints to see that there was a day, glorious and wonderful beyond the telling, in which God laid His great plan of creation and redemption. So majestic and sublime was the wisdom that conceived so grand and excellent a plan that the morning stars flooded God's mountain with harmonious canticles of rhapsody, and the sons of God filled the vastness of heaven with their shouts of joy and expectation as they beheld what the end of that plan would be! There is a chord deep within the depths of my spirit today that still vibrates to that shout of joy. There is a consciousness in my redeemed spirit that in that long forgotten past I was there with Him in spirit beholding with wonder the unfolding of His plan. But as a child forgets the day of his birth, so we, too, have forgotten the glorious things of eternity past, because for a purpose we were born into this world and subjected to vanity.

Lowered from the realm of pure spirit, formed of the dust of the ground, made a living soul, subjected to this gross material realm, the forbidding darkness of the carnal mind enshrouded Adam, and from that hour to this darkness has hung like a thick cloud over the hearts of men, and gross darkness has blinded all to the glories of that bright realm of spirit from whence we came. The whole race of men is groping in terrible darkness and confusion and misunderstanding. The eyes of men who hitherto stood erect in the image of God, living by His Spirit and walking in His fellowship, now behold only the outward illusions of the flesh and lust after things that do not pertain to the spirit. The glory of God has departed. As with Adam, God has caused a deep sleep to fall upon the whole race of mankind, as their soul is separated from the spirit, and their eyes are holden to see God, or any heavenly or spiritual thing. Their only remaining ability is to gaze earthward toward all that is unspiritual, natural and dying. The glory of the celestial realm is shut out and even spiritual sense and understanding has vanished from their hearts. The carnal mind is the dark veil of ignorance and spiritual blindness, for it shuts out the celestial world and imprisons men in the consciousness of sin, sorrow, limitation and death.

And yet - heaven itself, and the image and glory of God - are to be found in man, locked up in that outer form of sensuality and earthiness in the same way the germ of life is imprisoned within the outer shell of the seed. Yea, indeed man IS a seed, and within his inner life in spirit is the life of God, the very seed of Elohim, awaiting only that fructification that comes via the fertilization of the seed by the TRUTH the Word of God. "Being born (begotten) again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD (TRUTH) OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Pet. 1:23). On occasions in God's Word we read that the eyes of certain ones were OPENED. Now if the veil of the flesh is over our understanding, which veil is the natural mind, is it not evident that when the veil is cast aside, when the natural mind is put away, "all of us, as with unveiled faces we mirror THE GLORY OF THE LORD, are TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME LIKENESS, FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS DERIVED FROM THE LORD, THE SPIRIT" (II Cor 3:18, Weymouth). And notice this: "Now the Lord means the SPIRIT; and where the spirit of the Lord is, freedom (from the veil of flesh) is" (II Cor. 3:17, Weymouth). Those who renounce the consciousness of the natural world in order to discover, experience, develop and nurture to fullness the inner life of spirit are no ordinary people. They "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit," for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death. They have come out of the fleshly corral of the outer world of illusion and unreality and escaped the prison house of human tradition and understanding, to live in a spiritual realm where the light of God illumines mind and

heart, effecting life and transformation. To "walk after the flesh" means that the outward, visible, tangible realm is your source, and may I add that it is the source only of darkness and death. To "walk after the spirit" means to make the inward spirit realm your source, and it is the source of life, light, truth, reality, glory and incorruptibility. If you, like Israel, are lusting after outward things, even an outward God and external blessings, you will never grow to maturity nor come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Thank God, the quickenings of His Spirit are causing us to BE RAISED, out of the sleep of death in old Adam, standing up again in Christ, getting us all-together! We have been so fragmented in ourselves, vacillating back and forth between the flesh and the spirit, with our soulish nature frustrated, emotions spent, intellectually exhausted, our will divided, our minds confused, our desires unfulfilled. But now, praise God! HE is saying to us all, WATCH! AWAKE! RISE UP! ASCEND IN CONSCIOUSNESS! GET YOURSELF TOGETHER! THE LORD IS COMING! HE IS ARISING OUT OF HIS PLACE IN YOUR HEART! HE IS ARISING FROM WITHIN AS THE DAYSTAR! LIGHT IS DAWNING! THE CHRIST IS APPEARING! YOUR GOD IS COMING TO SAVE YOU! AND HIS APPEARING IS FROM W-I-T-H-I-N! It is the hour to gather all our faculties and focus them on HIM - THE SPIRIT WITHIN - and all that He has and brings, praise His wonderful name!

Out of the stupor of minding the flesh, now let us AWAKE and RISE UP to put on the mind of Christ, with our will one in the will of God, our thought-processes renewed into the truth as it is in Christ, our emotions girded up into the joy and peace of the unchanging spirit, our desires seeking only those things which are above, no longer setting any affection on the passing realm of the earthly. When Jesus says, "WATCH therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come," it is the SPIRIT exhorting the SOUL to AWAKE from its narcosis of ignorance that it might become alert and aware of the activity of spirit, bringing the life and authority of God to deliver, heal and restore to soundness even the soul and body realms. Awake, O my soul! and LOOK FOR HIS APPEARING. Many dear saints are "waiting" for Him but they are not "watching." They believe He is coming, but they know not when nor how, so they doze on in drowsiness. He will appear some day, somewhere, they think, so they wait. To be "ready" or "perceptive" one must WATCH. A man in a railroad station may be waiting for the train and fall fast asleep, but the man who is watching for the train will be wide awake. WATCH! I say.

We have passed through a time of great darkness. Thank God, the first rays of light of the new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not awakened. They know not of the dawn. And the Word describes them and their shepherds in very uncomplimentary terms. The heads of the churches are called "the drunkards of Ephraim" (Isa. 28:1-14). Then in Isa. 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, the seers, 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 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 darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others" (1 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 must be a parting of the ways. 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 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 spiritual side of life. Their human minds comprehend the natural side, but the spiritual is 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 a more glorious scene.

This more glorious scene of which I speak is of a people who are "looking for Him" and have FOUND HIM! "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him, but I found Him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go..." (S. of S. 3:1-5).

Symbolically, the Shulamite maiden in the S. of S. sets forth the bride of Christ seeking a more intimate relationship with the Lord. Individually, the bride bespeaks of the soul, the feminine area of our life, seeking the relationship of love (union) with the Lord who is the spirit. That the Shulamite symbolizes the SOUL is clear when you consider how many times she says, "I will seek HIM whom MY SOUL loveth." "By night upon my bed I sought Him whom my SOUL loveth." The word used for bed is a Hebrew word denoting "love bed" (Gen. 49:4; Num. 31:17). It is UNION she desires! "By night" catches the force of the Hebrew plural "nights" as well as "night after night," picturing "the dark night of the soul." The soul arises to go about the city, and to seek Him whom she loveth in the broad ways, and in every likely and unlikely place. Literally, this refers to the city of Jerusalem and the broad places at the gates of the city, where citizens gathered to transact business. Spiritually, it is the assembly, the church, or gathering places of spiritual enrichment, blessing and instruction.

The watchmen mentioned in this beautiful passage COULD NOT TELL THE SEEKER where to go to find the Lord, and in this respect they represent the preachers of the church system in our day who, though they go all about the city, compassing land and sea in search of proselytes, have no answer to the seeker's problem, no eternal reality to offer, for that answer, important above all others, they do not know. But "IT WAS BUT A LITTLE THAT I PASSED FROM THEM, and I found Him whom my soul loveth!" Oh yes, you will have to go beyond the ignorance of the so-called gospel of today's religious systems if you are going to find the Lord, the Spirit, and come into union with Him. Sermons and explanations are but vanity here, for God is found only by those who love Him enough to search for Him until they find Him. "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear..." Neither will such seekers find Him in the broad ways, or with the watchmen, or

in any other religious realm where men suppose Him to be. Those places leave us high and dry on the sand, proud in the knowledge that is nothing short of ignorance and foolishness with God. But men who will turn inward and find union with God in the INNER CHAMBER of the human spirit will discover that the glory light of His life within fades into nothingness the endless doctrines and instructions of men. Those blessed souls who truly find the ALL SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHRIST WITHIN are wiser in God and the things of God than all the doctors of the law and the ministers of religion, and richer far than the rarest treasures of earth.

O my soul! WATCH for HIS coming. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). This gives us the picture of a Roman sentry supposed to be on guard duty through the night. They wore a garment, a robe, a uniform; the robe was the profession they made to be guards, the insignia or proof of their position. There was a captain. At certain and unannounced hours the captain made his rounds to inspect and relieve the watch; some times he took one guard and left another. At times a guard became weary and slumped down. Presently he was asleep. Is there anything more despicable and criminal than to sleep at the post of duty? What must be said of a captain who sleeps on the bridge? Or a soldier who sleeps at his post? Or a light-house keeper who sleeps in the night? Of a soul who sleeps in the deceptive bed of religious activities, unaware of the movings and woings of the spirit? When the captain of the guard discovered the sleeping sentry, as the custom was, he grabbed his tunic from him without waking him. When he arose his shame was evident, the captain had come and gone, had stripped off his profession, made him naked and put him to shame.

SO we are exhorted to "watch" in view of the Lord's coming. Those who are faithless will be stripped of their profession, naked and ashamed before the bare light of day. He comes like a thief to steal from the "professing" church the garment that has under it no possession. Because He is coming to snatch away the mere profession and make it naked to the gaze of judgment He warns all in the Church to be on the watch, and for each one to keep his garment; that is, to "hold fast" the profession he has made. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). Cling fervently to the hope within you today, dear child of God. Embrace and never let go the reality you have found in the Christ within. Trade it not for the worthless tinsel pandered by the harlot system in the broad ways of Mystery Babylon. Treasure the truth you know as you would treasure the most priceless gem of earth, and guard it with all the vigilance of your being, for there, and there alone, is reality, life, immortality and glory eternal.

"It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go..."

So many people wonder, Will Jesus come in my lifetime? Will I live to see the return of the Lord? Well, start living and allow Jesus to come again in your lifetime! How many lifetimes do you have? You have only this one lifetime - let Jesus come in your lifetime! As someone has said, Let Jesus come in your lifetime and begin to have the TIME OF YOUR LIFE! Then you can cease gazing up into the skies wondering when Jesus is going to come, and you can step into the NOW of God and begin your progression back into God where He is all-in-all in your life. NOW is always the best time to live. TODAY is always the best time to walk with God. THE PRESENT is always the best time to see and know the Lord. I have this peculiar trait of enjoying life NOW. You can dream of tomorrow

and you can look back into the past, but all you have or will ever have is RIGHT NOW. It is always NOW. God is NOW. Get into TODAY, into God's NOW and begin living JESUS HAS COME!

Did you expect the sky to rend asunder?  
Were you expecting lightening, hail and thunder?  
Have you looked up to the skies With beclouded earthly eyes?  
Did you expect the Lord to come that way?  
Once He came and they laid Him in a manger.  
He came unto His own, but remained a stranger.  
Though some still looked for the King  
They never heard the angels sing,  
They didn't expect the Lord to come that way.  
None could desire Him, for He had no beauty.  
It then became their strict religious duty,  
Because His life they could not see,  
To nail and hang Him on a tree.  
How could they expect the Lord to come that way?  
That age is over; a new one is beginning.  
It's time for the next appearing without sinning.  
If He comes in robes of flesh  
And riding on a lowly ass,  
Would you expect the Lord to come that way?  
Be careful, then, just how you judge another,  
For Christ may come to you as just a brother.  
He's Zion's incognito King  
Whose coming will salvation bring  
To those who expect the Lord to come that way.  
"All flesh is not the same," our Lord has taught us.  
For when that sonship comes, which He has bought us,  
He's a Man within a man,  
A Living Word beyond time's span.  
We MUST expect the Lord to come that way.  
Yes, we MUST expect the Lord to come that way,  
For the Lord will surely, surely come that way  
In the sons of God... today!  
Connie Asbill

# *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).