

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

THE HEAVENS DECLARE

Book One

By J. Preston Eby

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Table of Contents

The Heavens Declare	4
The Heavens Declare (continued).....	17
The Heavens Rule	30
A Tabernacle for the Sun	43
Virgo-The Virgin	56
Virgo-The Virgin (continued).....	69
Virgo - The Virgin (continued).....	82
Virgo-The Virgin (continued).....	95
Libra-The Scales	108
Libra-The Scales (continued).....	121
Libra - The Scales (continued).....	134
Libra-The Scales (continued).....	146
Libra- The Scales (continued).....	159
Libra-The Scales (continued).....	172
Scorpio-The Scorpion	185
Scorpio The Scorpion (continued).....	198
Scorpio-The Scorpion (continued).....	215
Scorpio -The Scorpion (continued).....	231
Scorpio-The Scorpion (continued).....	247
Scorpio-The Scorpion (continued).....	263
Sagittarius - The Archer.....	280
Sagittarius - The Archer (continued).....	296
Sagittarius-The Archer (continued).....	312
Sagittarius-The Archer (continued).....	329
Sagittarius-The Archer (continued).....	345
Sagittarius-The Archer (continued).....	362
Sagittarius-The Archer (continued).....	379
About The Author	396

Chapter 1

The Heavens Declare

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

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

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

By contrast, the Bible states in Jer. 33:22 that "the host of heaven CANNOT BE NUMBERED." During the thousands of years before Galileo's invention of the telescope, such a statement was considered to be either false or at least a gross exaggeration. The stars uncountable? The universe, they said, was too small to contain that many stars! However, using such giant telescopes as the "200 inch" on Mount Palomar in California, astronomers have estimated that there are billions of billions of stars in the visible universe. More specifically, astronomers estimate that their number is equal to 1,000,

000,000,000,000,000,000 or one sextillion. Is this an uncountable number? That is the number that can be seen through the telescopes! But as far as man can see the universe stretches on and on into infinity- he has never discovered its outer perimeter. We therefore conclude that the term "uncountable" is indeed a very appropriate description of the number of stars in the universe. Yet in Ps. 147:4 we read that "GOD telleth the number of the stars; HE calleth them all by their names." God is not only able to number the stars- these billions of billions of blazing suns- but He calls each of them by name-He has ascribed a nature, a power, a purpose to each!

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

THE HEAVENS SPEAK

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

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

What did David know of the heavens and how they express the glory of God? What does David mean when he says that every day speaks to him and to us? What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of knowledge? To whom does he refer when he says that there is no place on earth where the language or speech of man is spoken that "their voice is not heard"? Surely there is something more indicated here than a mere wonder on David's part evoked by the immensity and grandeur of the star-lit sky. When we read the whole passage and mark its structure, and note the words employed, we are emphatically told that the heavens contain a revelation from God; they

prophecy, they teach knowledge, they tell of God's glory, and set forth His purposes and counsels. The heavens do not speak English, yet they speak to every Englishman and every American. The heavens do not speak French, but they speak to every Frenchman. They do not speak Spanish, yet they speak to every Spaniard. They speak in every language to every people. And they speak and reveal the majesty of God's great plan and purposes to His creation. Upon the blue sapphire of the firmament is spread a sheet of royal paper written all over with the wisdom and power of God. This book of creation is not sold in bookstores, but it is to be read by everyone who lifts his eyes up to heaven.

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

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

THE SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

Important perspectives are founded in the starry host of heaven, and, scripturally rooted in Gen. 1:14. Some years ago our daughter took an aptitude test to discover her career abilities, or what she is best at. She came across questions that were expressed in this way: "A group of four things are set before you; three of them have something in common and one of them seems out of place. Find the one that does not belong." How about a

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

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

To SPIRITUALLY comprehend the creative record, we must admit that God intended these orbs of light as expressions of some special teaching; something different and higher far than what is naturally deductible from them. Stop there for just a minute. Ask yourself what the inspired Psalmist means when he says that every day SPEAKS to him and to us. What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of KNOWLEDGE? From the dawn of the ages God almighty, omniscient, and immutable, charted the course of ALL THINGS. The heavens in their grandeur and majestic purposes were all designed as a fiery script by the moving finger of God. The increasing light and revelation of each one was planned with infinite care to display its own part in the spectrum of eternal truth that heaven and earth and things under the earth might rejoice together in the ENDS OF THE AGES BECAUSE OF THE EVERLASTING FULLNESS OF HIM who everywhere fills the universe with Himself. Glory to His name!

THE PICTURES IN THE HEAVENS

It is my deep conviction that these "signs" were designed as a pictorial presentation of the great plan and processes of God in creation and redemption-a symbolic portrayal of the grand drama of history as it unfolds through the dealings of God with mankind throughout the vast ages of time. Are there indeed "pictures" in the heavens? There exists in the ancient writings of virtually all nations on earth a description of the major stars or constellations in the heavens which are known as the "signs of the Zodiac," of which there are twelve. Historians have delved into the history and origin of the Zodiac

and none has discovered its beginning. Whatever source we go to-whether it be Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Persian, Arabic, Chaldean-the same signs were held throughout the world-and the farther back we go, they are always there! It predates all other sciences, all political systems, and all religions. It is older than the Flood, the Great Wall of China, the Egyptian Pyramids, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Law of Moses, the temples of Greece, the tablets of ancient Babylon, or the Ark of the Covenant. Regardless of how far you go back, there is a remarkable phenomenon: All nations had the same twelve signs, representing the same twelve things, placed in the same order. Archaeologists, historians and antiquarians have searched the dustiest libraries, uncovered the oldest tablets, ciphered the most difficult hieroglyphics, and have failed to discover how it is that in nations all over the world the same signs exist. The Persian and Arabian traditions all ascribe the Zodiac to Adam, Seth and Enoch. Josephus in his writings asserts that the Zodiac originated in the family of Seth, the righteous line from Adam to Noah. He also writes that Adam, Seth and Enoch made two pillars of stone on which they described the whole prophecy of the stars. This they did to preserve this revelation from being destroyed in the flood (Book 1, Chap. 1-3).

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

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

GOD AND THE ZODIAC

Let's turn our attention to a little cluster of stars in our own galaxy sometimes called the Seven Sisters, or the Pleiades. If you have a good pair of binoculars, you will see not seven stars, but dozens and with an average telescope, hundreds of stars. Now, some groupings or constellations of stars are actually vast distances apart, but appear as a group because they are located in a common direction of the sky. But there are other star groupings which are actual star clusters, and the Pleiades form such a cluster. Now notice a very interesting text in the Bible. It is a remarkable fact that it is in the book of Job, which is the oldest book in the Bible, going back to approximately 2150 B.C., which is before the Patriarch Abraham was called; 650 years before Moses and the Law; over 1,100 years before Homer wrote his Odyssey and Iliad it is in the book of Job that we have reference to this Stellar Revelation. In chapter 38 God finally breaks in and speaks

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the lonely isle of Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, John, gave him a communication concerning the Church, commanding him to write it in a scroll and send it to the seven Churches in Asia. With wondering eyes John stood transfixed as in spirit he saw a great wonder in heaven, "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be

delivered. And she bought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne" (Rev. 12:1-2,5).

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

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

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

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

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

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

seed of life in himself. Jesus Himself prophesied of this "many-membered seed" when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24).

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

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

It is true that astrology uses the signs of the Zodiac in a corrupted form and on a lower plane, but it is not true that astrology invented them or originated them. Most of the error in the religious realms is merely the high and holy truth of God brought down to a lower level, understood carnally rather than spiritually. The failures and sins of men do not disannul the truth of God, neither do their misuses and perversions of His gifts disprove their divine source or holy intent. The perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the blinding darkness of static creeds, dogmas, ritual, ceremony, and tradition comprising the abominations of the harlot church system does not prove Jesus of Nazareth an imposter nor the testimony of His holy apostles and prophets undivine or untrue. And if the ancients in like manner have perverted these primeval records in the stars, and turned their portrayal of God's beautiful plan of redemption into an instrument of damning superstition, and developed a bloody paganism out of a primitive revelation, what is it

except the depravity of the carnal mind, but by no means discrediting the wisdom and love and glory of God in the divine original?

The MAZZAROTH-the signs of the Zodiac-are bought forth each night by the skillful hand of God. These constellations were sprinkled by His hand across the sky as He garnished the heavens and created the figures which we now know as the figures of the Zodiac. They tell a glorious tale of creation and redemption, a glorious revelation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He has written this with His own hand; He has created the stars; He has named and numbered and ordered them. As there are twelve Patriarchs and twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles of the Lamb and twelve gates and foundations in the New Jerusalem, so there are twelve chapters in the celestial story-book. The WORD which begins in SPIRIT, in the invisible realm, was spoken to create the "things which are made" and to leave these created things as a visible testimony that the natural man may find God, and to call men, as the prophets did, to the knowledge of God and the abundance of life, glory, and victory in Him. The reality that lies behind what is commonly known today as horoscopes and behind the common signs of the Zodiac is an original revelation designed by God -a revelation not of pagan mythology or superstitious powers, but of the wonderful truths of God's grand and glorious plan of the ages through His anointed Christ, written in the very stars of heaven. In these twelve celestial signs we have enshrined for us like jewels in a precious display, the twelve great heavenly laws or principles which we are to pass through and master while we walk our fore-ordained path on this planet. Each one of the twelve signs embodies a Kingdom of Heaven principle taught in symbol and ritual under the Old Testament administration. It points to a wonderful progression as we begin in Genesis with the promised seed of the woman (Virgo) and end in the book's Revelation with LEO, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah! Just as the sun passes through each of the twelve signs in the course of a year, so must we experientially partake of the reality of each sign in our progressive transformation into His likeness.

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

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

trouble might be. As he thrust his head up the companionway, the inexperienced sailor called buoyantly, "I say, captain, pick me out another star, we passed that one !"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2

The Heavens Declare

(continued)

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

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

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

Paul illustrated this wonderful truth of God revealed in the heavens when he wrote, "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20). Here we are told that the invisible truths of God

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

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

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

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

There was a day in the times of the Judges when Deborah the judge, filled with the spirit of wisdom and courage from the Lord, and Barak the general took the army of Israel to war against the leader of the Canaanite armies, Sisera, and his mighty forces. The inspired record of that extraordinary battle states, "And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord

gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left" (Judges 4:12-16).

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

"Because the elders took the lead in Israel,
Because the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye the Lord.
Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord;
I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.
The kings came and fought.
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. Gain of booty they did not take.
FROM THE HEAVENS THE STARS FOUGHT,
FROM THEIR COURSES THEY FOUGHT AGAINST SISERA.
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength.
So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord;
But let them that love Him be as the sun,
When he goeth forth in his might."

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

the design of the Lord God of Israel of whom are all things, by whom are all things. and unto whom are all things, blessed be His wonderful name.

ASTROLOGY AND HOROSCOPES

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

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

Joseph Goodavage wrote, "Science has now begun to demonstrate direct linkages between celestial movements and the behavior of animals and men. Biologist Dr. Frank Brown of Northwestern University showed that oysters sense the position of the moon and regulate their activities by it. Ordinarily, oysters open and close their shells in phase with ocean tides. Dr. Brown wanted to see what oysters would do if there were NO tides. He hauled some out of the sea off New Haven, Connecticut, shipped them to Evanston, Illinois, and put them indoors in a tank of sea water at even temperature under a steady, dim light. For two weeks they continued to open and close their shells in phase with the tides at their old ocean home. Then abruptly they changed their rhythm. Their shell-opening cycle slipped into phase with the tides that would have existed if there had been an ocean covering Illinois! Dr. Brown's oysters were obviously responding to the location of the moon which triggered some mysterious reaction inside their 'biological clocks'. Here was an entirely new mystery for scientists. No one knows what the connecting link is between stars and planets and the earthly events with which they so often correlate. Men and women aren't oysters, but celestial forces have definitely been shown to affect human behavior. The American Institute of Medical Climatology in Philadelphia, working with the police and fire departments, major hospitals and the University of Pennsylvania

Medical School, conducted a three-year study of human reactions to the phases of the moon. Conclusions: cases of murder, rape, aggravated assault and arson are, most common during Full Moon periods. Much of human life, if not most of it, seems to be governed...influenced by these forces science is now beginning to detect, the forces on which astrologers base their predictions" -end quote. In addition to these remarks it is also interesting to note that modern physiologists now realize that man is a completely responsive element in the cosmos, that he interacts with his environment, both terrestrial and celestial. Astrology is the study and application of the effect on man of the forces reaching earth from surrounding space-his celestial environment.

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

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

BEYOND THE STARS

If there be indeed a truth in the rule of the natural heavens (and there must be, else the physical heavens could not in scripture serve as the TYPE of the rule of the spiritual heavens), the question follows: What is really wrong, then, with casting horoscopes or consulting astrologers? Let us now acquaint ourselves with the truth as it is in Jesus, for when we learn the truth I now affirm, many things which heretofore have been an

inscrutable mystery will begin to come clear to our understanding. Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact: THERE IS A POWER B-E-Y-O-N-D THE STARS! I must here emphasize the great truth that above everything that exists and behind it all standeth GOD, omniscient, omnipotent, immutable. The great God made and controls everything on earth and throughout the unbounded heavens and His omnipotent hand stretches forth high above and far beyond the vaunted powers of the heavens, for He is the great Cause, while they are the effect; He is the almighty Creator, whereas they are but the creation, the work of His hands.

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

Furthermore, there is no doubt whatever that astrology can inform you of the cosmic influences and instruct you concerning the earthly conditions marked out by the stars. But it can never in a million years EMPOWER you to OVERCOME those influences, or teach you how to be TRANSFORMED. Astrology is a rigidly fatalistic science, pointing you to the problem, revealing the circumstances, but possessing absolutely no power to CHANGE the situation nor one iota of authority to ENABLE you to rise above it. That, my beloved, is just the difference between astrology and Christ-Christ delivers, changes, empowers, quickens, transforms and perfects! Truly the glorious Christ of God has ALL POWER in heaven and in earth, whereas astrology has SOME POWER, and only on earth, and not redeeming power at that.

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

before which to sit!" (Isa. 47:12-14, Amplified). Take heed astrologers and monthly prognosticators! Take heed Jeanne Dixon, and all the rest! The word of the Lord makes it very clear that these shall not be able to deliver even themselves in the day of calamity, much less those who harken to their words.

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

This is the case for most human beings, all human beings, in fact, who live and have their being in the OLD CREATION MAN. But, blessed be God! AN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE EXISTS. The Master Architect of the universe saw fit to create a special category of people who are of an entirely NEW CREATION. New creation people are blessed with the ability to live their lives without having to pass through the stars or planets. Bypassing all physical barriers they receive directly from the Source. There exists a higher power than the stars- and it is that higher power that has touched the life of every re-generated man and woman on the face of the earth. Indeed, dear elect saints of God, it is this higher power that has been guiding your footsteps all along. No longer do you need to look to the stars for an answer. You have found the answer that will unlock all the mysteries of Being-or the answer has found you-right here-right now!

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

Let all who read these lines clearly understand that God's heaven is not the inexhaustible universe of stars and suns and planets- swirling nebulae. Heaven has nothing whatever to do with the time-space continuum or matter in any form. The true heaven is beyond it all, above it all, before it all. Heaven is that high and holy and invisible realm of SPIRIT, the pure and divine and eternal and incorruptible realm of GOD HIMSELF, which existed before ever a star or a planet appeared. Heaven, therefore, can only be entered BY THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT. Let every man know for a certainty that heaven is not a geographical or astral location with their limitations, but a dimension, a sphere of

existence, a state of being- that spiritual existence, being and habitation in which God eternally lives. Natural eyes cannot pierce the invisible realm of spirit. Natural minds know nothing of that realm, for we perceive only those physical things recognizable by the senses. Natural ears are unable to hear that which is spoken in the realm of spirit, for spirit vibrates on a frequency higher than and superior to the low vibrations of earth. Heaven is all around us but we must be raised out of our natural consciousness in order to touch it. But the dimension of heaven is ten thousand times MORE REAL than this gross material realm to which our mortal form has been subjected.

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

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

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

I want to draw your attention to a few scriptures that will make the truth crystal clear. In Heb. 7:26 we read these words concerning Jesus: "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS." This doesn't say that He merely ascended up to heaven, but that He was made HIGHER than the HEAVENS. Here we have the word heavens in the plural. What does it mean, "made higher than the heavens"? Let us look at some other passages along this line. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS" (Eph. 4:10). Now this language is somewhat different than saying that He ascended up to heaven. He is made higher than the heavens, and ascended up far above all heavens. We can be certain that such terminology indicates that there is not just one heaven as many think, but there are many heavens, and Jesus was raised and made higher than them all. Wonderful statements like this are also found in the Psalms. "Be thou exalted O God, ABOVE THE HEAVENS; let Thy glory be above all the earth" (Ps. 57:5,11). "Let God be exalted ABOVE THE HEAVENS" (Ps. 108:5). Not just in heaven, but exalted ABOVE ALL HEAVENS.

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

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

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

So the heavens He has been raised far above are the Principalities and Powers, and Might and Dominion, that inhabit and dwell in all the heavens. God has given Jesus an exalted position, far above all other Principality and Power, good and bad, and given Him a name (nature) that is above every name that is named throughout the vastnesses of infinity. He has put all other Power and Authority everywhere under His feet, and made them all His footstool, that before His glorious name, that wonderful name of Jesus, every knee should bow, yes, every knee, of the inhabitants of the heavens as well as those on the earth and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess, the tongues of those in the heavens, of those on the earth, and those in the underworld; every one of them shall proclaim Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father. It should be plain to even the simplest mind that this authority and power over all the powers of the heavens certainly includes the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, the "bands" of Orion, the "ordinances" of the heavens and their "dominion" in the earth (Job 38:31-33). It is a realm far above and beyond the beggarly influences of the stars and planets- of Capricorn and

Scorpio and Jupiter and Mars! And let demons rage. Let fools and unbelievers hang their heads in shame. We quote once more from the incomparable Word of God. "BUT GOD...HATH raised US up together, AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS" (Eph. 2:4-677. And this "heavenly places" where WE NOW SIT with the firstborn Son is this same super-heaven, or epour-aniois, the same position which He holds "far above all heavens"! Ah, we who have come the way of the cross, we whose spirits have been quickened by His Spirit, we in whom the mighty power is working which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand far above all heavens- are enthroned with Him in this super-eminence N-O-W. Christ is enthroned in the higher-than-all-heavens and WE HAVE BEEN QUICKENED AND RAISED UP AND GIVEN JOINT-SEATING WITH HIM IN THE UNION OF HIS DIVINE LIFE! And yet Christians in ignorance sing, "When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!" Heaven for those who have been born from above is not a future hope. It is a PRESENT REALITY. It is the realm far above all other forms of natural and spiritual life that inhabit God's vast universe and far above all power and might and dominion of any order; not above them geographically, but above them in RANK, in QUALITY OF LIFE, in EMINENCE and POWER and AUTHORITY and NATURE and GLORY! All the elect sons of God must find their existence and experience enthroned with Christ in the higher than all heavens. They must find all their source and reality of being IN SPIRIT. Oh! sons of God-let us arise and live the heavenly life! Let our ministry be one that will lift people out of an earthly consciousness into a heavenly (spiritual) consciousness. Truly all creation has been lowered into the bondage of corruption, the consciousness of the earthly and temporal, but not without a hope of restoration into a full God-consciousness and state of being again. This is what salvation is about. This is why God's purpose in this hour is to perfect, to raise us and bring us into the consciousness of God which is the full awareness of the realm of the SPIRIT-the power and substance of life within OUR SPIRIT!

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

the earth, and upon the earth man, but look thou unto the Lord thy God. For in Him is thy safety, and in Him is thy joy. And thy joy, even the joy of the Lord, shall be thy strength."

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

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

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

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

Hannah Hurnard relates the transformation that came to her life at the discovery of this higher reality. "Little by little everything in my circumstances altered. It was as though I had really moved into another country-a heavenly one, where I was surrounded by things that I found more delightful than anything that I had experienced in the past. Even more wonderful than that, I actually began to feel as though there were angels and heavenly beings coming and going all the time, and, for a very matter-of-fact and practical person like myself, this was a most wonderful and awesome experience. All sorts of spiritual influences and inspirations were given to me which seemed to 'open the eyes of my

understanding', so that I seemed to have been born into a new world and universe altogether, or to have escaped from the prison-house world of what my physical senses alone could perceive, into a vast and glorious world perceivable only through newly developing spiritual senses. Not through psychic senses, which enable people to see what is going on elsewhere in the world, or what is going to happen in the future, but through spiritual understanding of truths which had been hidden from me up till then-and which now began to reveal a world of REALITIES and experiences and contact with higher powers, such as I had never before envisaged" -end quote.

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

And finally, from the ready pen of Dora Van Assen, "'Who gave Himself for our sins, ~ that He might extricate (rescue) us out of this present wicked (evil) eon (world order) according to the will of God' (Gal. 1:4). Notice this word EVIL spells LIVE backwards. The whole course of this evil world is running in reverse, thus bringing death and decay instead of life. Peter calls it an 'untoward generation' (Acts 2:40). That is, a generation turned away from (untoward) God. And Paul declares we are to shine as lights in this 'crooked and perverse (turned around) nation' (Phil. 2:15). We cannot resist these negative influences (of the heavens) in our own strength. Even if we could keep the whole law of God, it would not give IMMORTAL LIFE. We would still grow old and die We need the LIFE OF CHRIST WITHIN to overcome the law of sin and death operating in our body which brings age, decay and final dissolution to this natural man. Only the Christ within can destroy and reverse this natural. That is why we must be born again! in our complete man, spirit, soul and body! O wonderful plan of God! Jesus Christ has come to deliver us out of this evil world order, both within and without, our total being set free. He told His disciples, 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (cosmos)' (In. 16:33). Since He has overcome, we shall also overcome. Because He lives free from all the negative influences of this universe, we now can live in this glorious realm also. All we do is believe and apply His deliverance in our lives!" -end quote.

Dearly beloved saints of God, the future of God's elect will not be decided by prognostications of our horoscope. It will be determined by the faith of God in our heart imparted by the sovereign and infinite purpose of OUR FATHER. Never mind about Aires

or Taurus or Gemini. Fret not about Cancer or Leo or Virgo. Forget about Libra and Scorpio and Saggitarius. For neither these nor Capricorn nor Aquarius nor Pisces nor any other principality or power or dominion influence one whet the destiny of the man or woman or child whose life is hid with Christ in God. Look upward...yes...but not to the stars. Look BEYOND THE STARS. By the light that the Spirit brings look into the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and you will find yourself being wondrously changed into the same image from glory to glory. And there the stars have no control. And what about the future? Must I listen to Jeanne Dixon or some dark psychic interpret the pale flicker of distant stars? Is this the light I want? Who needs horoscopes? THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN QUICKENED BY THE POWER OF THE LIVING CHRIST OF GOD, for He, and He alone is the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world (Jn. 1:9).

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

Chapter 3

The Heavens Rule

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

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

THE HEAVENS RULE

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

A person who speaks only the English language can take a book, written in French, and while he may not be able to read it, except with much hesitation and mispronunciation,

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

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

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

Then we find in Dan. 4:26, "the HEAVENS DO RULE." God's heaven is His throne. "Heaven I-S M-Y T-H-R-O-N-E" (Isa. 66: 1). Heaven in the spiritual terminology of prophecy is the seat where the SUN, the mighty God sits and RULES. And as God's heaven is His throne, so the prophetic heavens include all the governmental realm

THROUGH WHICH GOD RULES, and He is LORD OF ALL. That the prophetic "heaven" is the governmental realm, including the thrones of men through which God rules over men, is demonstrated quite clearly in Dan. 4:22, where Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar, "thy greatness is grown, and REACHED UNTO HEAVEN." He had just become the most exalted monarch of earth: the sun. And in Isa. 5:30, describing the casting down of earthly kings from their thrones, the prophet says, "THE LIGHT IS DARKENED IN THE HEAVENS THEREOF." This statement is most meaningful when compared with all the foregoing scriptures, and finally compared with the statement in Mat. 24:29: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the SUN BE DARKENED, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

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

The truth of the constellations of the heavens includes many wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the Spirit. The stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, where His life prevails. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the stars are used to represent HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God's elect sons ARE THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD'S SKY! As the glory of the Lord arises upon His chosen ones they pierce the gloom of the dark night of sin and sorrow and bring deliverance, life and order out of the chaos of man's failure and despair. In the light of Daniel's startling prophecy (Dan. 12:3) I am compelled to say to the elect of the Lord: Y-O-U ARE THE TRUE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC IN GOD'S SPIRITUAL HEAVENS!

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

the fall and rising again of many...and FOR A SIGN which shall be spoken against" (Lk. 2:34).

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

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

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

Jesus was a sign and you and I, my beloved, are given for signs. The sun, moon and stars were set in the diamond-studded heavens to be for signs and to rule over the earth. Jesus was a sign, and He is the Sun of righteousness set in the heavens of God's vast spiritual universe, and He is the Creator of the world, and its Ruler. The bride of Christ is

the moon in God's spiritual and governmental heavens, for as the sun represents the positive, masculine, life-giving principle, so the moon symbolizes the passive, feminine, receptive side. The elect sons of God are for signs and they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the STARS forever. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may become blameless and harmless, sons of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and darkened generation, AMONG WHOM YE SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD" (Phil. 2:15). This word here translated "lights" is the Greek word PHOSTER, and it means luminary, light container, or simply star. The sons of God, then, are the stars of God to shine in this darkened world.

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

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

Jesus Christ is Himself the "bright and the morning star," but this assurance I have from the Spirit of Truth within, that a vast company of MORNING S-T-A-R-S intoned that

glorious celestial song of creation and redemption on that primeval occasion ere the foundations of the earth were laid. And just as Jesus Christ came into this world as a Sign-Son, so all the sons of God are given for signs and wonders in Israel. In the same wonderful way that the heavenly constellations of the signs of the Zodiac rule by cosmic energy the men of earth, so do the heavenly, spiritual sun, moon and stars rule over the earth realm by the spiritual authority and power of the Kingdom of God. The physical Zodiac in the natural heavens of the material universe is but a faint shadow of the true and spiritual and heavenly Zodiac composed of the blessed Sun of righteousness, and the moon, which is the bride of Christ and the Queen of heaven, and the brightness of the stars constituting that vast family of the sons and daughters of the Most High. Some teach that the "morning stars" represent only the daughters of God, but it is my deep conviction that we must bear in mind that Jesus Christ, the SON of the living God is Himself T-H-E BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

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

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

Let us turn now to chapter 12 of Revelation, that most wonderful, symbolic unfoldment of God's plan for the time now present and the days just ahead. The chapter opens with this

cryptic statement: "And there appeared a great WONDER IN HEAVEN." It is necessary to pause here and note that the word "wonder" in this passage is the same Greek word SEMEION which, in Mat. 24:30 is translated "sign". In other words, "there appeared a great SIGN IN HEAVEN." Now compare this with the statement of our Lord in Mat. 24:30: "And then shall appear the SIGN of the Son of man IN HEAVEN." This comparison makes it crystal clear that what Jesus spoke of, and that which John saw, are indeed ONE AND THE SAME THING! So -what is the SIGN that John saw "in heaven"?

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

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

overcoming company, my beloved, is the man-child who is caught up to God and to His throne, who rules all nations with a rod of iron.

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

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

Therefore, my beloved, if you desire to see a "sign" of the coming of the Lord, look not to the depressing, negative, corrupted conditions in the earth today. Wickedness, licentiousness, violence, war, and ever-increasing sorrows are NOT signs of the Lord's appearing, as the ministers of Babylon mistakenly proclaim. Those negative conditions are merely signs that we have reached the crisis, the turning point in the long night of man' s rebellion and misrule. But the "sign" of the SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN is the sign of the birth of God's manchild, the maturity of the enChristed, the coming upon the scene of the overcoming sons of God who hold within their experience the answer, the solution to the ills and despair of sin-cursed humanity. Keep your eye on GOD'S ELECT, my friend. As full maturity, perfection, strength, and the Glory of the Lord arise upon them- a GREAT WONDER SHALL APPEAR IN HEAVEN. A new RULING GOVERNMENT of Christ IN HIS BODY shall appear on the scene, authority and power in the prophetic "heavens". "The saints of the Most High shall TAKE THE KINGDOM, and possess the Kingdom for ever...and the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH...and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. Hitherto is the END of the matter" (Dan. 7:18, 27-28).

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

A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN

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

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

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

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

which to influence creation and rule over all things. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE" (Isa. 51:16). In commenting on this instructive passage Ray Prinzing wrote: "When God has thoroughly planted His people in the heavenlies, they will be in a settled place, firmly secured by His grace, to DWELL IN HIM, established in His love and grace, no more to be lost or wandering in the emptiness of selfhood. 'But God...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show (display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2:4-7).

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

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

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

""He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the HEAVENS SHALL DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: for God is

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

Again I would emphasize the fact that the Psalmist establishes the position of the sun in the heavens. Of the heavens He says, "IN THEM hath He set A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN." In the Old Testament as well as in the New, the glorious sun that lights our day is set as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. This fact is evidenced clearly by the prophet Malachi, who writes: "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah contains some of the grandest poetry that was ever written in any tongue. The song of Israel's redemption and triumph in this chapter reaches its climax in these beautiful words: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God shall be thy glory. The sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. 60:19-20). In exquisite words of wondrous promise, the beautiful future of the Lord's people is portrayed. In language surpassing mere human vocabulary, the Lord, who is Jesus the Christ, is portrayed as the sun and the light of His people, and the everlasting light of His radiance is to shine upon the path of the nation, as they behold Christ in His unveiling. This thought is continued in John's description of the New Jerusalem, where the revelator says: "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23). How sublime is this truth of which we speak, and wondrous beyond articulation the knowledge that this mighty Sun, this glorious Christ is found WITHIN OUR SPIRIT. On the individual plane, is it not within the heavens of our own redeemed mind that God has set a tabernacle for the sun!

The shining constellations spreading across the enormous expanse of the heavens represent the Lord's dwelling place in the Kingdom of His new creation people. God has set a tabernacle for the Sun (Christ) in the heavens-in the midst of His star-sons. Other passages confirm this truth, such as Isa. 40:22, which states that the Lord "stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out AS A TENT TO DWELL IN." In the constellation of Sagittarius we find the Sign of Ara, which is the altar of the heavenly tabernacle. In fact, all of the symbolisms of Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness are found pictured in the signs of the Zodiac. Therefore, the heavens represent the Lord's spiritual tabernacle symbolically displayed. Travel back in our ancestral history, to that awesome day when Moses was given precise and explicit instructions by the Lord regarding the design and construction of the Tabernacle of His presence in the midst of His people. This "centerpiece" of the encampments of Israel was a tent, and it was within this tent that Yahweh made His presence known. It was this tent, this tabernacle in the midst of the congregation, that the Most High filled with His glory. We are informed that

"the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Ex. 40:38). How wonderful, how blessed this must have been! God arranged the order, the encampments of His people, and in the midst of them HE SET A TABERNACLE FOR HIS PRESENCE AND GLORY!

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

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

Around the tabernacle were twelve tribes, each had a standard or ensign. If you walked around the tabernacle, passing through each of the twelve tribes, you would pass through twelve standards or ensigns. This parallels the twelve signs of the Zodiac, for the twelve ensigns of the twelve tribes of Israel correspond to the configurations of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the heavens. The signs of the Zodiac are the circuit the sun passes through as it moves through the skies. "Tabernacle" means tent or house, hence the signs of the Zodiac are called the "houses" of the sun, because in them He moves, dwells, and fulfills all His circuit. Hear me! The sun, moon and stars are for SIGNS; Jesus the Sun of righteousness is a SIGN; and the sons of God are likened unto the stars and are for SIGNS and wonders. YOU ARE THE PEOPLE THE SUN (SON) OF GOD PASSES THROUGH UNTIL HIS DAY IS ACCOMPLISHED AND HIS PURPOSES FULFILLED IN ALL CREATION. The heavens are the people of the Spirit. The study of the Zodiac is the study of the "house" in the heavens. The sun goes through each of the signs of the Zodiac AND THE SAINTS ARE THOSE SIGNS. This spiritual race is the circuit, and HE is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the goal and the prize. As the Lord arises upon His people and completes His circuit in the heavens, so He accomplishes His plans and purposes concerning ourselves and the universe. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is always moving ahead through His circuit, working and moving toward His ultimate purpose, the redemption and restoration of all back into Himself again. And just as" there is nothing hid from the heat" (Ps. 19:6) of the sun, so the Lord ministers to His people in compassion, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency.

The sun of heaven is the Lord. The light of heaven is the divine truth, and its heat the divine love; both proceeding from the Lord as a sun. Our omniscient Father sees ALL of your circumstance and need, precious friend of mine, and He will not pass you by without tenderly touching your life with His redeeming, delivering, healing, quickening, restoring rays.

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

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

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

Chapter 4

A Tabernacle for the Sun

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

Earthly tongues and natural images can but dimly describe things that belong to heavenly realms, but this great truth of the stars being RULERS is also set forth in Job 38:31-33. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth (the twelve signs of the Zodiac) in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of the heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" Here the almighty Creator speaks of the "sweet influences" of Pleiades, the "bands" of Orion, the "seasons" of Mazzaroth, the "ordinances" of the heavens, and the "dominion" of these constellations in the earth! Each of these powers and influences of the constellations over the earth is indicated by God Himself as FACT! The truth of the constellations of the heavens includes many

wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the Spirit. The stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, where His life prevails. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the stars are used to represent HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God's elect sons ARE THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD'S SKY, of which the signs of the Zodiac, sprinkled by the hand of God across the night sky, are but the dim type.

There is no truth within the pages of God's blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating a new heavens and a new earth, and the constellations of the new heavens are not made up of the physical stars which comprise the signs of the Zodiac, but of living stars of God's sons formed and fashioned into an order and image through which to influence creation and rule all things. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE" (Isa. 51: 16). The sons of God are the promised STAR-SEED of the Kingdom. "Do all things without murmuring and disputing," says the apostle, "that ye may become blameless and harmless, SONS OF GOD, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and darkened generation, AMONG WHOM YE SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD" (Phil. 2: 15). The word here translated "lights" is the Greek word PHOSTER, meaning luminary, light container, or simply star. The sons of God, then, are the STARS of God to shine in this darkened world. In the same wonderful way that the heavenly constellations of the signs of the Zodiac rule by cosmic energy the men of earth, so do the heavenly, spiritual sun, moon and stars rule over the earth realm by the spiritual authority and power of the Kingdom of God. The physical Zodiac in the natural heavens of the material universe is but a faint shadow of the true and spiritual and heavenly Zodiac composed of the blessed Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the moon, which is the bride of Christ and the Queen of heaven; and the brightness of the stars constituting that vast family of the sons and daughters of the Most High.

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

All the signs of the Zodiac are placed in a massive circle in the hemisphere. The path of the sun passes through one of these signs (houses) each month. This shows forth His glorious plan of redemption as the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH HEALING IN HIS

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

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are;
Far above the earth so high,
Like a diamond in the sky...
Ah- you are a son of God,
Once to walk on earthen sod;
Now transformed by His great hand
To reign forever o'er the land.

THE DWELLERS IN THE HEAVENS

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

Everything in the world militates against this kind of consciousness in the world. Everything in modern civilization, everything in the scientific, educational, medical, industrial and social institutions of the world is calculated against heaven, against eternity, against SPIRIT. They want to delude the masses of mankind to believe that this is it-this temporal, spatial, physical and visible world is the sum and substance of REALITY. That is the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of this age that undergirds and permeates the entire kingdom of corruption and death. The world operates on the supposition and premise that everything of value is now, in time, material, the things that are seen, tangible, felt and held, and that when this life passes it is over. Therefore, eat, drink and be merry; therefore fornicate; therefore aggrandize; therefore grasp; therefore

get all you can get and enjoy all you can enjoy, for this is all there is. And that is a LIE! The world is living in a lie. And the church world is living in another (and just as serious) LIE. The churches tell us that heaven is a future hope-beyond the grave. They understand not that heaven and spirit are synonymous-you cannot have SPIRIT without having HEAVEN. And the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS W-I-T-H-I-N Y-O-U!

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

It is when we are quickened to the realm of SPIRIT, to the heavenly and celestial, to that bright glory world where alone can be perceived eternal truth and reality, that we hear our heavenly Father speaking from the throne of eternity, long before the ages were formed and before cosmos appeared out of the wastes of chaos, there in the glory and wonder of His presence, from out of the depths of His omniscient mind, His purpose for the ages, the dispensations, the worlds, and for eternity itself was laid down upon the infinite blueprint, plan by plan, purpose by purpose, age by age, so that each eonian purpose and every divine decree shall be guided and controlled by His omnipotent hand to grow and mature from glory to glory until His vast family of beloved sons shall deliver up to Him all things in perfection that God Himself might be all in all. The very idea that one could in some way become so "heavenly minded" that he would be "no earthly good" reveals the incredible darkness and deluded stupidity of the carnal mind and its pitiful inability to comprehend things that belong to heavenly realms. Oh that the wisdom of man which is foolishness with God might be torn from our hearts that we might see beyond the mists and theories of time and tradition right into the very heart of the eternal where is found the infinite wisdom that teaches us how it is that until one becomes truly HEAVENLY MINDED he CANNOT be of any EARTHLY GOOD! The fact is, the only reality in the universe is S-P-I-R-I-T. The things which are seen are TEMPORAL, says the Lord, and the things which are not seen are ETERNAL. This is the wisdom of God in a mystery. Until one learns how to live and have his being OUT OF SPIRIT, out of the invisible

realm, out of his very innermost being, he will continue to be held captive by the corruption of the flesh and dwell in the shadow of death.

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

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

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the Spirit was shed forth, Peter stood up with the eleven. Consider the scene that day! There was Peter, a fisherman, a little man, an uncouth and apparently inconsequential man. But on that day of the outpouring of the Spirit, when he rose to testify and proclaim that Jesus was resurrected and ascended to the heavens, this little man was in a position higher far than the most exalted rank of

earth. The greatest and highest on this earth could not compare with Peter and those standing with him. Why were they so high? How could such as them be so exalted? It was because at the very moment their spirits were quickened by HIS SPIRIT they were in the ascended Christ. They were not men on this earth; they were men in the heavens. By the power of the Spirit these disciples were resurrected people, new creation people, people in the heavens. They transcended everything on this earth. The high priest, the rulers, the kings and the emperor were all under their feet. They surpassed the highest rank of man because they were seated in the heavens in God's Christ. They were living in Him, walking in Him, talking in Him, manifesting out of Him. They were living on this high plane and in this exalted realm of the Spirit.

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

Come into this place-Ascension,
Where no death can enter in.
My own life through resurrection,
Qualifies this Corporate Man.
I AM ready now to speak as
I am righteous evermore-
New Ascension brings authority,
And I've opened up your door.
by Charlotte Torango

REIGNING FROM THE HEAVENS

The heavens are the realms of spirit where the Lord now rules with absolute authority and dominion. How do we know this to be true? Because of the words of Jesus, when He taught us to pray, "Our Father...Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." These words lead us to the certainty that GOD'S WILL IS DONE IN THE HEAVENS; and, if you can discover a realm or a person anywhere where God's will is perfectly done, such is a heavenly place and a heavenly person. The will of the Father is being done in heaven, in the realm of spirit, and it is our expressed desire that His will shall also be done in earth, the realm of the physical, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. There is no sin in heaven, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no sin. There is no foul, loathsome disease in heaven eating away at the vitals, weakening, crippling and destroying the life, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no sickness. There is no sorrow nor pain in heaven, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no grief.

There is no death in heaven, no crepe on the door-knob, no winding funeral processions, no weeping and wailing of heartbroken, disconsolate mothers, fathers, and children, no silent, waxen forms lowered into the cold stillness of earth, for the will of God is done in heaven, and where the will of God is done there is no death. My Father and my God! Guide me to that place where Thy will shall be done in me upon this earth, as Thy will is done in heaven! The heavens declare the GLORY of God, for the heavens are His eternal domain. His throne occupies the heavens, and the earth is His footstool (Acts 7:49). Our Lord Jesus Christ rules all the heavens having ascended "far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10). Throughout the vast and boundless expanse of the heavens, the will of God is expressed and fulfilled. How our hearts cry, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven!"

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

You must become insensible to the demands of all other voices and hear only the Voice of the Holy Spirit speaking out of your spirit. "Be still and know that I am God." When your soul is agitated to a turmoil and your flesh demands with insatiable desire that its claims be met, and the outer world evokes utter confusion and despair with its myriad exasperating problems, it is time for silence, repentance, and listening to the voice of Christ.

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

"God's word, sent forth from His heavenly sanctuary, cannot fail to accomplish His purpose. If He wants to eliminate the whole communistic society, He will do so by simply

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upon awaking the interpretation of the dream flooded my spirit. It was clear that a new condition of RELIGIOUS LIBERTY was to come to the people of the Soviet Union. Remember- this was 1983. At that time Yuri Andropov was in power and Mikhail Gorbachev was unknown to the Western world. We had not yet heard the words GLASNOST and PERESTROIKA. The Spirit revealed to me that the advent of religious liberty would be followed by an unprecedented move of the Holy Spirit which would shake the nation to its very foundations. It seemed to me a thing neither incredible nor impossible-though not explicitly revealed- that this move of God would effect the demise of Marxism in Russia and the breaking up of the atheistic communist malignancy. I was made to understand that the book - THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY- indicated that American ministries were destined to play a pivotal role in the move of the Spirit in Russia, in terms of ministry, and the impact of the Kingdom of God.

in 1984, first at a Convention in Daytona Beach, Florida, I commenced to proclaim the word the Lord had given me; following that in meetings in El Paso, Texas and in other parts of the country. Beginning in March, 1985 with the ascendancy of Gorbachev to power, reports began to come, and continue to come, to us of actual changes taking place in the Soviet Union involving increased religious freedoms, release of most religious prisoners, public harassment relaxed, thousands of new churches opening, the

Lord has opened doors--tremendous avenues for the Gospel. Teaching services in Soviet churches are now diverted to evangelistic messages in deference to the masses of unbelievers (most first-time attendees) flooding the meetings. Invited by friends or attracted by a printed invitation, many Soviet people come to churches seeking an answer to their great spiritual hunger. Evangelical churches in the Soviet Union are filled with new inquirers, and many newcomers are converted to Christ. Most have dramatic and emotional salvation experiences- all are life-changing. Excitement permeates Soviet churches as believers have the joy of leading unbelievers -people who have never prayed before in their lives- to the Lord. And there is a very significant revival in the cities, especially among the young.

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

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

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

"My missionary friend was on the Uruguayan side of the main street offering attractive gospel leaflets to the Saturday morning shoppers. As usual, they would refuse or, if accepting the literature, might discard it a few steps down the street. Mid-morning he crossed over to the Brazilian side of the main street and began offering the same literature to the shoppers there. To his amazement, the people eagerly accepted the gospel leaflets and would often pause to start reading them before moving on down the boardwalk. Thinking that perhaps his mind was "playing tricks" on him, he passed back to the Uruguayan side of the street. The people still showed little or no interest. With a non-committal attitude they might accept the literature to discard it a short time later.

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

Through faith and prayer and prophetic decree the STRONG MAN'S influence over Argentina had been broken, and the nation was released for a massive response to the Gospel and the power of God. Ralph Mahoney continues, "Great healing and miracle crusades packed the largest stadium in the country (seating capacity over 200,000) and in the cities everywhere people were responding by the thousands to the invitation to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. But Uruguay had not known this 'purging of the heavens' of the covering of darkness. Here, ten years after the great Argentine revival, people were still unresponsive to the Gospel. Meantime Brazil had also had mighty sweeping visitations of the Holy Spirit with God's power and glory displayed in almost

every sector of the nation. The heavens over Brazil had been opened. Under the release from the covering of darkness the people in Brazil found themselves responsive to the good news about Jesus. This, concluded the missionary, was the reason for the great difference in the people on one side of the street from the other. In crossing that street they were passing out from under the covering of darkness in Uruguay into a country which had experienced, in part, the removing of this covering." -end quote.

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

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

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

Simply speaking, to reign is to exercise authority for God- to rule all things. God's one intention from the beginning has been that He may make man in His image and likeness

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 5

Virgo-The Virgin

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

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

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

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

In these twelve celestial signs we have enshrined for us like jewels in a velvet case, the twelve great heavenly laws or principles which we are to pass through and master while we walk our foreordained path on this planet. Each one of the twelve signs embodies a Kingdom of Heaven principle taught in symbol and ritual under the Old Testament administration, and now fulfilled spiritually in God's elect. It points to a wonderful progression as we begin in Genesis with the promised Seed of the woman (Virgo) and

end in the book of Revelation with LEO, the conquering Lion of the tribe of Judah! Just as the sun passes through each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac in the course of a year, so must we experientially partake of the reality pictured by each sign in our progressive transformation into HIS likeness.

It is a blessed day for any man when he discovers that what the Bible calls "heaven" is in fact and in truth the REALM OF THE SPIRIT. It is not a place on some far-away planet, nor a figment of man's imagination, but a realm of reality where saints of God may dwell here and now. These things are hard to utter, because the vast majority of Christians cling tenaciously to the dark understanding of the carnal mind, and it is almost impossible for them to believe that heaven is an abiding and eternal reality. It is even harder for them to comprehend that the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS W-I-T-H-I-N M-A-N, and that in spirit we possess the fullness of its more excellent glory. To most of the Lord's people the outer, physical, and natural realm, including the supposed golden streets of that great "city in the sky," is the realm of REALITY while the spiritual realm, the unseen Kingdom within, is the realm of shadows, mists, visions, dreams and UNREALITY. But just the opposite is the truth. The natural man (and most believers are pathetically natural) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.

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

Scientists are probing into two unseen worlds. One is a world too vast and far away to be seen by the eye and the other is a world too small to be observed by the eye. I want to give you three words in this connection, together with their meanings. First, we find the word MICROCOSM. This word means a little world: anything regarded as a world in miniature: man, viewed as an epitome of the universe. This word comes from two words in the Greek. One is MIKROS which means little or miniature. The other is COSMOS meaning world. Thus we have the meaning of LITTLE WORLD. The word MACROCOSM, on the other hand, means the great world, or the universe. It also comes from two words. One is MACROS meaning great and the other is COSMOS meaning the world. We noted above that the word MIKROS carried the meaning of "man viewed as an epitome of the universe." This word EPITOME means, among other things, A CONDENSED REPRESENTATION of something. The word MICROCOSM then gives us the meaning that man is a CONDENSED REPRESENTATION OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE! Thus, man is the CONDENSED REPRESENTATION of all the universe, or man is all the universe in miniature. After the original creation, God then began to move to bring the whole vast creation into fellowship and harmony with Himself. In order to accomplish this God made man in the image of the creation, but also in the image of

Himself. Man is therefore the bridge or connecting link between God in His spiritual existence and the creation in its visible and material constitution. God put both Himself and the whole universe into man in miniature—a microcosm of the macrocosm! His purpose is that by and through man all things shall be brought into subjection to the mind of the Lord. We read in Hebrews that we do not as yet see all things put into subjection to man, but WE DO SEE JESUS who was, we may safely say, as the second man and the last Adam, a CONDENSED REPRESENTATION of God, the universe, and all mankind. In other words, what was done in and through the singular Man, Jesus the Christ, will also be done in and through corporate man, but on an enlarged scale, for Jesus said we would do even greater works than He did. There is no stagnation in God, for He continually moves ahead. And as He moves we move with Him, advancing according to His pre-determined plan. What wonders lie ahead of us in this majestic pathway!

The seventeenth century German mystic, the simple shoe cobbler from Golitz, Jacob Boehme, penned the following words which are just as revolutionary and up-to-date as the space age. "Now, dear reader, observe: If you want to know about Heaven and what Heaven is and where it is, you do not need to cast your thoughts many thousands of miles off, for that place, that heaven thousands of miles away, is not your Heaven. The true Heaven is not a created place but an uncreated place, and it is not found in a particular place but everywhere, even in the very place where you are standing and going. For when your spirit within yourself is able to penetrate inward through and beyond your own flesh and life, and is able to catch hold of the innermost moving of God, then you are clearly in Heaven. Moreover, if your eyes were but opened, you should see God everywhere in His Heaven, for Heaven is found everywhere. For instance, when Stephen saw Heaven open and the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, his spirit did not suddenly transport itself into outer space, but rather Stephen's spirit had moved inward, within, into the innermost place where Heaven is found everywhere. So you must realize that this world with all its physical properties is in union with the vast vistas of the heavenly spaces above the earth. There is only one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, All in all.

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

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

Light, Gentleness, Mercy, Wisdom and Love forever, and it is expressed to us by His Voice, the Word, the Son, our Lord, Saviour, and God. And out of this eternally immense depth of God's Desire, there forever streams forth the Light and Love which is the uncreated glory. And this is the true Heaven.

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

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

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

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

The twelve signs of the Zodiac as originally ordained by God were a prophetic outline of the progressive unfolding purpose of God in creation and redemption. In order to decipher this wondrous Heavenly Scroll, we must discover just where to begin reading the names of the constellations and their starry hosts, for God is said to have both NAMED AND NUMBERED them. This means that there is a divine order as well as naming. These signs are in the form of a circle. Now a circle has no beginning and no

ending. Where is the beginning and where is the end of this circle through which the sun is constantly moving? When we endeavor to read the story of the signs, obviously, if we begin at the wrong place, our efforts must yield a meaningless result. Where are we to break into this circle and say, "This is the commencement," and at what point are we to say, "This is the end, the conclusion." Modern astrology begins with Aires, the ram or lamb. But how do we know that that is the place to begin? Since everything else about the Zodiac has been corrupted by pagan mythology perhaps this is corrupted also. The fact is, it is! So how are we to know where to begin?

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

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

VIRGO-THE VIRGIN

The first sign, as we have noted, is Virgo. The sun occupies Virgo for forty-three days, passing through it from September 14th to October 29th. This group of stars is associated with the picture of a young woman with an ear of wheat in one hand and a branch in the other hand. In Hebrew she is called BETHULAH, which means "virgin," just

as VIRGO, from Latin, means "the virgin." Everywhere her name is the same. However, you can study the stars in Virgo until you turn blue and they would never look like a woman! But the picture which has gone with them down through the ages, in every nation and culture of the world, is the picture of a woman. The fact that the signs of the Zodiac bear little resemblance to the pictures associated with them should mightily confirm the faith of all who know the living God. The fact that every single ancient culture which had any knowledge or tradition concerning the stars recognizes the same twelve star groups and the same names and pictures! Cultures as far away and diverse as China, Egypt and the Indians of Central America ALL gave the same pictorial meanings to the constellations. There is only one explanation to such an incredible phenomena- there was one original Source who identified the constellations with their meanings BEFORE THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH. And GOD, my friend, is that Source!

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

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

Glorious indeed and full of wisdom and creative design is the fact that your relationship to Christ as a "virgin" is ordained to forerun your manifestation to the world as a "son." As in the natural, so in the spiritual; the virgin relationship bears the feminine characteristics of modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness, dependence and obedience, whereas the sonship relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine nature. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power and dominion are among the

traits of the masculine sex. Hence the Lord calls the CHURCH a virgin, but to the OVERCOMER He says, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My SON. To HIM will I give POWER over the nations: and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron. To him that OVERCOMETH will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with MY FATHER in His throne" (Rev. 21:7; 2:26-27; 3:21). The mighty, eternal and indisputable truth is that THE S-O-N IS ALWAYS BORN OF THE V-I-R-G-I-N! Just as the blessed firstborn Son was born of a virgin, so is it through the vehicle of a PURE AND UNDEFILED SOUL (virgin) that the MIGHT AND DOMINION OF THE SPIRIT (son) is manifested, expressed and revealed. This is a true principle in God that I hope no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss! I cannot emphasize too forcefully, or too carefully, that the power and glory of SONSHIP will never come forth from the man or woman of God who has not first become truly VIRGIN in their soul life.

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

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

THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

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

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

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

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

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

The many sons would form ONE CHRIST, Head and body, each having the seed of life in himself.

THE SUN-CLAD WOMAN

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

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

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

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

type of a revelation of God's spiritual heavens here in the earth, which spiritual heavens We are.

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

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

"On the other hand, the word PERIBALLO used of the sun-clothed woman infers that this full-grown woman has a covering of the sun that is CAST ABOUT her in such a manner that the garment fits her rather than her trying to fit into the garment. This woman is a mature woman-matured in God, matured in love, matured in understanding-and God grants her the clothing that fits her maturity. Her clothing is comprised of one thing: the

sun. The sun is the light and warmth of our solar system and rises upon the just and the unjust alike. It is no respecter of persons. The planets revolve around it and are benefited thereby. Thus this woman is clothed with the light (understanding, revelation) and warmth (effect, blessing) of Him who is 'the Sun of Righteousness.' She does not withhold her light and warmth from anyone either just or unjust, but beams alike upon all. In other words, her light of understanding is dispersed abroad, not by words, but by BEING, EVEN AS THE SUN SPEAKS NOT BUT IS WHAT IT IS BY VIRTUE OF ITS NATURE. She claims nothing for herself-no position, no gifts, no power, no ministry-but simply IS what she IS by the grace of God. The sun does not have to say, 'I am the sun!' It is that by reason of its being, and this woman is what she is by reason of her being who she is, and as a result, her light and warmth are shed abroad without stint" -end quote.

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

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

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

This crown of twelve stars, as nothing else, positively identifies this woman as Virgo, the virgin of the Zodiac. The astronomer, Professor Thorley, has shown that there are exactly TWELVE STARS surrounding the head of Virgo as we view them from the earth. If one will look at Norton's Star Atlas, twelve visible stars will be seen around Virgo's head. They

are, according to astronomical terminology: (1) Pi, (2) Nu, (3) Beta, (4) Sigma, (5) Chi, (6) Iota-these six stars form the southern hemisphere around the head of Virgo. Then there are (7) Theta, (8)Star 60, (9) Delta, (10) Star 93, (11) Beta, (12) Omicron-these last six form the northern hemisphere around the head of Virgo. The apostle John saw the scene when the sun "clothes" or "adorns" the woman. This surely indicates that the position of the sun in the vision was located somewhere mid-bodied of the woman- between the neck and the knees. The sun could hardly be said to clothe her if it were situated in her face or near her feet. This "clothing" of the woman by the sun in the heavenly constellation of Virgo occurs for a twenty-day period each year. And here is a fact of surpassing wonder- at the time of the new moon at the feast of trumpets (John's vision of the sun-clad woman appears under the seventh trumpet in the book of Revelation). THE SUN, IN ITS RELATION TO VIRGO, IS IN THE UTERINE POSITION AND THE MOON IS SEEN UNDER HER FEET! Coincidence? NO WAY! Thus, the description of this wondrous woman in heaven by John on Patmos is graphically confirmed to be the very same woman portrayed from antiquity in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY -Virgo, the virgin!

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

Again I would share some beautiful insights from the pen of the late Norene Nichols. "Before considering the crown of stars, let us delve a bit into the meaning of the word 'head' upon which the crown rests. It comes from the Greek word KAPHALE which comes from the root KAPTO which means TO SEIZE, or that the head is the part most readily taken hold of. How apt! Is it not the head or the MIND that satan seeks to captivate and take hold of? By the same token, it is the head or mind that the Spirit of God wants to seize and lay hold of that the mind of Christ might be fully manifest therein. There can be no spiritual nor bodily changes in anyone without there being a changing of the mind and thought patterns (consciousness). Have you not read that we are TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF THE M-I-N-D??? What a battle has been waged to keep the mind in subjection to bondage and darkness and ignorance, but contrariwise, there is also a battle whereby liberty comes to the mind to bring it enlightenment and renewal. It is thus upon a renewed mind that the crown rests.

"Furthermore, from this same Greek word we get another form-KEPHALIS, which is translated as VOLUME, 'Then said I, Lo, I come (in the VOLUME of the book it is written of me,) to do Thy will, O God' (Heb. 10:7). The word VOLUME means a HEAD or KNOB which is placed on the end of the roll upon which the scroll is rolled. Is not this

interesting? In other words, the inference is that the head, or mind, is to be inscribed and ingrained with truth. Has He not promised that He would write His laws in our hearts and MINDS? Therefore the crowning can only take place upon the head that is girdled with truth, filled with truth, open to the Word of God, a mind that is a channel for HIS THINKING and His inscribings.

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

Chapter 6

Virgo-The Virgin

(continued)

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

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

VIRGO means the VIRGIN, or the untouched one, the one of undefiled soul. Mary the mother of Jesus, was a virgin when she conceived and bore her divine Son, although she was betrothed (espoused, engaged) to Joseph and under the law of those times was

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

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

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

When John was shown the great city, Mystery Babylon, we read, "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1). Again, when John was shown the New Jerusalem Bride we find, "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials...and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9). In each instance the very same angel came and delivered the very same challenge to the astonished Seer of Patmos, "Come hither; I will show unto thee..." These words take on new depth of meaning when we understand that in the book of Revelation the word

"come" always signifies AN INVITATION TO REVELATION. The whore and the sun-clad woman are two women; the invitation goes forth to come and see by the Spirit what they mean; and I do not hesitate to tell you that it requires a REVELATION FROM GOD to see either!

One would certainly think that God's people would respond to this invitation to revelation whereby the Spirit says, "COME HITHER, and I will show you," and that they would look with anointed eyes and readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not the case. Would God that all men could now see the hidden mystery of Christ and the Church! Would God that all men could see the hidden mystery of the virgin sun-clad woman who delivers the manchild! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery has nothing to do with that tradition-ridden system which everywhere calls itself THE CHURCH and CHRISTIANITY! The glory of the sun-clad woman represents the pure, unadulterated TRUTH of God permeating and overwhelming the soul. When the soul is truly overwhelmed and subdued by TRUTH, the seed of Christ (spirit) begins to take form within. Think of this, dear reader, for it will lift the sackcloth from your eyes, and you will behold the white-winged dove of SPIRITUAL REALITY descending upon you. Come hither! Arise from the lowlands of ignorance, false consciousness, and mistaken identity; from the harlot Babylon, the soul encumbered with lies, misconceptions, misrepresentations, falsehoods, error, sense-knowledge, tradition, and static creeds and doctrines of men. Arise until you become conscious of THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS, THE ETERNAL REALITY OF THE SPIRIT, THE OMNISCIENCE AND OMNIPOTENCE OF THE CHRIST WITHIN, and are caught away IN SPIRIT where you can see the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, the city of TRUTH and LIFE and REALITY built into a living form and expression through a people who live out of the heavenlies of the SPIRIT. When one ceases to live out of the blindness of the carnal mind and commences to live and move and have his being in the reality of THE SPIRIT he has been transported, as was John, from the glitter of Babylon to the glory of the City of God. Oh glorious City of God! City of Celestial Reality! The description of the city as "foursquare" has a profound meaning. The four sides of our city are: Life, Light, Love and Truth, "and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." All who would bring forth the manchild, the manifestation of the Son of God, must dwell there, and walk in this light. Its gates open towards light and glory both within and without, for nothing can enter that city, which "defileth...or maketh a lie." The sons of God shall be born of a chaste, virgin Church, without contradiction, the greatest mother that God has planted on the face of the earth, the Jerusalem which is from above. This Church is not going out with a whimper or a limp. It shall conclude this age victorious, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and riding a river of peace and blessing and life and power. It shall arise in freedom from all bondage and limitation, with its feet on the neck of every enemy, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. The tempter's power shall be broken. God's people shall be holy, strong, anointed, transformed and glorious. Yes-she will be a great WONDER IN HEAVEN! Virgo the Virgin shall be seen exalted in her magnificent splendor by all the inhabitants of the earth! The heavens declare it!

THE MANCHILD

"And she was with child; and she cried out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered" (Rev. 12:2). What does it mean to be with child? It means that a child is in the mother's womb, and the child and the mother are united in one body. When the mother eats, the

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

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

The woman is "clothed" with the sun, the blazing glory of Jesus-divine Truth. But notice, precious friend of mine, the manchild does not "wear" the glory of Jesus as a garment-he IS by very nature and being the glory of Jesus, caught up to His throne! This one has discovered the ALL-SUFFICIENT SPIRIT WITHIN to constitute the sum and substance of his reality and has ceased to see reality as something apart from or without himself, thus developing to live completely in and by the plenitude of God within. These have life within themselves even as the Father has life in Himself. THESE ARE THE SONS OF GOD! Oh, that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God may enable all who read these lines to comprehend the difference! Can we not see by this that the virgin Church realm is the SOUL CLOTHED UPON WITH CHRIST (TRUTH), SUBMITTED TO CHRIST, OBEDIENT TO CHRIST, YET THE SOUL OPERATING IN ITS OWN PERSONALITY UNDER THE ANOINTING AND HEADSHIP OF THE CHRIST. BUT THE MANCHILD IS THE S-P-I-R-I-T I-T-S-E-L-F BURSTING OUT OF THE WOMB OF **THE SOUL TO BECOME THE O-N-L-Y LIFE, WISDOM, TRUTH, REALITY AND PERSONALITY!**

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

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

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

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

Jesus spoke to this woman of a truth more wonderful and glorious than the vast majority of Christians have ever grasped. How many of the Lord's people STILL COME TO THE

WELL! How many of us still have our well, our water, our supply, our source of life, ON THE OUTSIDE! We are still trying to pray something down from heaven, or work something up in a meeting, or always looking for some ministry, some prophet, some healer, some experience from which we can DRAW LIFE! And after all our running to and fro, from well to well, from water pot to water pot, we're still thirsty! We're still singing, "Fill my cup, Lord!" We're still conscious of our need! So we keep looking for a well from which to draw to quench our thirst and meet our need. Some even think it is NORMAL to always be thirsty, to ever be coming to the well, drinking again and again.

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

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

ULTIMATE FAITH

I pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon the minds of all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship two important factors about the birth of this manchild seed that need to be burned deeply into our hearts. The first is that this manchild is going to be birthed supernaturally, and the second is that it is going to be through faith. First I want to state with the greatest possible clarity and authority that this manchild is going to be born supernaturally, therefore naturalism cannot and will not have anything to do with the

manifestation of the sons of God. One of the most subtle tricks the carnal mind- ever since that fateful day in long ago Eden-is continually playing on God's people is injecting naturalism-carnal means and methods- into their vision, their revelation, their worship, and their walk in God. Because of their lack of faith and patience, the carnal mind (serpent) is continually convincing them that God is going to fulfill His promises somehow through the normal processes of nature, through natural law, natural wisdom, natural knowledge, natural means and formulas.

The Word of God clearly teaches that the manifestation of the sons of God at the close of this age brings FULL SALVATION, which, of course, includes the BODY OF INCORRUPTION- salvation for spirit, soul and body. The purpose of this manifestation is twofold: first, to bring full redemption to God's elect; second, to bring deliverance to all peoples, kindreds, tongues and nations, to those now living as well as to the vast multitudes who have lived and died throughout the ages, until sin, sickness, sorrow, darkness, pain and death shall exist no more anywhere in God' s unbounded universe, worlds without end. Let us notice how the apostle Paul reveals this purpose of God in the following words: "For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known-waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their son-ship. For the creation was subjected to frailty-to futility, condemned to frustration - not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him who so subjected it. Yet with the hope that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children. We know that the whole creation has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the first fruits of the Holy Spirit - a foretaste of the blissful things to come -groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies from sensuality and the grave, WHICH WILL REVEAL OUR ADOPTION, OUR MANIFESTATION AS GOD'S SONS" (Rom. 8: 19-23, Amplified).

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

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

or nurses, or technicians, or truck drivers, or housewives, or store clerks...or they may be apostles, or prophets, or elders, or deacons. But it is in their ultimate fashioning as SONS that they shall become the LIBERATORS that God has in mind for a world in darkness and bondage.

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

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

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

Now, don't misunderstand me! I do not mean that it is healthy to put any and every kind of food into your body. I am by no means opposed to health foods, proper nutrition, or obeying the natural laws of God established in the physical realm. In fact, I am personally supportive of these things. I have learned experientially that the human body is the most amazing and marvelously constructed mechanism in God's physical universe. It is

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

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

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

me present this Tree of Life, this one and only Tree of Life: Christ, risen, glorified and exalted above all heavens! Christ enthroned in the glory He had with the Father before the world was! Christ dwelling IN YOUR HEART (spirit) by faith! HE is the Tree of Life in the paradise of the Kingdom of Heaven within you! And you, dearly beloved, have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness (ignorance, carnal mind, material consciousness) into the Kingdom of God's dear Son! The leaves (truths) of this Tree of the SPIRIT OF YOUR SONSHIP are for the healing of the nations. With ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD RESIDENT WITHIN Y-O-U-R S-P-I-R-I-T- who needs a PINEAL GLAND?

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

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

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

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

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

I would earnestly exhort the elect of God in this momentous hour that the faith of yesterday and yesteryear is not sufficient for today. The admonition of the inspired apostle is especially meaningful for God's apprehended ones at this time, wherein he says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:1-2).

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

In spite of such a plain admonition the sad fact is that not one believer in a million ever gets beyond these first stepping stones- these elementary rudiments of the doctrine of Christ. The Spirit declares that ALL these elementary rudiments of the doctrine of Christ pertain to the realm of LITTLE CHILDREN- babes in Christ. In the verses immediately preceding the passage under consideration the apostle says, "For every one who continues to feed on milk is obviously inexperienced and unskilled in the doctrine of righteousness, that is, of conforming to the divine will in purpose, thought, and action, for he is a MERE INFANT -NOT ABLE TO TALK YET! But solid food is for full-grown men, for those whose senses are trained..." (Heb. 5:13-14, Amplified Bible). It is very easy to spot a spiritual babe, for he will always be dwelling around one or more of these ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES...laying and re-laying that foundation. It is one of the great marvels of the universe, and perhaps the eighth wonder of the world, that the family of

God has not completely disappeared from the face of the earth, for it is crystal clear to any who have eyes to see that the preachers and leaders of the church world today are altogether as INFANTILE as the church members! They are one and all, according to the criterion of our text, merely spiritual infants. These slobbering, sputtering, dribbling infants are in charge of the care and feeding of the whole congregation of infants. Truly it is the phenomenon of the ages that they have not all starved to death or died in their own purulence.

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

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

In Hebrews 6:1-2 the Holy Spirit lists FAITH among the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ. But let us note that it is not simply FAITH of which the Spirit speaks, but FAITH TOWARD GOD. This distinction is important. The word "toward" is the translation of the Greek word EPI which means "upon," "to," or "toward." The Greek Interlinear New Testament which I have at hand renders this as "faith upon God." The thought is of a faith which turns one in a specific direction and THRUSTS HIM UPON GOD. This faith is directed totally TOWARD God and bears along the one identified with it so that he in turn is directed toward and cast upon God. The Amplified Bible comes very close to expressing the correct thought from the Greek: "Let us not again be laying the foundation of...the faith BY WHICH YOU TURNED TO GOD." Thus, this elementary faith, this faith toward God, is that first ministration of faith to our hearts which turns us around from our stumbling in ignorance and blindness, causing us to trust in the living God who is the Saviour of all men. If you lay again and again that foundation you will in the consciousness of your weakness and sin, continually be turning again and again to repentance, getting "saved" over and over, never overcoming the flesh, the world, or the devil, but ever "turning" again and again to the Lord for mercy and salvation. Elementary faith is first and foremost the faith that reconciles and saves us -which also appropriates the many elementary blessings and benefits of our redemption such as forgiveness, healing, material provision, gifts of the Spirit, answers to prayer, etc.

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

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

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

Chapter 7

Virgo - The Virgin

(continued)

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

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

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

To establish the message of God's Bible in the sky, the Lord selected three of the most godly and eminent of men at the beginning of history-Adam, Seth and Enoch. It is not our purpose to go into the wearisome trail of historical evidence in support of the fact I have just stated-but it does exist. According to Arabic tradition the signs came from Seth and from Enoch. This is the same tradition that the Greeks have, only they knew Enoch as "Atlas." This is the same tradition the Egyptians have, only they knew Enoch as "Hermes." But all these go back to the grandson of Adam and say that Enoch and his father Seth were the founders of this ancient understanding of the heavens. In the divine record of the fourth creative day the sun, moon, and stars were arranged as lights in the sky, and these lights were designated to be for SIGNS, so that night after night, year after year, in the purple depths of the midnight sky, those burning suns show forth and silently

but ceaselessly proclaim the Great Revelation. There is only one system in the universe where STARS and SIGNS are united together and that is in the SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC, also called the Celestial Signs and the Twelve Signs. Ancient and modern civilized nations have called them Signs. The renowned Jewish historian, Josephus, mentions Seth as the first astronomer, or arranger of the Zodiac. The ancient Egyptians said SET (Seth) was the inventor of astronomy-and astronomy in ancient times was by the study of the Signs of the Zodiac. And according to Gen. 4:25-26 it was directly through the ministry of Seth that MEN BEGAN TO CALL upon THE NAME OF YAHWEH. The method by which Seth taught the knowledge of God was by the stars of heaven, for there was no written scripture in that early time. Seth gave a name to each star group, designating them by the attributes of Yahweh and the characters and events involved in the great scheme of redemption. He named the first sign VIRGO-for the Redeemer of the world would come forth as a child, born of a Virgin. The last sign he named LEO-the figure of a great rampant lion, leaping forth to rend, with his feet over the writhing body of Hydra, the Serpent, which is in the act of fleeing. The Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails. The Serpent of that long ago Eden is defeated. Christ IN US is Victor. The conflict ends, the warfare is brought to a successful conclusion, all strife ceases. Sin, error, sickness, pain, sorrow and death forever flee away. Victory is secure! All things are restored! Man lives again tall and magnificent in the image of God!

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

THE DECANS

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

COMA

The first is called Coma. It depicts a woman sitting in a chair holding a child in her arms, which she is contemplating and admiring. The name Coma means "the desired" or "the longed for"-the very word which Haggai the prophet uses where he speaks of the coming Messiah as "THE DESIRE of all nations." "And I will shake all nations, and THE DESIRE of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag.

2:7). The ancient Egyptian name for this constellation was SHES-NU, meaning THE DESIRED SON! The woman in Virgo, and the woman in this first Decan of Virgo, as well as the sun-clad woman in Rev. 12 are one and the same; and the infant here is everywhere identified with the Seed and the Branch. Historically this is Jesus the Christ. But prophetically it is the manchild of the manifested sons of God-the complete Christ, Head and body. Oh, the mystery of it! How this precious child is DESIRED!

"For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known-waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship. For...the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rom. 8:19,21). When Paul by inspiration penned these blessed words of hope he did not have in mind a manifestation of God's sons after the order of which Jesus was manifested while on earth. Jesus glorified the Father on the earth plane, and so do we; but this is not the glory yet to be revealed that we anticipate, neither is it the hope for which the whole creation is in travail. The glory to which we are called as sons of God is not the glory Jesus had on earth, but the glory for which He prayed when His earth-walk was completed: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Paul wrote, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall YE also appear WITH HIM IN GLORY" (Co1. 3:4). And Peter declared, "But the God of all grace...hath called us unto HIS ETERNAL GLORY by Christ Jesus" (I Pet. 5:10).

I can assure you, precious friend of mine, that this resurrection glory, this incorruptible glory, this eternal glory is the HOPE OF ALL CREATION. We rejoice in the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, in prophecies, visions, healings, miracles, temporal blessings and provisions, but I must confess that I am saddened to see the Lord's people continually following after mere TEMPORAL SIGNS and PHYSICAL, MATERIAL, MORTAL BLESSINGS. It is a distress to my soul to see my precious sick brethren (as well as myself) healed by the power of God, only to behold them smitten later by some other debilitating disease. What sorrow it brings to the human heart to see the precious men and/women of God who have walked in the Spirit, and proclaimed the revelation of God, and have so mightily blessed God's people finally grow old or be struck down by some loathsome disease and pass from our midst into the silence of the grave. I grow tired of healing the sick only to see them sick again. It is frustrating to pray for the same saints over and over again for the same problems and weaknesses. I say it reverently, but I am weary of seeing the dead raised just to watch them aging and weakening on their way into death again. I tire of signs and wonders which cater only to the flesh, and minister solely to the physical man on the plane of mortality: food, raiment, money, and all the rest of the corruptible things of earth. I am deeply discontented with that which blesses men in the natural but then leaves them to carry on their lives in corruptible bodies and natures. There is NO ETERNAL GLORY nor is there any release from THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION in any of these things. How expressive the word which the Spirit selected when He inspired the apostle to write: "For in this (our earthly house) we groan, EARNESTLY DESIRING to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven... that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:1-5). Paul says that the whole creation GROANS and EARNESTLY AWAITS the manifestation of the sons of God, and we ourselves ALSO GROAN, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. This incorruptible race of the manifested sons of God is the "desired son"-COMA! The "greater works" of which Jesus spoke will appear when 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 a ministry

beyond limitation, death, and the curse, it seems but little wonder that such deliverance and reality is indeed THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS. With what anticipation do we wait for this glorious manifestation!

CENTAURUS

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

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

The message which beams from this awe-inspiring picture like the blazing rays of the noon-day sun is one of SACRIFICIAL LOVE-REDEEMING LOVE. The truth of love in Jesus Christ was that He loved without retaliation for evil, a love that suffered long, even to the agonies of the cross, and then was kind enough to pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). And I declare to you that regardless of what other sins those wicked men may come into judgment for, they will never stand in the judgment condemned for killing the Son of God, for HE AND HIS FATHER FORGAVE THEM! This truth of the love of God in Jesus Christ must also be true in us, the younger sons of God. Jesus did not love people because He loved Himself, as it was under the law. It was the Father's unconditional and all-surpassing love flowing through Him, surging as a mighty river out to humanity, overflowing redemptively, so that He could say, "Let your love for others not be based on love for yourself, but on what was true in Me: If the Father could love Judas through Me, and love Peter through Me, and the people that crucified Me, then let the Father's love so find expression through you."

In years past we have sung a chorus that goes like this: "His love has no limits, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundaries known unto man; for out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again." This is a lovely chorus and I

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

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

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

THE FOOLISH FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

There is a truth enunciated by the apostle Paul in I Cor. 1:26-29 that should hold us spellbound once we grasp its meaning. The statement is very simple and, like so many profound truths, it is easily missed, going completely unnoticed. But you, O people of God, partakers of the heavenly calling and sharers together with Christ Jesus in the sonship for which all creation groans, should give continual meditation and consideration to these words. Paul, having stated that Christ is both the wisdom and power of God, and that the FOOLISHNESS OF GOD is wiser than men and the WEAKNESS OF GOD stronger than men, says, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the

FOOLISH THINGS of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the WEAK things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and BASE things of the world, and things which are DESPISED, hath God chosen, yea, and things which ARE NOT, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

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

1. foolish things
2. weak things
3. base things
4. despised things
5. things which are not

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

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

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

There is absolutely no need for any of us to try to search out the ways, means and methods that God employs to bring His purposes to pass. For God has declared and written that He will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will even bring to nothing the wisdom of the prudent. And, as we have seen, the FOOLISHNESS of God, is WISER than men. Or this thing that appears to be so foolish to the carnal mind (the Christ and His work) is actually the WISDOM OF GOD. Not a great many wise men, after the flesh, are called of God. They are left to follow the plan prescribed for them, and in God's due time and according to His plan, they will be brought to a knowledge of God. Their wisdom, which is nothing but foolishness, will drop from them, light will shine upon their path and they will be brought to understand at last what true wisdom is.

"For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God" (II Cor. 13:4). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). In becoming WEAK IN HIM, brought to obedience unto the death of His cross, we are also brought to the end of our self-life, in its carnality, perverted consciousness, distorted understanding, and deceptive illusion. But rather than being destroyed by this process, there is a new and glorious living by the power of God out of our own reality of SPIRIT-LIFE. There is a revelation in weakness that few have comprehended. The purpose is to magnify the supremacy of the SPIRIT, the power of the divine life released through us, while discouraging completely the strength, wisdom, and reality of the OUTER MAN. Again I would share an enlightening insight from the able pen of Ray Prinzing: "Regardless of Paul's natural stature, be he a short man, or otherwise, I do envision him standing before men and speaking with power and authority because of the revelation of God which he possessed, and because of the anointing upon his message. His boldness, his free-spokenness was IN GOD, not as the result of being psyched up by his own ego. The natural world today relies heavily upon this self-psyched state. Athletes will win or lose a game according to the degree they mentally 'jack themselves up' until they feel themselves to be superior to all the athletes in contest with them. On the energy-force of this mental state, combined with a physical body that has been toned and prepared for this hour, they emit a self-confidence that is used to intimidate their opponent. However this self-induced state cannot be maintained, and they will 'peak out,' burn up their resources, and afterwards have a 'let down' and be unable to continue any immediately

stressful conflict. How OPPOSITE is the way of the child of God, who knows that 'in himself he is nothing,' and then, relying solely upon the power of God, can move forth in divine confidence. Thus, at the same time Paul was speaking forth the truth by the power of the Spirit, yet he was conscious of his own weakness, that in his flesh (outer man) dwelt no good thing (Rom. 7:18). Be there any sufficiency at all, it would have to be BY THE POWER OF GOD. Nor did Paul desire that people put their trust in him-this would be building a kingdom of man, which man would have to maintain. There must be a BALANCE, for while we have a 'consciousness of our weakness,' we must not develop a WEAKNESS COMPLEX. For though it is true, I AM WEAK, yet it is also true, I CAN DO ALL THINGS! Thank God when He imparts to us a real understanding and comprehension of our own weakness-we should not despair because of it, because it becomes the arena wherein He can show forth HIS POWER. 'Out of weakness were made strong...' (Heb. 11:34)" -end quote.

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

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

Pharaoh thought that by slaying all the Hebrew male infants in Egypt that he could further oppress the people of God, but the very edict he sent forth opened the door for little Moses to slip right into his own house and be raised as his own son, finally overthrowing his throne and scattering the Egyptian tyrant and his armies upon the rocky depths of the Red Sea. Thus was the wisdom of Egypt confounded. Ah, the weak things! What was weaker than Moses' rod? God sent Moses against the mightiest empire of the world. Egypt then ruled the world. When Moses was wanted for God's service he was found on the back side of a mountain feeding sheep. God found him with just a shepherd's stick, and said, "What is that thou hast in thy hand?" and he answered, "A rod," and God said, "Throw it on the ground," and when he had done so it became a serpent, and Moses was afraid of it, but God said, "Take it by the tail," and he trusted God and took it by the tail, and it became a rod again. He stretched that rod over Egypt ten times, and ten times the heavens parted and God sent judgment on that people. With that rod he smote the waters of the Red Sea and they parted. With that rod he struck Jacob's rock at Horeb,

and a vast Mississippi River sprang forth, enough for three and a half million famished souls, and all with flocks and herds. God chose the WEAK THINGS.

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

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

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

Note how rare it is that a prophet ever comes forth from the ranks of privilege in either Church or State. Your mighty Elisha comes from the plough; it is seldom that he comes from the conventional school of the prophets. It seemed very foolish for Jesus in choosing disciples to ignore Jerusalem with the Sanhedrin and all its culture. There was no shortage of trained religious professionals to choose from-priests, scribes, lawyers, Pharisees, and Sadducees -but Jesus bypassed them all for a group of nobodies. How strange-to the natural man-that He ignored Rome-Rome that ruled the world, and was in the height of her splendor! The Son of God goes down to the shores of Galilee and gets

twelve men. Here comes a young, unheard-of itinerant preacher from Nazareth, the "place of no good thing." He has only a collection of bedraggled, uneducated, untutored, unschooled, unlettered, unsophisticated men around Him who smell of fish. This is His corporate board of directors. Yet He claims it is going to triumph over Rome! When the hour arrives for Jesus to inaugurate His Church, the Pastor (Jesus Himself) was being executed between two thieves. The chairman of the board (Peter) was out cursing and swearing that he had never even met the Master. The treasurer (Judas) was committing suicide after embezzling funds. Most of the rest of the board members (the apostles) had run away. A few ladies from the Women's Fellowship were about the only ones who showed much faithfulness. Talk about a bunch of "ARE NOTS"! Shortly thereafter He leaves His followers with an assignment to preach the Word of His Kingdom in the uttermost parts of the earth. Little did those simple fishermen know that their work would one day extend to Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro, Lagos, London, and even Moscow! But when He had chosen them and filled them with fire out of the skies, the wisdom of this world was not able to resist the power with which they spake. "Foolish things" hath God chosen! "It pleased God," Augustine beautifully says, "in His infinite mercy, to save philosophers by means of fishermen, and not fishermen by means of philosophers."

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

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

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

It is a wonder when we think of the method that God used to accomplish the redemption. It was not that He appeared as some blazing flame of fire from the heavens. No! He came as "a little tiny baby thing that made His mother cry." God in swaddling clothes! A wonder indeed to behold! God as a teenager, God as a carpenter, God as the wandering peasant preacher who proclaimed a new message which startled men. Everywhere He went He caused people to wonder, "What manner of man is this?" In one moment He is wearily lying in the back of a ship and in the next He says, "Peace, be still," and the waves cease their roaring and the winds die at His command. "What manner of man is this?" "Whence hath He these things, seeing that He never learned?" Here the wisest man that ever lived astounds the doctors and the lawyers and the theologians with the depth and profundity of His wisdom. It is a wonder by the principle on which it operates, a principle which is so foreign to anything we know in this world. It is a principle which most people have never even dimly grasped-that God is Spirit, that God tabernacles in human flesh, that man is basically spiritual, not physical, that we can live out of the Spirit so that out of the greatest weakness is revealed the greatest strength, God manifest in the flesh! It is the principle that GOD HATH CHOSEN THE FOOLISH, WEAK, BASE, AND DESPISED THINGS of the world to confound the wisdom of the wise and the power of the mighty.

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

the flesh, the Spirit living out through the soul and body. As one brother said, "I drive my car in the Spirit-if you don't believe it you should see the spirit some people drive their cars in!"

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

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

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

That, precious friend of mine, is just the glory of CENTAURUS-"the despised"-who lays down his life, bringing redemption to all mankind! Centaurus is the epitome of those foolish, weak, base, and despised are nots who bring to naught the powers that are. Glorious victory! Hallelujah to the Lamb!

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

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

Chapter 8

Virgo-The Virgin

(continued)

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

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

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

The message which beams from this awe-inspiring picture is also enunciated by the apostle Paul in I Cor. 1:26-29. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise

men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty...that no flesh should glory in His presence." And so it has been, even as the apostle declared, that the Lord rarely calls the mighty ones of this world. No, He calls the lowly, the meek, the humble; those possessing a simple, childlike faith; those who in their hearts are humbly and truly seeking Him, "if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him" (Acts 17:27). To these, and these alone, He reveals the glorious MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.

This, indeed, is a miracle of the ages; it is one of the most thrilling of all the Lord's arrangements for His people. For, to know and understand these precious truths is a confirmation of our sonship; it is assurance that the seed has fallen on good ground and that it is being received into good and honest hearts. It is evidence that the great God of the universe has begun a good work in us, that He has called us and is dealing with us as His children. Is this not a marvelous arrangement! And so we can say with the apostle that "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew" (I Cor. 2:7-8). But we have the mind of Christ, and He has revealed these things to us by His Spirit. For unto us, unspeakably, amazingly, "it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God."

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

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. As far back as Isaiah God said that He would cause the wisdom of the wise to perish or disappear. It will be made to disappear, not by a mighty act or work of God, but by some foolish thing of the world. Foolish means something which is dull or stupid. Ah, the weakness of God is stronger than the might of man! God will take a thing in the world that man looks upon as stupid or dull and use that to cause the wisdom of the world to perish or disappear. The dull or stupid thing, so regarded by the "enlightened" religious world, will confound, disgrace, or "put to the blush" the wisdom of the wise. The wise man of the religious world will be put to shame by that which he considers to be stupid, yet is chosen of God. God is choosing that which is weak, which has no strength of itself, to confound, to disgrace, to make to blush those things which are mighty in the world. To know the mind of God we must have the mind of Christ. And the mind of Christ is this, that He emptied

and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. This humility was His capacity, His fitness for rising to the throne of God. This mind must be in us if the hidden wisdom of God is to be revealed in us in power. This is the mark of the spiritual, the perfect man.

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

Paul clearly sets forth the scope of Christ's sacrifice when he says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). This passage points to the fact of the pre-existence of our Lord and clearly identifies His sacrifice. The sacrifice He made did not happen AFTER His incarnation, but BEFORE. He left the "GLORY that He had with the Father BEFORE THE WORLD WAS" and His boundless "RICHES in glory" and entered into this gross material realm, being "made in all points like unto His brethren." Ah-before ever the babe appeared in Bethlehem's manger, the Christ had DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS GOD in order to become a man! When Jesus came and was numbered with the transgressors, He cut every tie binding Him to heaven. He burned every bridge behind in His course of action. With this in mind we can appreciate the magnitude of His sacrifice set forth in these words of inspiration: "Let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let Him be your example in humility-who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God (possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, God), did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but STRIPPED HIMSELF of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born as a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself STILL FURTHER and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!" (Phil 2:5-8, Amplified). Truly, He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS ALMIGHTY GOD, He emptied Himself and became poor, becoming a MAN. THAT WAS HIS FIRST DEATH. When He laid down His divine consciousness and entered into the charnel house of this fallen world, "He made His grave with the wicked," and when He died physically, He was laid in the tomb of the wealthy Arimathaeon and thus made His grave "with the rich."

When Christ left the glory and riches of celestial life and was "made flesh," what sort of a condition did He enter into? He was not spared the lowliest kind of birth. Humanly speaking, Jesus was not born to the purple. Into the arms of a peasant maiden He came, in a stable rough-hewn out of the hillside, yonder in a little land whose light seemed to have gone out and whose people were the helpless subjects of a foreign power. If one has walked in Bethlehem and walked in Rome, he surely must be impressed with the

contrast. Jesus might have been born in Rome, in the palace of the Caesars, an imperial establishment with such a range of wealth and extravagance that even the mules of the royal stables were shod with silver. But He was not thus born. And for reasons good enough. He came to found an empire of which Rome, with her pride and tyranny, could never be the symbol. He came to win an allegiance that no legions in shining armor could ever compel. That empire is the empire of LOVE and that allegiance the response that men can make to that which they know to be love and which, because it is love, rules their lives by winning their hearts. So down this costly way of unsparing love Jesus came, His delivery room a barn, His cradle a manger, and His lot in life cast among the poor.

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

"The angel said to the shepherds that star-lit night, 'THIS is the SIGN unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger' (Lk. 2:t2). This probably shook them more than anything else. Had they heard correctly? Surely the least they could expect for THE SIGN of such an event would be an outstanding miracle. It would be a sign at least comparable to the rod of Moses turning into a serpent (Ex. 4:2), or the sundial of Ahaz being reversed to convince king Hezekiah that God would heal him (II Kings 20:8). Yet they were not even granted the miracle of a star hovering over 'where the young child was' (Mat. 2:9). The problem was not that the sign was commonplace. It was worse than that. Babies were common enough, but who, except the outcast or the poverty-stricken, would put a baby in a manger? That was a place for cattle fodder. 'A babe...lying in a manger.'

"But for the forewarning of the angel, this was the only child in Bethlehem they would have passed by without a second glance! The manger would have been an insurmountable stumbling block to them. They were looking for a SAVIOUR. The angel had spoken of CHRIST-the anointed of God for the redemption of the world. He had used of Him a title which really belonged to Almighty God Himself-the LORD. Who would look for 'the Anointed Lord' in a manger? Yet this was THE sign. They would recognize Him, not in spite of, but because of, His low estate. They would find Him, of whom all the prophets had spoken, in a MANGER. It is difficult to grasp such condescension. It is also hard to imagine a bigger difference between what the shepherds expected and what they

received. The contrast between the glory of the heavenly host and the meanness of the stable cannot be exaggerated. When they inhaled the fetid air of the polluted den, these sons of the great outdoors must have wondered, 'Do angels come to speak of such things?' -end quote. The message is clear-God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak, base, and despised things of the world to confound the things which are mighty! It is the law of His Kingdom.

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

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

Can we imagine what Jesus might have accomplished had He elected to use the wisdom and knowledge and power resident in His PERFECT MANHOOD for His own ends? He could have used His power for wealth and become the richest man in the world. He could have used His talents for power, usurped the thrones of the rulers of this world and become Emperor of the mighty Roman Empire. He might have used His powers for sensual gratification, attracting the fairest women of the world to Him, building the largest harem of the most beautiful women ever possessed by a man. He could have become the world's greatest general, or the most famous artist, or the most acclaimed orator, or the most accomplished musician, or the most brilliant scientist, or the most articulate philosopher, or the most important, distinguished, eminent, exalted, renowned, or noble of a thousand different vocations and positions. But He didn't! He could have rallied the masses and marshaled an army before which the name of Alexander the Great would pale into oblivion. He could have built great hospitals, schools of learning, and gold-

domed cathedrals. He could have initiated wonderful programs to better society and save the world from disease, poverty, and trouble. But He didn't! He said, simply, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I can do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things...for I do always those things that PLEASE HIM" (Jn. 8:28-29). Yes, dear ones, He DIED TO ALL THAT HE WAS AS A MAN that He might do only and always the will of His Father. And that will led Him to Calvary and the tomb and down into hell.

Finally, Jesus died to all that He was as the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, that He might live again in the glory He had with the Father before the world was-the incorruptible, eternal, unlimited dimension of SPIRIT. For when Jesus was crucified, risen and ascended, He returned to the Father or to SPIRIT and is now with the Father as SPIRIT, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. When this Christ or Anointed One was crucified, risen, and ascended, He returned to His eonian resting place-HUMANITY. He has come as the last Adam, in the place of the first Adam, assuming his position as Head of the race, in order to QUICKEN THE SPIRITS OF ALL MEN BY HIS SPIRIT that they may regain the sacred knowledge of WHO THEY ARE and from WHENCE THEY CAME-the image of God on earth. As in the first chapter of Genesis, the Spirit of God-the Christ, the Anointing-is moving upon the face of the waters, upon the faces of multitudes of people, even the whole vast world of humanity. And God is speaking into the darkened consciousness of all men the transforming fiat: "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

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

I pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon the hearts of all who follow after sonship the deep mystery of CHRIST CRUCIFIED. It is the power of an EXCHANGED LIFE, the laying down of the human life (identity, consciousness) to take up the divine life. Jesus fully and completely did this for us, that BY HIM we may follow in His footsteps. This beautiful truth is wrapped in the arms of one single verse in Isa. 40:31. This is what it says: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The key word is "renew." "They that wait upon the Lord shall RENEW their strength." The word actually means "exchange." What the prophet is saying is, "They that wait upon the Lord will exchange strength." It means that, as we wait upon the Lord, refusing to either recognize or demonstrate any ability of our own, our strength will be taken away and exchanged for His strength. It is not a matter of combining our strength with His, or

asking Him to bless and increase our strength, but a complete removal of our strength, and a putting on of His. God says, "If you're strong, if you can do it yourself, you don't need Me." But of course our strength is limited, imperfect, insufficient, finite, mortal, corruptible. His strength, on the other hand, is unlimited, perfect, all-sufficient, infinite, immortal and incorruptible. WHAT AN EXCHANGE!

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

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh..." (Gal. 5:24). "I am crucified," says Paul. The "I" is the soul, the life of the outer man. In its place comes another self which is Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). This Christ-self will now be manifested out of your spirit. While you in your own self have renounced all wisdom and power, Christ becomes the wisdom of God and the power of God in you. Paul was not, like some of the other disciples, an ignorant and unlearned man. His was the best education available in his time. His speech to the men of Athens, on Mars Hill, is still recognized as one of the best classics of persuasive debate, and of homiletical and literary arrangement. His background, training, and reputation among his fellows was such that he could declare, "I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more" (Phil. 3:4). But Paul turned it all aside. He was willing to decrease. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 3:7). Although, as we have seen, Paul was capable of eloquent speech, he wrote the Corinthians, "My speech and my preaching was NOT with enticing words of man's wisdom, BUT IN DEMONSTRATION OF THE S-P-I-R-I-T AND OF POWER" (I Cor. 2:4). In the next verse he tells us why he had laid aside his natural talents to depend upon the power of God and that alone. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." If the power of GOD WITHIN were given its rightful place today, more people's faith would stand in the power of God. Not so many would be trusting in their "church" for salvation and security, not so many would be carried away by some preacher's personality, so that they are of no use to God nor man unless they can work under his leadership.

There is a greater manifestation of strength when in yourself you have no strength at all. Is that not a strange paradox? "I am crucified...nevertheless I live; yet not I" -not the old I-"but Christ liveth in me." Why then should there not be power and wisdom and grace and authority and victory manifested in us? Christ lives in you and HE is victorious. Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water, a flow of revelation and victory and power and triumph out of weakness and death. This is the ministry of the SPIRIT. Even

though we renounce our wisdom, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are manifested in us, for they are hid IN HIM IN US -THE SPIRIT! Nothing of spiritual value comes out of the shallow well of the outer man or out of the stirring of our soulish ability. We have to settle for it that what is going to bring humanity to God in these last days will be that which out of weakness is made strong, out of death and nothingness brings life.

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

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

After having created the SPIRITUAL MAN (man in God's image) in Gen. 1:26, we find a further work wrought upon this man in Gen. 2:7. "And the Lord God FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life; and man BECAME a living soul." Reading this passage we have the definite assurance that, as man has first been "created" on the sixth day a spiritual man, the image of God, a further work is being carried forth by the same almighty Creator and the man is now being "formed" into another expression: "FORMED of the dust of the ground," and so BECOMING a "living soul" - manifest in the earth realm. The first is the "created" man, the second the "formed" man. The first is a "spiritual" man, the second a "physical" man. The first bears the image of the "heavenly," whereas the second bears the image of the "earthly." The first is known unto God in the SPIRIT, the second is manifest to creation in the MATERIAL WORLD. But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that both of these men are but aspects of the very SAME MAN!

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

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

George Hawtin has eloquently expounded on this thought, and I share a few of his valuable insights. "Well did the apostle Paul know that the vast mass of humanity was 'at home' only in the REALM OF THE BODY. They belonged entirely to an earthly realm where things are visible, audible, and touchable. Their minds seldom mounted higher than things physical, and when for a few moments they did rise to walk upon a spiritual plane, they were not really 'at home' there, but waited for the moment when they could LAPSE BACK to the NATURAL AND NORMAL, for that is where they were 'at home.' So, while men are 'at home' in the body, they are 'always absent from the Lord' (II Cor. 5:6-7), absent from the spiritual world of true reality. HEAVEN IS CLOSED TO THEM. Their

minds dwell in the realm where men buy and sell, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage. They dwell in a realm of eating and drinking, of finding pleasure for the body, amusing their minds with silly things of the world, absorbing, listening to, or looking at some fictitious thing that serves only to amuse the natural man, keeping his heart away from the realm of eternal reality."

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

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

"It is small wonder then that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; for all things connected with the natural belong to time and change, while all things belonging to the spiritual are eternal and changeless. So then all who would come to know the WISDOM OF GOD, and the REVELATION of the Lord, must turn their spirit from the realm of the physical and changing, the corrupt and mortal, and fly away into the realm of the pure, eternal, unchanging, and immortal. It is only there that rest and truth are found, and, abiding there in the Spirit, even the body itself begins to be lifted from corruption to incorruption and from mortality to immortality. We said a moment ago that when the soul comes into the realm of the flesh, it becomes carnal and fleshly minded because it is dragged into the realm of the body. Inversely then, when the soul and spirit dwell in the secret place with God, they lift the body till it also becomes incorruptible,

immortal, and eternal. While the spirit and the body are united and dwell together, one must always be in subjection to the other. Either the body will be servant to the spirit or the spirit will be servant to the body. One will be the servant and be ruled. The other will be the master and rule. We cannot avoid this conclusion. Either the flesh will rule the spirit, or the spirit will rule the flesh. Since, however, the flesh is like the mortal and changing, and the spirit is like the immortal and unchanging, then the spirit is the one who should be the master. If the spirit is the master, it will save the flesh by lifting it to the realm of God and immortality, but if the body is master, it will ruin the soul by dragging it to the realm of the carnal, the mortal, the changing" -end quote.

When the Lord God lowered man into this gross material realm man possessed, by the spirit, the divine potential to overcome the flesh, sanctify it, transform it, infusing it with the qualities of Life-holiness and incorruption. Jesus, the last Adam, came and demonstrated for us this very principle. This potential in man to rule the natural by the spirit is shed forth in Jesus' mighty works-by His healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils, forgiving sins, and raising the dead-He transcended by His life, words, and actions all the so-called laws of the material, mortal realm. The great significance of Jesus' mighty works will never ring clear in our spirits until we understand that He did not perform as a unique, different kind of man-all His wonderful works were the teaching of what is NORMAL FOR MAN IN HIS TRUE STATE AS THE IMAGE OF GOD. As the last Adam Jesus demonstrated all that the first Adam lost-mankind's heritage as the sons and daughters of the Most High. Little wonder, then, that He confidently and joyfully proclaimed to His disciples, "The works that I do shall YE DO ALSO; and greater works than these shall YE DO" (Jn. 14:12, Paraphrased).

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

By His resurrection Jesus proved the Spirit within to be OMNIPOTENT, all-conquering, all-sufficient. He met and mastered death itself by the law of the Spirit of Life. He took no drugs to allay inflammation. He did not depend upon food or pure air or vitamins or herbs to resuscitate wasted energies. He did not require the skill of a surgeon to heal the torn palms and bind up the wounded side and lacerated feet, that He might use those hands to remove the napkin and winding-sheet, and that He might employ His feet as before. Jesus vanquished every material obstacle, overcame every law of matter, and stepped forth from His gloomy resting-place, crowned with the glory of a sublime success, and everlasting victory-the second MAN, the last ADAM-the role-model for each and every man of Adam's race! Jesus' victory over sin, sickness, pain, limitation, death and the

grave was for the enlightenment of all men and for the salvation of the whole world. Paul writes, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved BY HIS LIFE (WITHIN)." (Rom. 5:10).

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

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

Now to come back to our original thought-CHRIST CRUCIFIED. Our Lord died to all that He was as God to become a man. He died to all that He was as a man to become the Son of God-TRUE MAN! And He died to all that He was as a Son to bring us to God. His crucifixion was the continual laying down of SELF, and the outpouring of LIFE. It meant dying to everything in every realm that was anything LESS THAN GOD. For us it pioneered the pathway of VICTORY OVER THE FLESH, which is also victory over sin, sickness, limitation and death. The cross and the resurrection are the supreme examples of what Paul means when he says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is MADE UNTO US wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD" (I Cor. 1:27-31).

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

God AS us, God LOVING THROUGH US, God FLOWING OUT of us, loving through us, redeeming through us, reconciling and restoring all by us. Amen. So be it!

Chapter 9

Libra-The Scales

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

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

LIBRA-THE SCALES

Having previously dealt with Virgo, the Virgin, we now come in our series to the second house or constellation in the Zodiac: Libra, the Scales. The Zodiac consists of the twelve Signs that are around the ecliptic of the heavens, as well as the 36 Decans or pieces which go with them. There is a major Sign and three Decans, or minor Signs, in each of the houses or mansions, or "tabernacles for the sun," as Psalm 19:4 describes them. We now turn our prayerful attention to the major Sign in the second house which is LIBRA. In Latin it means "the scales" and in Hebrew it is MOZANAIM, "the scales weighing." Libra is always pictured as a pair of old fashioned balances or scales which work like a

seesaw, an instrument with a beam or lever supported exactly in the middle, having two scales or pans of equal weight suspended from its two ends. When a certain weight is placed in one scale, then a corresponding amount must be placed in the other scale, if it is to be in balance. It is the most accurate kind of scale. They were used by the Egyptians thousands of years ago, to weigh things like wheat. The wheat would be placed in one large pan or basket and a stone in the other. The stone usually weighed about fourteen pounds. When the lever was balanced, it meant that there were fourteen pounds of wheat in the basket. This figure pictures the idea of being IN BALANCE, neither lacking nor being overweighed on the other side. It bespeaks of a state of sufficiency, equilibrium, correctness. When there is more weight on one side than the other, it is unequal and out of balance-so that which is lacking needs to be ADDED until a balance is achieved again.

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

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

Some time ago a sister in Christ was carried in vision into a revelation of this place and process of divine weighing. She wrote: "There are many places in God, and each one is different from the others; in fact, all things are in Him. Today He took me to a new place of great severity and cold exactitude, where the balances of God weigh, with inflexible vigor, all things from the smallest to the greatest. Although the sense of warm, flowing love is absent, it is, nevertheless, the background against which the severity of His balances operates. Here there is tremendous exactitude and perfection of harmonic distribution where nothing, not even the smallest atom, is out of place, for all things are located in exact positions. Although nothing moves from its designated place,

nevertheless, all things are greatly moved upon by the tremendous operations of these powers of great severity. In this place of weighing which is in continuous and ceaseless operation, all things are examined and weighed to utmost perfection; not one thing, no matter how small, is ever overlooked. In this judging place which is impartial, inflexible, solemn and severe, the atmosphere is not like that of a tribunal or court of justice. It is more like that of a school principal's office, where a disobedient child is brought for correction, or a godly home, where the sole purpose of the wise discipline of an upright father is to bring a rebellious child to right paths."

BEFORE THE WORLDS WERE FRAMED

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

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

I turn to the passages of scripture which with divine certainty relate this. In Eph. 1:4-5 we find, "According as He hath chosen us IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (placement as sons) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that God chose and predestinated a company of sons BEFORE the foundation of the world. The word "before" translates the Greek word PRO meaning "to go before, to precede." Hence, the Father's act of choosing the firstfruit-sons preceded the laying the foundations of the world. How, I ask, could God choose you IN CHRIST and predestinate you in that long ago eternity IF YOU DID NOT THEN EXIST? Now, therefore, when I talk to you, I am talking to a household of God's sons and daughters; I am talking to a celestial race, a divine household; and these are the people of whom the apostle spoke when he wrote to the saints in Rome, saying, "For whom He did

FOREKNOW, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Yes-the Father in heaven FOREKNEW YOU, my beloved brother, my precious sister in Christ. And that can mean nothing else but that He KNEW YOU BEFORE and at that time when He KNEW YOU BEFORE He predestinated you to enter this earth-experience and thereby be conformed to the image of first, unique, and preeminent Son, Jesus Christ.

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

As poor Job sat on the ash heap in the midst of trial and suffering the Lord commanded him to stand up like a man and respond to the questions He, the Lord, would put to him. The Lord then asked forty questions, none of which Job could answer. Among the questions was this one: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:7). Job was speechless, for he had no idea where he was in that time of long ago, but the truth, it seems to me, was that Job was there among the company of the sons of God, beholding with wonder the plan of God on earth with its sufferings and testings and the glory that should follow. These sons of God who shouted for joy on that primeval morn understood the wisdom of a plan by which they should gain the enlightenment of perfection by experience instead of perfection by creations guided only by divine instincts, and that the sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to follow as a result of them, and so awesome was the prospect that they shouted for joy in holy expectation. We do not shout unless there is something to shout about. The message is clear-there was a time before the foundations of the earth were laid; there were sons of God who already existed in that ancient time; and those young sons of God lifted their voices with the morning stars in contemplation of the marvelous purpose they were to fulfill. It is precious to know that God's first Son, our own Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is named the Bright and Morning Star.

In the ninetieth Psalm referred to above the prophet David assures us with great plainness of speech that the Lord has been our dwelling place in all generations. Even before the mountains were brought forth or God had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting He is God and in Him we dwelt and from Him we came. Our spirits were with Him before the creation of the earth, for the Father was then our dwelling place. We were

sent to this earthly realm for a wise and glorious purpose—for testing, learning, instruction, training, discipline, and perfection—preparation for our part in that magnificent work of deliverance of the whole creation from the tyranny of darkness, decay and death. The Psalmist said, "Thou turnest man to destruction (this realm of sin and death, of flesh and blood); and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (Ps. 90:3). The Lord turned man to destruction, which is to say, He sent us down to this earth realm of dust, sin and death, and then said to us, "Return! ye children of men." What a revelation that is!

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

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

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

who had grown up with them. At first he wanted to stay. The roar from the edge of the forest had stirred some lost memory in his soul. He flexed his great muscles in a kind of automatic reflex to the challenge from the forest edge. For a moment he could have been a tiger too, but he could not believe in the sound he heard, the challenge it brought. He couldn't believe in himself, in the instincts that had lain dormant so long. For a brief moment, he could have been a tiger. He wanted to try, but then the goat's life was all he knew so he turned and fled. He could have grasped a new and greater life, but then he fell back to being a goat for the rest of his days. The tiger at the edge of the forest of your existence is JESUS, unique, divine, glorious and powerful. He will not fail-He will draw ALL unto Him! He is all you should be. He is all man was created to be. He is all you were destined to be. He is what God intends. He is THE SON as you are predestined to be sons and daughters of the Most High. You cannot avoid Him. You cannot resist Him. Something deep within stirs. Deep calleth unto deep. The tiger calls to the tiger in you! The God in Christ calls to the God in you!

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

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES

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

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

The point of special interest to us here is the fact that God first called man ADAM, or RED-SHOWING BLOOD IN THE FACE-when He created him a SPIRITUAL MAN. Man did not "become" Adam when he was "formed of the dust of the ground"-it was not the

earthly man who was first characterized as red, or showing blood in the face-but the heavenly man! And this Adam was not formed of the dust, but was created "in the image and likeness of God." No poet or philosopher or prophet could possibly describe the glory and eminence of THIS MAN! I have long known that the "face" in symbolic terms bespeaks of the outward expression and revelation of the deepest inward parts of man's being-the heart. All that a man thinks and feels and is inwardly is written and expressed outwardly upon the countenance, known and read of all men. Blood bespeaks LIFE. To "show blood in the face" is to show life in the countenance-the OUTWARD REVELATION OF THE INNER CONDITION OF L-I-F-E!

Lowered into the earth realm, becoming a living soul, man sank even lower. The bright and glorious spirit ruled in the man and woman of flesh until that dreadful hour in which they partook of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Then and there their eyes were opened to see their OUTWARD FORMS. The outraying spirit of glory that had reigned within them dimmed beneath the newly discovered consciousness of the OUTER and they knew the shame of their nakedness before the Lord. Truly the "nakedness" consisted in their sense-consciousness of the lack of reality in the realm of the flesh. In this state they knew the grief of sustaining their bodies by sweat and travail. Man was lowered from the realm of spirit, into the realm of the soul; then in disobedience, drawn away of his own lust and enticed down into the flesh, so that at last God said of man, "He is BECOME FLESH" (Gen. 6:3) He was lowered from spirit to soul, and fell from soul to "flesh." The spirit of man is the image of God-GOD consciousness. The soul is the seat of SELF-consciousness, and the body is the seat of SENSE-consciousness. In spirit Adam was God-conscious. In soul man was both God-conscious and Self-conscious. But ruled by his five senses, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, conscious of the outward world about him, seeking his experience, existence and identity in that low realm, he was a FLESHLY MAN. Having made the transition from the celestial to the physical, we died to the spiritual and became alive to the natural, under the throes of the carnal mind, to have "our conversation...in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind...by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

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

out to His praise and all the universe shall throb anew with wonder of the power and the inworking grace of God" -Gospel Echoes.

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

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

Eve was deceived in this realm by a half-truth-it is not that the devil has no truth-even the truth he has is a lie-for it is truth out of balance, partial truth, a half-truth, which, though it contains an element of truth, is not truth at all, but a lie. In the true and eloquent words of a friend: "The serpent in the garden of Eden used an argument that is correct **IN FORM**, but because it was **ONLY FORM** and had lost its **ESSENCE**, Eve was deceived by it. What was the argument that he used that was 'correct in form but actually invalid?' Hear it! 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened!' That was truth-and 'ye shall be as gods' was also a truth, for after the man and the woman had eaten, the Lord God Himself verified the serpent's statement as being absolute truth. 'Behold, the man is become as **ONE OF US** to know good and evil,' God said (Gen. 3:22). He was saying that Adam had become a god himself! 'Ye shall be as gods,' the serpent had said, and that he told the truth is confirmed in the words, 'The man has become as one of us' -he has become **AS A GOD!** **IN FORM**, then, the serpent had a truth. He had, in fact, drawn on the very Word of God itself to tempt Adam and Eve, for the Lord had said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' What the serpent failed to reveal, however, was the **ESSENCE** of the form which is that **INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD** man can **NEVER** be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been self-evident truth, but man failed to see it. Man became a god, alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil-but he became a god in the wrong realm, for at the same time that God acknowledged man's 'deity' He also **CAST HIM FROM THE GARDEN**-cast him from the consciousness of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth-and set him in the earth 'to till the ground from which he was taken.' Thus, we find that Adam truly became a 'god' -as the serpent promised and the Lord confirmed-but he was not an heavenly god. He became, rather, the 'god of **THIS WORLD**' (II Cor. 4:4). It is one thing to be 'a partaker of the divine nature' and it is quite another thing to be the 'god of this world.' In the former, there is contained the thought of **TOTAL DEPENDENCE** - in the latter, the principle of **INDEPENDENCE**" -end quote.

Independence-separation-fragmentation-imbalance-these terms each bespeak of that which has come **OUT OF** God into a state of division, disunion, thus lacking wholeness.

As we pointed out earlier, all sin, evil, darkness and death is the result of an **IMBALANCE** or **LACK**. "For all have sinned (missed the mark) and **COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD**" (Rom. 3:23).

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

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

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

""Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature...and beside this, giving all diligence, **ADD** to your **FAITH** virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ' (II Pet. 1:4-8). First we have the emphasis upon the Word-exceeding great and precious promises. **BELIEVING THE PROMISES**, we are made partakers of the divine nature. One would surely think that was enough, but then Peter writes on, 'Giving all diligence, **ADD TO YOUR FAITH...**' The inference becomes clear, the 'faith message' alone is not balanced.

Place it on one side of the scale, and then START ADDING on the other side, until it balances out.

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

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

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

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

There is one image that is perfect: the blessed Son of God, the visible manifestation of the Father, the only One who has ever walked upon this planet who sums up the totality of DIVINE BALANCE. He is the only whole, united, balanced, UNFRAGMENTED MAN! In Jesus Christ a Man has stepped forth who came from God without any lack, so that He

could make this astonishing declaration: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (Jn. 14:9-11). Jesus Christ is the One who shows us just where we are-and opens up the way for our return into the fullness of God. Our heavenly Father demands that all men should follow the example of our Lord and Master. In order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the anchor of hope must be cast beyond the veil of this carnal, dying realm into the Shekinah into which Jesus has passed before us, as by faith we are led to prove for ourselves and demonstrate to those about the authority of the SPIRIT OF LIFE WITHIN over the law of sin and death in the flesh.

Christ Jesus is perfectly balanced and united in all His faculties, and IN HIM all things are restored into oneness, wholeness, balance. "He that is joined unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17). "That they all may be ONE; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE IN US...and the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me" (Jn. 17:21-23). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all ONE IN CHRIST JESUS" (Gal. 3:28). "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even IN HIM" (Eph. 1:10).

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

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

sustenance, underived, inherent, drawing not from anything or anyone. ALL SUFFICIENT, ABUNDANT, GLORIOUS AND UNCHANGING LIFE! No lack, the scales are perfectly balanced.

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

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

REDEMPTION

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

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

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

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

The love of God became a man, the love of God became human flesh, the love of God in Jesus Christ has flowed into our souls as the precious blood of Christ to wash away the veil of flesh and quicken us again to our true identity and heritage in God. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19).

Hallelujah for the blood!

Chapter 10

Libra-The Scales

(continued)

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

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

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

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

The Romans learned the art of torture by crucifixion and immediately set out to refine and improve it in many subtle ways. At the time of Christ the Romans made use of four cross forms. In addition to the upright STAUROS which was used alone for impalement through the bowels, there was what they called the CRUX IMISSA in which the cross-beam was located about one-third the way down the post. This is the traditional design which is usually associated with the cross upon which Jesus was slain. The third Roman cross form was called the CRUX COMMISSA in which the crossbeam was hauled to the very top of the pole, forming a T-shaped cross. The fourth Roman cross form was in the shape of the letter "X" and was called the CRUX DECUSSTA. Tradition maintains that Peter was crucified upside down on this shape of cross. The Latin word CRUX, which was the Roman term for these instruments of torture, comes into English as "cross" by way of the French CROIX.

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

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

the curse- into the symbol of His eternal triumph. Yes, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death-EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

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

THE CROSS IN THE HEART OF GOD

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

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

Though I am sure it is impossible to plumb the shining depths and the inexhaustible riches of the meaning of the cross, I would like to endeavor to set before you the deeper meaning of the cross of Christ. We will never understand the mystery of the cross until by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God our eyes perceive the eternal cross in the heart of God Himself. The only true and eternal life in the universe is the life of God. He

alone is self-existent. He alone is reality. He alone is eternal substance. If we are to fully know and partake of that life, we must die to all that is contrary to that life. Everything that exists in the universe has its opposite-and as surely as God exists there is the opposite for all that He is. God is love-and the opposite of love is hate. God is light-and the opposite of light is darkness. God is truth-and the opposite of the truth is the lie. God is life-and the opposite of life is death. Every positive has its negative, and all the laws of the universe reveal this principle of opposites. Jesus enunciated the fundamental principle of life (spirit, God) when He said that except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die it brings forth the increase of life. Every negative must be brought to death. Everything in the universe must die to all that is contrary to divine life and nature, being born again of the Spirit. This is the meaning of "Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW" (Rev. 21:5). This has been the Father's plan for man-man in the image and glory of the incorruptible God.

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

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

In reference to His substance, God is SPIRIT. In reference to His state of being, God is ONE. That which is ONE is that which is UNITED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. Oneness speaks of unity, harmony, singleness, concord, solidarity. God is ONE! The fact that there is ONE GOD must not be confused with the truth that GOD IS ONE. Perhaps, as someone has said, this is only another aspect of viewing the same truth, for God is truly one, undivided in Himself, or in His will and purpose. And surely HE alone is God! But this One God IS ONE. It is a great and blessed fact that God is ONE. He who is united, undivided and unfragmented in every aspect of His nature and state of being cannot be influenced, affected, moved, upset, frustrated, changed, altered, damaged, destroyed, made discordant or set at variance in any way. The character of God is eternal, change-less, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness, wisdom, justice, power and will of God do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens nor what men devise or devils say or do, the love of God, the purpose of God,

the holiness of God, the power of God are steadfast, unmoved, unquenched, unaffected, without fluctuation. He is Yahweh, the SELF-EXISTENT ONE. He is ONE. No power in the universe can cause any deviation whatsoever in God's nature, will or action.

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

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

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

sold under slavery and bondage to sin, sorrow, and death GROANS for the manifestation of THE SONS OF LOVE!

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

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

BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

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

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

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

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

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

Why these references to the beginning, yea, before the beginning, before the founding of the cosmos? What happened away back there that He should appeal to it? Why did He speak of the Father's love for Him in that distant point of time? Did not the Father always love Him? I feel deeply within that something tremendously important happened at that time that invoked a special love from God, His Father, causing Him to love His Son in a very special way. One thing is certain-that was the time when the Christ left His pre-existent glory. Otherwise, why should He say, "Father, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory I had with Thee B-E-F-O-R-E THE COSMOS WAS." If He had left the glory of the Father only when He came to earth as a man, why not say, "...the glory which I had with Thee before I came to earth"? Ah-it was not in Mary's womb that He descended from the glory of the Father, it was much farther back-BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD!

Notice now these wonderfully meaningful words penned by John the Revelator. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" (Rev. 13:8). Let us notice just what truth is stated here. A better rendering would be, "The Lamb that was PUT TO DEATH from the founding of the cosmos." Weymouth's translation reads, "All the inhabitants of the earth will be found worshipping him; every one whose name is not recorded in the book of Life-the book of the Lamb offered in sacrifice FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD." The sacrifice and death of the Christ did not start with the events surrounding Calvary; it began away back there at the beginning, and culminated on Calvary. He was the Lamb who was put to death from the beginning. Just as the cross did not begin at Calvary, so the crucifixion of Christ did not begin at Calvary. Peter expressed the fact that the cross existed as a work of God before the foundation of the world in this manner: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and

without spot: who verily was FOREORDAINED B-E-F-O-R-E THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:18-20). The Lamb whose offering was already a glorious and eternal reality in the heavens, remained only to cast its shadow upon the earth, on Calvary's hill. We would have thought that in calling our Lord "the Lamb" this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation in His earthly life. However, in scripture it is most used in reference to His glory in the heavenlies. Peter saw Him as a Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. John saw Him as a Lamb that had been put to death from the founding of the cosmos, highly exalted, standing in the midst of the throne. Actually John saw the Lamb SLAIN IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE! What a wonder!

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

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

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

These blessed ones chosen by the Father are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), and they are the heirs of the Kingdom of God "prepared for them from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34). Praise God, our sonship is assured, our victory over the world is certain, the outcome of God's plan is sure-therefore all creation is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own! The world, as a result, shall pass away and "the kingdoms of THIS WORLD shall BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ!"

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

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

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

Now let us look at some of the things Jesus said about Himself. "I am THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (cosmos); he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of Life" (Jn. 8:12). The whole cosmos was in darkness, the heavens as well as

the earth, else the heavens would have shed their light upon the earth. The first and greatest need was light, and God brought that light into the dark universe, and that light was THE WORD, THE CHRIST. Jesus also said, "I am come a light into the cosmos, that whosoever believeth on Me should not walk in darkness" (Jn. 12:46). The truth He proclaimed was that HE WAS THE LIGHT THAT CAME INTO THE COSMOS, to bring light into the darkened creation. He was indeed the light, but there was more in Him coming into the darkened universe than just to be a light. There was much more to it than that! John by inspiration of the Spirit sheds additional revelation on it when he speaks of the Word being with the Father in the beginning, and how all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Then he goes on to say, "In HIM was life, and the life was the LIGHT OF MEN" (Jn. 1:4). From this verse we see that light and life are essentially one and the same. "The life was the light of men." So when He came a light into the cosmos, He also was the life that came into the creation, to give life unto all creatures. "The Spirit is Life," says the apostle Paul. Life and Spirit are synonymous even as Life, Light and Spirit are but three ways of saying the same thing. The Word was the Life, the Life was the Light, the Light was the Christ, the Spirit is the Life-GOD INFUSED INTO HIS CREATION-or, as we read in Job 32:8, "There is a SPIRIT IN MAN: and the INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY giveth them understanding."

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

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

This gross material realm was created on a level of death, and death is still a part of the creation; and as long as darkness exists death will still be around. But, blessed be the Lord! darkness and death will ultimately be done away, for the Light shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day and "there shall be NO NIGHT there." When this present creation came into being, death was in the universe, for everything has its opposite, and death is the opposite of life as darkness is the opposite of light. There is even the opposite in God, which is slain by the cross in His heart, so that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Everything of this present creation, when it was

formed, had the potential of death in it. It was a built-in factor in creation. But included in God's great and eternal purpose is the abolition of death and darkness; and God, in working out His plan, is doing just that. When He has finished there will be no darkness nor death anywhere in the universe. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But destroyed it shall be, and His Son, who is the Light and the Life, is the One ordained to perform this great task. And He performs it IN US. Praise His name.

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

The Light of Life is now being unveiled in a people into whose hearts GOD HATH SHINED. The pen of inspiration wrote, "YE are all the children of the Light, and the children of the Day, we are not of the night nor of darkness" (I Thes. 5:5). There are many other places where we read of the children of light, the sons of light, the children of the day; and the children of night or of darkness. We can be either children of the Day, or children of the Night. We can walk in light, or in darkness; it all depends on who we are following, and where our source is-flesh or spirit. The Spirit is life, and light is life. "If ye walk after the Spirit, ye shall live!"

Christ is to God what the light-rays of the sun are to the sun. Compared to the great orb of fire blazing in the heavens the gentle sunlight which strikes planet earth seems pale and limited; yet it is the very substance of the sun and the dispensation of the sun to us. Ere it left the sun it was with the sun and was the sun, as the Christ was with God and was God. "He is the sole expression of the glory of God-the Light-being, the out-ricing of the divine-and He is the perfect imprint and very image of Gods nature" (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). Light is energy, and the energy of the sun, for example, can change into other forms of energy. When light causes sugar to form in green leaves, some of the light energy is changed into chemical energy and stored in the sugar. When you look at those green leaves you see nothing that even slightly resembles the glory or brilliance of the sun. The lesson here is that the light of the sun has been LOWERED into another form, and when you eat those leaves you receive the strength of life from the energy in the sugar which is really the energy of the sun lowered into that existence.

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

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

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

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

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

It was when the Christ hung upon the cross before the foundation of the world, and upon the cross of Calvary, that He became the one fruitful tree. He tasted death for every man and was made perfect through sufferings that He might lead many sons to glory. It was under the shadow of His cross, that we were found and were quickened by His Spirit. It is there He found us, and it is there that we found Him, the Man who is our hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. It was there that streams of living water

were poured out in the dry place; from that moment the Rock followed us, and out of it, living streams are flowing more abundantly. It is the cross in OUR LIVES which brings the release of these living streams to mankind, for the body of Christ is the channel of His life by the extension of His cross. While we praise God for the cross of Calvary, and while the soul of man will ever love to thank Him who gave His life for us, yet I believe the triumph of the Christ began at the cross in the heart of God before the foundation of the world and ends only when the race has received from God the Father, through the Christ, Head and body, the grace, power and glory of God that makes them sons of God like Himself.

Hallelujah for the Cross!

Chapter 11

Libra - The Scales

(continued)

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

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

One of the most strangely arresting statements in the Word of God is that Jesus is the "lamb SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD" (Rev. 13:8). Well do I know that there are shining depths and lofty heights of meaning in that sublime statement, yet the central thought seems to be plain enough. It is that long ago "when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy" -- the purpose of creation and redemption was conceived and wrought out in the heart of God in celestial realms. The sacrifice and death of the Christ did not start with the events surrounding Calvary; it began away back then at the beginning, and culminated on Calvary. He was the Lamb who was put to death from the beginning. Just as the cross did not begin at Calvary, so the crucifixion of Christ did not begin at Calvary. Peter expressed the fact that the cross existed as a work of God before the foundation of the world in this manner: 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood

of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was FOREORDAINED B-E-F-O-R-E THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, but was manifest in these last times for you' (I Pet. 1:18 -20). The day came wonderful day! -- when that love-purpose, conceived and enacted in eternity, cast its shadow into time. The fullness of time having come, God "sent forth His Son." And on the cross of Calvary the eternal purpose became an historic verity.

Christ came into this world, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to bring us back to God and the glory we had with Him before the world was. That may seem a strange statement to some, but because God is God, all the wisdom and understanding of the universe dwells in Him. We must expect Him to say many things and state many facts that the natural mind cannot comprehend nor pry into. It is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding. The most unlearned and simple among men can comprehend the deepest things of God in that moment when the divine light from above shines upon them. It is a divine certainty that Christ was with the Father and loved by the Father before the worlds were made or the ages framed. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (.In. 1:1-2).

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

Our human minds cannot measure eternal things nor such divine love. Human love is limited to days, weeks, months, and years in duration. Fifty eight years ago I stood by my lovely, blushing bride-to-be in a marriage ceremony under the stars. A year and a haft prior to that hour we had fallen in love - deeply, devotedly. In pledges written poetically, and in promises whispered personally, we had spoken of our love that would last forever and ever. Yet it came as a stunning, shocking, sobering reminder of the frailty of earthly love when I discovered in our marriage vows that we could only pledge our love to each other 'until death do us part.' There was a moment when our love was born - but there would be another moment when it will cease! Not that we embrace death - but all EARTHLY THINGS pass away whether by death or by transformation to a higher plane of existence. Not so with the love of God! God's love toward us did not begin the day we were born into this world. You may go back beyond the time when a wave beat upon a beach, or a star shone in the sky, or glorious Seraphim cried 'holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!' and when you get back as far as the mind can reach you will know that GOD KNEW YOU THEN, GOD LOVED YOU THEN, GOD PURPOSED FOR YOU THEN, GOD PREDESTINATED YOU THEN, and the blessed Lamb of God was SLAIN FOR YOU THEN UPON THE ETERNAL CROSS IN THE HEAVENS. This is a deep spiritual truth, a mystery of the universe. Think and pray over it and the Holy Spirit will teach you.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS

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

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

"The preaching of the cross" . . . Here we note that the word "preaching" is actually the Greek word LOGOS -- THE WORD. The word LOGOS goes far beyond just an utterance, a spoken saying, or particles of speech - it reaches into the very will, purpose, intent, and thought behind the words. The LOGOS (WORD) OF THE CROSS speaks to us of the full will of the cross, the full purpose of the cross, the full intent of the cross, the mighty power of the cross working in our life, which becomes in us THE POWER OF GOD. As Ray Prinzing wrote: "IT IS NOT IN THE SYMBOL, IT IS IN THE WORD -- in the outworking of the will and purpose of God through the cross, that becomes HIS POWER IN US. Or, shall we say, it is the experiential outworking of the cross in our life which becomes THE POWER OF GOD. Talking about the cross, singing about the cross doesn't do, but the inworking of this WORD OF THE CROSS becomes a marvelous thing." Not the theory of the cross, but the tremendous, heart - gripping WORD -- the REALITY of the cross is what towers in our interest.

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

"Let us imagine, if we can, a man in this world who is truth incarnate. In him is all truth; and I mean by truth, reality without sham -- no pretence. There is not a ring of unreality about him. A man like that would be the glory of his nation. Then imagine another man in whom all light centers. I mean by light, knowledge and understanding, light on every

subject in the universe; and if you could find a man like that he would be the glory of his nation. Then look for another man in whom life is centered -- physical life, intellectual life, ethical life, spiritual life, all the life you can think of incarnate in this one man. He would be the glory of his nation. Then find another man in whom all wisdom is centered, not simply knowledge, but how to use it. He never makes a mistake, never acts foolishly. He would be the glory of his nation. Find another man in whom all power is centered, and he would be the glory of his nation. Then another man in whom all love is centered, love that is pure, love that is not flecked with lust; everything that is lovely and of good report centers in him. He would be the glory of his race.

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

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

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

Jesus' secret to the life of sonship was: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it and whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Mat. 16:24-25). ". . . let him deny himself" -- not: protect, defend, uphold and promote himself, or feel sorry for himself. How can you love any one else if you have all of that to do? Most people would rather deny the movie theater, the liquor store, the gambling den, the Babylon church system, communism, and Fidel Castro, but the message is clear -- "If any man will be My disciple, let him . . . deny HIMSELF." Poor, sweet, innocent little SELF! A brother in Christ once asked whether there can be found in all the universe a more possessive, blinding, or

deceiving devil than the devil of self. It is self, self, always SELF that stands between you and true sonship to God. It is the friendly hand of SELF that turns you away from your cross and refuses to let you take it up and follow Christ to the place of execution. Would God that all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship would learn this divine secret: It is the SELF that stands between them and the full manifestation of the will, purpose and glory of God in their lives. It is SELF -- the outer man of sense consciousness - that shuts us out from the vibrant and incorruptible life of the SPIRIT.

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

Why did the love of Christ lead Him to the cross? Because nowhere in Him did SELF rise up and say, 'I have had enough of it.' Nowhere in Him could self say, 'I should not have to suffer so much,' or 'I should not have to give so much.' When Judas betrayed Him, there was no place in Him where self could rise up and say, 'I trusted this man to be the treasurer and now he has sold me down the river.' Or when Peter denied Him, 'I gave him the keys to the Kingdom and now he denies Me. He could truly say, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me' (Jn. 14:10). There was no ground in Him where the carnal mind could do its work. The path of sonship is truly one of denying ourselves, submitting to the cross as the Lord applies it to our lives, and following Him all the way. The road to Mount Zion passes through the hill of Golgotha. This is a WALK which requires all that we have and all that we are.

There is no place where self is a more cunning and deceitful devil than in the realm of our SPIRITUAL LIFE. Volumes have been written on the CRUCIFIED LIFE - the surrender of our will to God, of becoming nothing, that He might become everything. I am sure that some of my readers have sung the little chorus that expresses this beautifully:

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

As another has written: 'Herein is a definite inworking of the Spirit, till we recognize that in ourselves we are nothing - as pertains to the spiritual realm. Then He will make us a

'something' - indeed, the new creation is to become a part of HIMSELF, so we truly bear His image. And we are able to say with Jesus, 'I can of mine own self do nothing' (Jn. 5:30). Now, this we have found - the deep inworkings of the cross do not take away our self-respect, sense of self-value that belongs to the natural realm. It is dealing with an entirely different realm. The cross is used to cancel out any self effort to become spiritual. All of the natural gifts and graces wherein we are endowed in the earthly, proper for their sphere, do not qualify us for spiritual glories. We are born into this earthly realm, receiving whatever strengths, abilities, and weaknesses, that are appointed to us. And we grow and develop to the fullest potential we are able. Likewise, we are BORN into the heavenly realm, and endowed with HIS gifts and graces, and then are to progress toward spiritual maturity. Thus we find that we have a LIFE WITHIN A LIFE. The natural has its sphere, the spiritual has its sphere. The spiritual will help you to be even a better natural person, BUT THE NATURAL CANNOT HELP YOU BE A BETTER SPIRITUAL PERSON. For 'it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing' (Jn. 6:63).

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

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

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

God is raising up sons in these days whose eyes are set upon the Father, who will be able to declare, "We are the light of the world," not out of self-consciousness, but because of a God-consciousness, who is speaking out of our innermost being, "Arise and shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The Lord said to

Paul, "They will not accept thy word, turn to the Gentiles, for I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth." If Paul were diplomatic, if Paul were religious, if Paul were self-seeking, if Paul were self-saving, he would have kept the revelation to himself and just walked out of town calmly and said, "Well, they do not understand, but really, I have a deeper and greater calling, I will just go off to fulfill it." The Father said to Paul, "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, thou shalt be for salvation to the ends of the earth." So Paul said to the people, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Acts 13:47).

Jesus instructed His disciples: "Into whatsoever city you enter and they receive you not, shake the dust off and say to them: Nevertheless, the Kingdom of God has come nigh unto you" (Mat. 10:14; Lk. 10:11). Do not walk out of town silently, muttering to yourself, "They did not realize what we represented, that we are, in expression, the Kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. They did not realize that the Kingdom of God is working and living and expressing itself in us." There can be no self-seeking, no self-saving in these days, there can be no self-protection in the life of sonship. The sons of God cannot be self-righteous, parading the ideas of the carnal mind before men under the guise of spirituality, but neither can the sons of God be so wrapped up in self-saving that they pretend to be more humble than they are, and pretend to be what they are not. God is declaring that the creation is groaning and travailing, waiting for the unveiling of God's sons. Are we going to sell the world short in these days? Are we to deny that the Lord is saying to His elect, "As the Father sent Me, so send I you"? Are we to deny that we are the sons of God, calling ourselves, like Babylon's masses, "sinners saved by grace," "Christians," etc. Why have we not heard this word before? Because the Father did not send the babies to be the saviours of the world. The baby Jesus in the arms of Mary was not the saviour of the world. The Father sent His SON to be the saviour of the world. And there was no salvation or expression or manifestation until He began to be about thirty years of age, then it was that the Father spoke from heaven: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And on the mount of transfiguration: "This is My Son, hear Him." When the son has come to maturity he has but one desire, to do the Father's will, to speak the Father's words, and to accomplish the Father's purpose. Jesus said: "In the same manner in which My Father has sent Me -- as a son in maturity in full commitment to His will, with the Father dwelling in Me, My eyes fastened on Him and My whole being swallowed up into Him -- as the Father has sent Me to be Light and Life and Salvation and all that creation needs -- SO SEND I YOU!"

No man can walk this path of sonship apart from the cross. When the blessing of God comes, when the power and glory of God arise upon us, what happens? We speak either out of the life of God with no self-consciousness, or self takes the credit for what we have received and struts about like a peacock, with its tail all spread out, parading flesh before men. Self will assume the tide of "Reverend," "Head Elder," "Senior Pastor," "Bishop," "First Apostle," "the Prophet," "General Overseer," or "God's man of faith and power for this hour," subjecting the people to his dominion for prestige, power or gain. I do not hesitate to tell you that men who have never denied self and who know nothing of the work of the cross have been blessed by God with gifts and self has usurped these gifts and used them for its own ends - building vast empires of flesh in the name of the Lord. These men of reprobate minds presumably serve God but are dedicated to material gain. They promote what they term a "faith message" or a "life message" with joy, peace, miracles, blessing, healing, prosperity, glory, fame, power, and anything else you can invent which would appeal to the lusts of the flesh, and make life on earth one continuous

glorified "Disney World" experience. In the name of Jesus Christ, and under the banner of spiritual ministry, they separate the simple, God-fearing saints from their money. These religious racketeers, wearing the masks of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, promise blessing, healing, miracles and prosperity -BUT NOT WITHOUT A PRICE. Their "prayer request" forms are attached to their "offering" forms, subtly suggesting that if you GIVE you will GET. Their clever promises and adroit manipulations have led tens of thousands of distressed and needy souls to send in their meager incomes in hope of a miracle in return. The apostle Paul bluntly describes these crafty promoters of greed and warns the godly against their message and methods in these forceful words: "... men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that GAIN IS GODLINESS: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain . . . and having food and raiment let us therewith be content. But THEY THAT WILL BE RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL: which while some have coveted after, they have ERRED FROM THE FAITH, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, FLEE THESE THINGS; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (I Tim.6:5-11). Again, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose GOD IS THEIR BELLY, and whose glory is in their shame, who MIND EARTHLY THINGS." (Phil. 3:18-19).

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

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

Most of us have no problem as to our bad, we know the flesh and all that it represents must go to the cross. But all of us have areas in our life which we think are good: a devotion, a commitment, a consecration, a faith, a prayer life, a knowledge, a ministry, but which are as much SELF as the bad temper, the lust, and the rest of it. God is saying that everything must go. That which is left will only be CHRIST HIMSELF formed in us.

Why is this? Because when God has planted something, after a while we become idolatrous about it. Idolatry is really the self-life projecting itself into the things of God so that they turn into idols because they become the thing which is produced by our consecration, our prayers, our dying. But we do not want it to die, because it has cost us too much, and it represents a work of God in our life. We have given our whole life to see this thing come into being, and anyone that comes along to destroy it is destroying all our consecration, the prayers we have prayed, the reputation we have lost, the deaths we have died. After God has established it, you are telling me that it has to die? But that is exactly it! If it lives we will do what Israel did with the brazen serpent. We make an ephod out of it and go after it to worship it. I know people today who instead of worshipping God, worship worship. It is not the Lord they delight in, but the soulish sensation they get out of 'worship.' Others worship a message - the faith message, the sonship message, the Kingdom message. Many worship experiences and ministries. Wherever God has brought us in previous dealings, God is progressively moving forward. Today He says: "Build it", tomorrow He says, "Destroy it." Today He says: "Plant it," tomorrow He says, "Pluck it up." Today He says: "Get a harvest," tomorrow He says, "Let the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die." He who has a right to build has also the right to destroy when He is through with a thing. And, woe! unto that man who cannot discern the times.

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

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

How our glad hearts rejoice and our tongues drop down their pearls of praise in the sacred knowledge that we are each a living stone in the living temple of God, rising to form a holy sanctuary in the Lord. There is, however, a holy ambition of God that transcends the form of what we are becoming in Him. Only with the mind of the Spirit can we fathom the deep mystery John the beloved encountered on barren Patmos when in vision he beheld the glorious Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. With astonished wonder and open-mouthed amazement he cried, 'And I saw NO

TEMPLE THEREIN!" What a wonder! The Bible calls us the temple of God, but one day we will cease to be the temple. "And I saw no temple therein: FOR THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE THE TEMPLE OF IT" (Rev. 21:22). Think of it! The very thing that is represented by us must one day be swallowed up into GOD HIMSELF -- no longer to be a "container" of God, but SPIRIT as our total reality. As the Lord has spoken to us in times past, Christ has been doing things in us, He has been putting a devotion in us, forming a commitment, creating a character, perfecting a ministry, performing a work of grace in our life until we can say: "I am what I am by the grace of God." The Lord has worked and wrought within us until of this commitment, and of this faith, and of this consecration, and of the blessings and gifts and ministry and attainment we can say: "The Lord hath done it for me." But that is over. From now on God is not interested in what He has done FOR YOU. From henceforth it must be "When Christ who is our life shall appear..." If there is a mind in us, it must be the mind of Christ, not our religious mind that is cultivated through the years until it is religious and devoted and full of the Bible and stayed on God. From now on it must not be our mind stayed on Him, it must be HIS MIND IN US.

What we have witnessed to for years was a work of God, His salvation in us, His peace in us, His victory in us, we had become a product of the work of God. But God's purpose is not that we shall be a testimony of the work of God, but that there shall come a revelation of A PERSON, that the revelation will BE CHRIST. It will not be a revelation of the work of God, but a revelation of the Person of God in us. God is talking to His sons about PERSONIFICATION, MANIFESTATION, REVELATION AND IDENTITY. Now you are going to PERSONIFY CHRIST as you have embodied the works of Christ. Christians represent the work of God: Saved from this, having received that, changed into something else, but it is still "ME". What you see is a marvelous expression of the handiwork of God. But God intends that the hour should come when there shall be a revelation of the Person of God, the Identity of God, so that HE IS OUR LIFE. Not: we have life because He has wrought life in us, but "Christ who is our life shall appear" He no longer gives us peace, He becomes our peace, our righteousness, wisdom, redemption, sanctification, ALL THAT HE IS until we are no longer a witness to a work or an experience, but a witness of His Person, His Identity as our reality. Are you willing to have nothing but the Person? Are you willing for God to be your life, and you His life until HE IS ALL THERE IS? Are you willing to forget the work and the experience to bear HIS IDEN'TITYY? In our moving on into God, God is saying to us: "What I did for you yesterday, the works of God, must now become the Person of God in you. The cross must strike not only at our carnality and sin, but at all our blessings and experiences and attainments in God. While we praise God for all His mighty acts on our behalf, in and through us , it must all be slain by the cross until we no longer talk about the work of God wrought in us, for that is duality -- God and me. When men saw Jesus, the salvation of God, they saw more than a work of God; they saw the PERSON OF GOD, for, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' (Jn. 14:9). Ultimately God's purpose is that when the cross has done its work Christ will be so formed in us, so expressed and revealed through us, until he that sees us sees the Father. There are tens of thousands of people here in Texas and tens of millions around the world today who are living witnesses to the work of God, of His handiwork, the power of the blood, the power of faith, the glory of His gifts and graces. But what is God looking for and creation groaning for that is DIFFERENT from what we have had for two thousand years? Ah -- creation is groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God, the unveiling of GOD IN HIS SONS, a people who are no longer witnesses to the work of God, but who bear the very Person of God, who bear the very Identity of God, from whom flows the life of God without limit or

measure. What the Spirit is saying is that God must have a people in whom the Lord, the Spirit, is BECOMING rather than DOING. That is what the manifestation of the sons of God is, that is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is, there will never be the unveiling of Jesus Christ if all I can talk about is what He has done. His works are not Him -- HE is a Person. Paul said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." Not, "It pleased God to reveal some of the works of His Son in me and give me an experience." And when he prayed earnestly for the saints: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you", Paul did not mean that they should receive another healing, another miracle, another answer to prayer, another gift of the Spirit, another revelation, or die a little more death and so on. There came an hour when Paul knew that the works of the Lord would not be sufficient, but that the Lord Himself had to be put on, so that instead of having a work of faith, or a work of love, or a work of power, the Lord Himself, the spirit of life within, would BE THE FAITH, LOVE AND POWER. It looks as if you are turning your back on these wonderful experiences in God, but you needed them to bring you where you are. The lesser is swallowed up of the greater.

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

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

There should be no need to remind those who read these pages that the cross does not end when God becomes ALL in us - for the cross is eternal in the heart of God. Let us rehearse what is meant by the cross of Christ. Truth, light, life, wisdom, holiness, power and love all in ONE CORPORATE MAN -- the Christ, Head and body. What a character that is! Yet truth, light, life, wisdom, holiness, power and love by themselves do not make for true glory. I have heard people testify about the work of God in them and all they were doing was bragging. They were boasting and glorying in what God had done for them, in what God had given them, and all they had was centered in themselves. But truth becomes truly glorious when it goes to the cross, when it becomes sacrificial, not defending, but dying upon the cross for those enslaved by error. So with light when it

goes to the cross, not displaying itself, when it is willing to give itself for darkness; when life refuses to protect itself, but goes to the cross and gives itself for those who are dead; when wisdom goes to the cross, not admiring itself, but giving itself for the ignorant; holiness, not boasting in itself, but giving itself for the unholy; power not exerting itself, but holding itself back in order that it may be sacrificed for those who are weak; love not enjoying itself, but pouring itself out for the unlovely. That is greatness, great through conforming to the death of Christ, great in that all that is good is on the altar of sacrifice for those in need. That is God, for God brought the whole vast universe, the creation, all things visible and invisible, in the heavens and in the earth, out of Himself; then He gave Himself to the creation, to live for the creation, to dwell in the creation, that He might be ALL-IN-ALL. Truly this is the heart of God and the hope of creation!

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

Chapter 12

Libra-The Scales

(continued)

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

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

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

How we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the blessed knowledge that "all these things are of God." He has planned it all. He it is, too, who has been fulfilling it. There is no place BEYOND GOD, for it is "IN HIM that we live, and move, and have our

being," even though it be without a consciousness of His presence and consumed by the consciousness of our own self-will. Still we cannot get beyond Him, for matters not the extremity of our rebellion and waywardness, we shall find that HE IS THERE with His cross, waiting to deal with our self-hood, and then with HIS LIFE to restore us back into wholeness in Him again. There is, then, a divine Plan, and that plan is "the way of the cross" that LEADS HOME. A clear and profound statement of this plan occurs in Hannah's simple words in I Sam. 2:6, "The Lord KILLETH, and maketh alive." A killing process is here taking place, one which is being carried out under the direction of our Lord.

The question sometimes annoys us -- Why does God deal with me as He does? Why is God so SEVERE? Why does He strike so VIOLENTLY?. This burning question the scripture answers very simply by saying: He KILLETH. There is something within us that must be put to death. And that something God deliberately kills, whether we understand what He is doing or not. He does not ask us for permission thus to kill. It is the old "I" which must be put to death, our mistaken identity. Our self-hood must be bruised and broken. And not our self-life in the form of egoism and self-willfulness only. That too. But what we wish to emphasize here first and foremost is that our soulish life in its relation to God must be broken. It is that confidence which I have in myself, in my own understanding of spiritual things, in my own will, in my own ability and righteousness and spirituality, that confidence in myself with which I always oppose THE SPIRIT and which is the real hindrance to the expression of HIS INDWELLING LIFE, which must be broken. To break our own inherent and deeply rooted self-confidence, and self-righteousness, which is fallen man's deepest error, is undoubtedly the most severe work that God has to accomplish within us. And when we see how He does it, we must stand before Him in awe, adoration, and thanksgiving. He breaks our old fleshly life, our carnal consciousness. This He does by driving it to exhaustion, to a point where it has spent all its energies and lies at His feet, surrendered and brought to naught -killed.

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

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

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

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

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

understands exactly what He is doing and how -- we don't. But we can be sure of one thing: God is at work by the Cross to make things safe for Himself' -- end quote.

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

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

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

Nearly half a century ago Lloyd C. Douglas wrote a best selling religious novel called THE ROBE. Paul Rees, in reviewing the book, points out that its readers will remember that Marcellus Gallio was the Roman tribune who was supposed to have been the officer in charge of the actual crucifixion of Jesus. When Marcellus returned to his quarters after the crucifixion, he made a confession to his Greek slave Demetrius. He confessed that he felt dirty and ashamed. When Demetrius tried to console him by reminding him that he

was only obeying orders given him by Pilate, Marcellus asked, "Were you out there?.. . Were you there when He called on His God to forgive us?" And the rest of the story is concerned with the strangely persistent way in which this Roman noble was haunted by his sense of guilt for having crucified the Lord. He, who was supposed to be upholding the law by executing a guilty man, was somehow condemned by that man's innocence and made to feel guilty himself. "WERE YOU OUT THERE," he asked. It is a fair question that Marcellus put to Demetrius. And the answer is "Yes." WE WERE ALL OUT THERE! Whether Roman or Greek, whether Israelite or Gentile, we WERE there when they crucified our lord.

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

A most wonderful and significant event, completely passed over by the vast majority of Christians, occurred at the time of the crucifixion of our Lord. In the purposes of God extending from Paradise lost to Paradise regained, the time came when all three of the characters (God, Adam, the serpent) involved in the ancient drama in Eden MUST meet again -- this time AT THE CROSS! You will understand a great truth when you see how it is that Christ, Adam, and the serpent ALL MET AT THE CROSS. Let me unfold for you this deep and blessed mystery which transpired on the hill called Calvary. Yes, Christ, the manifestation of God in flesh, the consciousness of God in our spirit, was present there at Calvary. But Adam was also there in flesh, old Adam, the self-consciousness of man in the soul--he was not there in the flesh of Jesus (the last Adam), but represented in the flesh of one of the thieves crucified WITH HIM. Furthermore, the serpent was there, that ancient serpent, the power of the carnal mind, the law of sin and death in our members--this serpent was manifested in the flesh of the other thief crucified WITH CHRIST. Three and a half years prior to this event Jesus had encountered the serpent in the wilderness of Judea, the temptation came in these subtle words, "IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD, command that these stones be made bread" (Mat. 4:3). And now, on mount Calvary, while drinking in obedience to the Father the last bitter dregs from the cup of suffering and death, the satanic voice is heard once more taunting Him through the lips of this jeering malefactor: "IF THOU BE THE CHRIST, save Thyself and us!" (Lk. 23:39).

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

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

and full of depth. Truly Christ died FOR US, not in our stead, precluding our dying, but on our behalf, thus enabling us to truly die and rise again WITH HIM.

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

Turn aside with me for a few moments and meditate upon these THREE CROSSES on Golgotha's hill. We will find a very wide field of truth opened before us in these THREE CROSSES. There were THREE MEN met together there by the counsel of God that fateful day. Three, in the numerology of scripture, stands for that which is solid, real, substantial, complete, and entire. E.W. Bullinger, in his book, NUMBER IN SCRIPTURE, points out that "All things that are specially COMPLETE are stamped with this number three. God's attributes are THREE: omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. There are three great divisions completing time-PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE. Three persons, in grammar, express and include all relationships of mankind. Thought, word, and deed, complete the sum of human capability. The simplest proposition requires three things to complete it; viz., the SUBJECT, the PREDICATE, and the COPULA. Three kingdoms embrace our ideas of matter-MINERAL, VEGETABLE, and ANIMAL" To which I would add-man himself is a TRIPARTITE being composed of SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY. Those three parts comprise the whole man. The three crosses on that hill far away were there by neither accident nor coincidence. There is deep mystery and divine meaning in the scene!

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

lives out of any dimension other than SPIRIT will sooner or later discover to his or her chagrin that soul and body are indeed TWO THIEVES! And it was these three-spirit, soul, and body-the whole man in the totality of his reality that was crucified upon three crosses in that long ago!

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

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

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

Oh. that we might learn to believe in the almighty power of the CHRIST WITHIN! The penitent thief believed that Christ was a King and had a Kingdom, and that on the other side of the cross He would take him up in His arms and in His heart and remember him, make him a part again, when He came into His Kingdom. He believed that, and believing that, he died. Dear brother, sister, you and I need to take the time to come into a much larger and deeper faith in the power of Christ, that the almighty Christ will indeed take us in His arms and carry us through this death process, revealing the power of His death in us. Christ must do it. Christ CAN do it! Now that Christ is upon the throne, now that the revelation has dawned that HE has all power and authority in heaven and in earth, would

you be afraid to do what the malefactor did when Christ was upon the cross, and entrust yourself to Him to die His death and to live His life? Christ, the very Christ of God within your spirit, will carry you through the very process He went through. He will make the process of death work in you until it is complete and your soul is swallowed up into the reality of HIS SPIRIT.

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

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

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

Our English word "Paradise" comes to us from ancient Persian by way of the Greek language. Paradise is the transliteration of the Greek word PARADEISOS which, in turn, transliterates the old Persian term PARIDAEZA. The PARIDAEZA denoted an enclosed park, beautifully landscaped with floral and fruit trees planted along a spring-fed stream, belonging to the king and his nobles. History tells of the idyllic beauty of the orchards of the king's forests, grazed by sheep, and guarded at the entrance by two soldiers whose task it was to see that intruders and spoilers were kept out. Only those who were friends of the monarch were given the pleasant privilege of passing peacefully through its gates to enjoy the sweet waters of the stream and the delicious fruit of the trees. In fact, the old Persian word PARIDAEZA gained such intentional popularity that it became a loan word in Aramaic and Hebrew as well as Greek. The Hebrew word for Paradise is GAN, the

word used in Genesis for the garden of Eden. In the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) the word PARADEISOS is used and Gen. 2:8 reads, "The Lord God planted a PARADISE eastward in Eden." It is not surprising that the Jew, during the Babylonian captivity, observed how many things about the paradise-parks of the king and the nobility resembled the story of the garden of Eden! There was the pure spring-fed stream, bounded by every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. The Jew beheld the PARIDAEZA of his majesty, and thought of the flaming sword of the Shekinah and the guardian Cherubim at the entrance to the garden of the King of the universe! The Jewish captives knew of the flocks of sheep which grazed in the royal enclosure, feeding by the still waters, and thought of how beautifully they depicted Yahweh's sheep, over whom He was Shepherd as well as King! In short, the word PARADISE seemed a most fitting term for that wondrous realm where heaven met earth before Adam discovered his self-hood, and it was adopted into the Hebrew language by the post-exilic rabbis in particular to speak of the garden of God.

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

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

That is why Jesus came-to open again to man the Paradise of God. He lived and moved and ministered from that Paradise all the years of His sojourn on earth. The pure river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb is again accessible as Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink. He that believeth on Me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (In. 7:37). The tree of life is now within constant reach as it is written, "This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is IN HIS SON" (I Jn. 5:11), and again, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in Me SHALL

NEVER DIE" (Jn.11:25-26). This tree is vibrantly and continuously bearing the fruit of His divine life in all who partake of it. The leaves of this wonderful tree are for the healing, the restoration of THE NATIONS. In this blest realm of Paradise, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, the curse is removed, as it shall finally be in all the earth, for there shall be NO MORE CURSE. The throne of God and of the Lamb is with men-heaven and earth are united again. The river that flows from the throne of God flows from out of our innermost being, the Kingdom of God IN MAN. In this Paradise His servants serve Him, for they behold His face in the light that the Spirit brings. His name shall forever be in their foreheads, His nature reigning in their minds and hearts-only His will forever and ever. There is no night here in this city of living stones, for the never-ending day of the Lord has come. No need for the light of candles, or lamps, nor for the light of the sun or the moon, no external light of any kind is needed, for the glory of the Lord, the light of the SPIRIT floods the length and breadth of the city of God. God Himself has reconciled all unto Himself and HE GIVETH THEM LIGHT

TODAY! Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise, Jesus assured the thief. Oh, the wonder of it. "Today" did not signify a particular date on the calendar two thousand years ago. The word heralded the bringing in of a NEW DAY, a NEW DISPENSATION, a NEW PROVISION, a NEW ORDER, a NEW REALM OF LIFE AND VICTORY, GLORY AND POWER! Ah, today! Paradise! In this one notable statement Jesus reveals that the Garden of Eden, the Paradise of God, the high and holy estate from which man fell, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth was at last OPENED ANEW. Thank God-we can now enter! Today is THE DAY!

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

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

henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is DEAD is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:6-7). Three crosses, three men, and three deaths. Oh, the mystery of it!

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

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

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

In the Song of Solomon the King, beautiful type of God's corporate Son, Head and body, exclaims, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me up to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense" (S. of S. 4:6). Myrrh in the scriptures is a figure of death, while frankincense is a figure of life, and was uniquely the fragrance of the Most Holy Place, the incorruptible realm of God. Beloved, THE CROSS IS THE

MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH. It is not just a small amount of myrrh, but a great and eternal MOUNTAIN of this costly perfume. How many times we go up to the cross with our self-life as if it were mountains of grief and regret, of suffering and sighing, of rain and loss, and not a sweet and priceless fragrance unto God. How often when we take up our cross to go after Jesus, we follow Him moaning and repining at every step. All the fragrance of this precious mountain is lost when we go up reluctantly and grudgingly, or withholding something from death. Oh! let us go up with joy unspeakable and full of glory, exulting that we have been counted worthy to suffer and to follow in His footsteps, and that to us it has been granted to die to the vain spirit of this world, to the carnality, childishness and abomination of the wretched religious systems, and to have our own fleshly minds, ambitions, desires and ways firmly nailed to the cross, to be gloriously alive unto God and exquisitely conformed to the image of God's beloved Son.

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

Chapter 13

Libra- The Scales

(continued)

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

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

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

There is real pain. The struggle of life against life--or rather life against death. The old life is death--a paradox of paradoxes.

The constellation of the CROSS represents the process by which we are crucified with Christ. The second Decan in the house of Libra is called VICTIMA, meaning "the victim." It is located right below the scales, and was anciently called SURA- a sheep or a lamb. This is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ giving His life for us and to us, "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). We would have thought that in calling our Lord "the Lamb" this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation and His earthly life and physical death. However, in scripture it is most often used in reference to His glory in heaven, the realm of Spirit. John saw the Lamb in the midst of the throne, standing as if slain, "having seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). The Spirit works as the Spirit of the Lamb. He works as a hidden, but divine power, breathing into the heart of His own people that which is the divine glory of the Lamb--His life, His nature. The Lamb is the Temple and the Light of the New Jerusalem. It is from beneath the throne of God and of the Lamb that the river of the water of Life flows. There must be a deep union with the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord, that the saint and the Saviour may consciously share the same life. There was great energy that brought Him out of the grave--the power of an incorruptible life--greater than atomic power. This resurrection life energy is now available for the saints, for it abides right within YOUR SPIRIT. "He that is joined to the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17).

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

THE CROWN

From the dawn of time the crown has been a symbol of rule, whether by secular monarch or by sacred priest. The early form of the crown was a simple band that was first used to hold back the long hair of the wearer, not unlike our modern headband. Eventually it was

adopted as a royal headdress even among peoples wearing short hair. Such bands are represented in sculptures of ancient Egypt, Nineveh, and Persepolis. Some of these bands were about two inches wide and were made of linen, silk and even silver and gold. These ancient headbands gradually developed into the more elaborate turbans encircled by a band of silk or other expensive material and decorated with diadems and other precious objects to assume the dignity represented. When a ruler conquered other countries he would sometimes signify his multiple-kingdom rule by wearing several bands of cloth or metal around his turban. An example of this is seen historically in the advent of Ptolmy into Asia Minor. When he made his entrance into Antioch, Ptolmy wore two bands or CROWNS around his headdress to advertise the fact that he was emperor of Asia Minor as well as Egypt. In the process of time, when bands of precious metal replaced the bands of cloth as crowns, "horns" were added to the royal circlets. In the Middle East, as in the Bible, a horn is a symbol of power and authority. It was natural, therefore, for the designers of crowns to use points on the bands to indicate the might of a king or ruler. These bands were an artistic rendition of horns and indicated the number of countries under the rule of the wearer. If his crown had three horns it meant that he ruled over three countries, five horns meant that he ruled over five countries, and so forth. But whether simple headband, turban, or the elaborate metal crowns of recent ages their message has always been the same-to declare that the wearer is SOVEREIGN!

One of the Greek words for crown is DIADEMA which may be translated into English as "diadem." When heaven was opened to the blessed apostle banished to the wilds of Patmos, and the white horse Rider appeared in the bright skies above, the glory and eternal triumph of God's Christ was magnificently expressed in these meaningful words: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were MANY CROWNS; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron... and He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-16).

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

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

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

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

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

The revelation of Christ to the human heart as King will always be subsequent to the revelation of Him as Saviour. There need not necessarily be a long interval between these two revelations, indeed the sooner the one occurs after the other the better; but the Saviour must ever be discovered first, and in the joy of that discovery the soul will be led on to find the King. When Gideon had achieved the liberation of his countrymen from the yoke of Midian, we are not surprised at hearing that they offered him a throne. It was natural that they should say, "Rule over us," when his prowess had by divine assistance rescued them from the pitiful bondage of their enemies. It is even so in the history of our own spiritual progression in God. As we make proof of HIS power to save, and earnestly

desire that He should carry on His saving work to its final triumphant conclusion, we begin to feel that He will be the better able to do this, the more completely we surrender ourselves to His control. If He is merely a Saviour, called in at a moment of emergency, He will show Himself on such occasions strong to save. But if He can once become our King, then He will exert His regal power in making such transformations within the little kingdom of our own nature as shall bring us to our full rights, benefits and state of being as citizens of His glorious Kingdom.

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

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

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

TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS unto Himself, thus reigning as King over our domain. As this victory is secured within, it is then, and only then, that truly "we see Jesus... CROWNED with glory and honour."

We are to crown the Lord, the Spirit, as King in every place in our being, outer and inner. It was the humiliation of France, in the fifteenth century, that her king Charles VII, was not crowned in the proper city, where former kings were crowned. Joan of Arc, burning with the high resolve to remove this dishonor, and have the king crowned in Rheims, emerged from obscurity, gathered an army, drove the enemy back from one point to another, until she dislodged him from Rheims. The king came then. The crown was placed upon his brow in the right place; and the fair maiden, Joan, bowed at the foot of the throne, the tears of joy streaming down her beautiful cheeks. Where are we to crown our King? We are to crown Him in the most sacred and authoritative chamber of our nature, from whence proceed the impulses and propensities of our spiritual life. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mat. 6:10). So then the Kingdom of God originates in the realm of spirit (heaven) and finds expression in the earth-realm (physical). If you walk after the SPIRIT you will live, you receive the crown of life, the crown which IS LIFE, the dominion of life out of your spirit. The authority of life is in the Spirit, even the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. And this Spirit of Life is in YOUR SPIRIT, AND FROM THENCE HE WOULD BE CROWNED AND RULE IN LIFE OVER THE KINGDOM OF YOUR BEING.

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

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

The truth is, of course, that although God (SPIRIT) is the supreme authority and power, and the only reality of the universe-man with his mortal mind does not so perceive Him. The carnal mind ever pursues an identity apart from God, proclaiming the ancient error: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" (Isa. 14:13-14). I will...I will... I will!

So man, in his distorted consciousness, rules his own life and destiny apart from the consciousness of God-yea, in opposition to God! And the inevitable result of this course is chaos, sorrow and death. How certain it is that "there is a way which SEEMETH RIGHT unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). The power of the human will is not sovereign. The human will pertains to the material senses, the outer man who is perishing. There is no reality there.

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

This brings us back to our question: If the Lord HAS ALL POWER, how is it that He R-E-C-E-I-V-E-S POWER? The answer is found in the prayer Jesus taught us which sets forth the great principles of KINGDOM PRAYER. Jesus says, "When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN" (Mat. 6:9-10). What does it mean for God's Kingdom to come? I am the king of my life; I am seated upon the throne; I make the decisions; I do according to my own will. But when THE LORD comes I must abdicate my throne and let HIM sit upon the throne! The testimony of sons in the Kingdom of God is: "Till I met THE LORD I was the commander of my life. Since I came into relationship with Him, HE COMMANDS." "Thy will be done in earth" is something for now-not tomorrow, not in the millennium nor the ages to come. You see, when I abdicate the throne and resign from the dominion I have exercised in my life, that realm of dominion which was reserved unto myself is GIVEN TO THE LORD. The power which I once held in my own hands is YIELDED UP TO HIM and He now exercises the power and authority that I formerly exercised. Thus, HE RECEIVES POWER! He receives the RULE over my life. He never took that rule by force, but He receives the rule when I surrender it up to Him. It is when I truly recognize that there is NO POWER BUT THE LORD, THE SPIRIT, that I crown HIM Lord of ALL!

THE VICTOR'S CROWN

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

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

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

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

Paul had felt the electric charge permeate the air in the arenas when the games were finished and all the winners were gathered together to receive their crowns. The trumpets sounded, the crowds cheered and the granite walls trembled as the victors knelt in the center of the arena. Suddenly, emerging from his private observation box, the king would walk in great pomp and colorful display toward the kneeling victors. A hush would come over the crowd. Silent tears dropped from happy faces. In the suppressed silence, the winners could hear their own hearts pounding with joy as the king placed the crowns on their heads one by one. When the last crown decorated the last brow, the trumpets played an anthem of victory. Amidst the deafening roar of the crowd, the athletes embraced each other while tears spilled down their faces and they talked of "next year" when new crowns would be won. Paul reminds us that the athlete trained and ran to obtain a CORRUPTIBLE CROWN. Those green leaves would soon dry up, turn to a faded brown and crumble into oblivion. The fragrant branches soon wilted and became dead and brittle. In contrast to this, oh ye saints of God, OUR STEPHANOI are INCORRUPTIBLE CROWNS which will never fade away in death-for our crown is the Crown of Life-LIFE ITSELF!

How appropriate that we should read of the twenty-four Elders: "And round about the throne were... four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads CROWNS (stephanos) OF GOLD" (Rev. 4:4). Golden Stephanos! Golden

Victor's Crowns! Gold is a symbol for the divine nature. And how true that we are only able to overcome by being made partakers of HIS DIVINE NATURE! To be "crowned" means to be given kingly authority. As the kingly authority of God's divine nature ascends the throne of our lives we are CROWNED, MADE RULERS, not after the carnal pursuits of the flesh, but in the love, truth, life and glory of God's own character.

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

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

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

The Most Holy Place is, then, an earthly picture of the throne of God-the realm of God's manifestation in power and dominion. The Most Holy Place prefigured CHRIST THE KING together with all those holy sons of God who reign with Him. It is the glory of KINGSHIP. Armed with the understanding that the Tabernacle constituted God's throne among His people, let us remember that there is "before" that throne a "great multitude"

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

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

The priesthood numbered thousands. Of course, all those priests could not go into the temple at one time, so they were divided into courses and assigned to work shifts, each "course" of Priests and Levites came on duty for a week, from one Sabbath to another. When a "course" was on duty, all its members were bound to appear in the temple, and the service of the week was subdivided among the various families which made up that course. The point I wish to emphasize here is this: It took all twenty-four courses to MAKE UP THE ENTIRE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD! As the Father unfolds these truths to the inner man, we become convinced that as the four Living Creatures "in the midst of the throne" reveal the glory of KINGSHIP, so the twenty-four Elders "round about the throne" reveal the glory of PRIESTHOOD. KINGS AND PRIESTS! A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS! PRIESTS THAT SIT UPON THRONES! REIGNING PRIESTS! A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION WITH AUTHORITY AND POWER! This is the great truth revealed in the throne of God, with four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne, and the twenty-four Elders around the throne. John the Revelator summed up in three short verses the wonderful truth of which I now write: "And when He had taken the book, the FOUR BEASTS and FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS fell down before the Lamb, every one of them having harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And THEY (the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders) sung a new song,

saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou was slain, and hast redeemed US to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast MADE US unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS; and WE shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:8-10). The four Living Creatures--KINGS! The twenty-four Elders PRIESTS! Together they bow low before the great King of kings and High Priest of the heavens, intoning this NEW SONG--"Thou hast MADE US unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall REIGN over the earth!"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 14

Libra-The Scales

(continued)

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

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

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

The Victor's Crown is granted as a reward for faithfulness--it is the trophy earned by steadfastness, perseverance and carrying the battle onward to victory. There was once a king who had a heavy stone placed in the middle of a busy road. He hid himself and watched to see who would remove the cumbersome obstacle. Men of various walks of life approached it and went around it. As the king watched, some men openly cursed the king for allowing the road to be so cluttered. One by one they dodged the task of removing the heavy stone. At last, a poor peasant, on his way to town, approached the place. His back was laden with a load of vegetables which he was going to sell. He stopped and contemplated the stone. The king watched eagerly. The peasant laid his

load on the ground. Taking a deep breath, he buffed and puffed as he rolled the heavy stone off the road. Turning around, he spied a money bag which had been laying beneath the stone. With trembling hands, he opened the bag. It was filled with a fortune in gold pieces. There was a note folded among the pieces of gold. It stated that the person who removed the stone could have the gold. It was signed by the king.

Beneath every task that the Lord puts in the pathway of our spiritual journey, is a hidden blessing. We, like the people in the story, have a choice. We can dodge the obstacle if we wish. But we do it to our own hurt. Our King will reward us if we faithfully OVERCOME in each test. There are crowns He has prepared for the overcomer. We will receive them if we press on to victory! "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, IF WE FAINT NOT" (Gal. 6:9). Faint in your fulfilling of the Lord's will and you will reap no reward. That is the law of sowing and reaping. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things WHICH WE HAVE WROUGHT, but that we receive a FULL REWARD" (II Jn. 8). The word translated "wrought" is also translated "gained." Either way, the message is clear: it is possible to lose rewards which you have gained. You must be faithful to the end of the journey, to the completion of the process, to receive a full reward.

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

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

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

THE CROWN OF LIFE

The journey to the Throne carries us through the process clearly revealed in the three Decans of the Sign of Libra: the CROSS, the VICTIM, and the CROWN. The cross is the transition point by which we die to this carnal realm and are made alive unto God-the realm of SPIRIT. The cross always meant DEATH. When a man picked up his cross and headed for Golgotha, he wasn't coming back! This has never changed. The cross still means DEATH. Notice the Lord's choice of words. "If any man will come after Me, let him DENY HIMSELF and take up his cross DAILY and follow Me" (Lk. 9:23). Notice the word, "daily". This cross-bearing business is a DAILY matter. Just as we need DAILY bread (Mat. 6:11), we need DAILY crucifixion. The life of a disciple demands "dying" every day. Seven days a week. Three hundred and sixty-five days a year (366 in leap year), the true disciple takes up his cross, crucifies the outer life, the flesh man, the carnal mind, the consciousness of old Adam -and DIES! Paul said, "I die DAILY" (Col 15:31). "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). If you take up your cross, it is for the purpose of being CRUCIFIED. If you get crucified, you will DIE. If you DIE, if your mortal consciousness with all its affections, lusts, and delusions are SLAIN, your SPIRIT, the inner reality of the Christ in you will LIVE and reign in righteousness, glory and victory! Now let us turn our attention to this CROWN OF LIFE. Jesus said, "Be thou faithful unto death (the completion of the work of the Cross) and I will give thee a CROWN OF LIFE" (Rev.2:10). One does not have to be a doctor of theology to see that only those who faithfully take up their crosses daily and follow Jesus into death to the outer life and the outer world of illusion, will receive a VICTOR'S CROWN OF LIFE. Truly, he that loses his life will save it!

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

James writes of this special blessedness of the one who is patient under trial and stands up under the severest testing, "Blessed, happy, to be envied is the man who is patient

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

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

To help us understand this transcendent realm of life offered to the overcomer, let us examine the two terms "mortal" and "immortal". "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this MORTAL must put on IMMORTALITY. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this MORTAL shall have put on IMMORTALITY, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:53-54).

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

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

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

When man was lowered from the realm of pure spirit existence into this gross material realm he was placed by God in the realm of mortality. He entered into the sense-realm with only a consciousness of his outer flesh-life, the inner spirit being veiled. In this consciousness he could not have been immortal, for God said to him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17), and it is IMPOSSIBLE for an immortal person to die! But, on the other hand, it was not necessary for Adam to die, for if he would die anyway why would God have pronounced the threat or penalty of death as a result of his disobedience? If Adam would never have eaten of the forbidden tree, it is obvious that he would have continued to live for as long as that condition was met. It could have been forever! And yet he lived within the POSSIBILITY OF DEATH at any time through disobedience, proving that he was NOT IMMORTAL. The thing we want to

see is, that although Adam possessed physical life in full and perfect measure, he did not possess INHERENT LIFE. His outer life was a SUSTAINED LIFE, SUSTAINED FROM W-I-T-H-O-U-T HIMSELF by "every tree of the garden."

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

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

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

The tree of knowledge and the tree of life both were "in the midst" of the Garden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the flesh-the carnal mind. "For to be carnally minded IS DEATH" (Rom. 8:6). "For if ye live after the flesh YE SHALL DIE" (Rom. 8:13).

The tree of life is the Spirit-the mind of Christ. "To be spiritually minded IS LIFE" (Rom. 8:6). "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, YE SHALL LIVE" (Rom. 8:13). The life-giving fruit of this tree was accessible to man but had absolutely nothing to do with the realm of earthiness. In the tree of life God invited man to discover HIM-the indwelling Spirit-as the source and center of life, that in union with Him God would be at once both the indwelling power of life and the environment in which man would live, move, and have his being. By eating of the tree of life man would be full of light, abounding in heavenly wisdom and knowledge, fearful in power and dominion, ethereal as a spirit and shining in the image of God. The fruit of this wonderful tree would make men radiant with the resplendent glory of God as was Jesus, the last Adam, at the transfiguration, whose face shone as the sun and His raiment was as the light. The mighty power of this tree would raise men up beyond any possibility of sin, corruption and death into the incorruptible divine life demonstrated by Jesus when He arose from the dead in a body of glorification. In this tree of life the effulgent perfumes of the heavenly realm would be fragrance and life to man's nostrils. He would taste spiritualities and touch spiritual things. The wisdom and power of God Himself would be wide open to him and he would walk in the presence and glory of celestial realms. The gates of that realm would never be shut by day or night. The heavens would be opened over his head and he would walk in the power and majesty of God Almighty.

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

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

We have seen that father Adam in the beginning had a conditional natural life (body and soul) which could have been sustained forever by walking in obedience to the law of God. Death came by sin, and sin is the transgression of the law. Furthermore, he could have

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

I am sure that this thought that not every Christian shall in the ages to come possess the full degree of life which is IMMORTALITY will come as a shock to many. But the scriptures clearly indicate MORE THAN ONE DIMENSION of everlasting life. One is the kind of life Adam could have had, a SUSTAINED LIFE, and the other is the kind of life that ONLY JESUS has been raised up into-INHERENT LIFE. The first raises men up in redemption to the quality of life Adam knew before he sinned and the second goes far beyond "redemption" (a buying back) to the ultimate purpose of God for the NEW CREATION, expressed in the nature, image, glory and dominion of the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. One will never understand that quality of life which is a "prize" to be won until he clearly sees that the first Adam never did dwell in that dimension of life demonstrated by the last Adam. Redemption means "to buy back" and involves a return to a former condition. Redemption, therefore, does not guarantee an entrance into the full and complete glory of the last Adam, the Lord from heaven; but it does purchase for men a return to the first condition and state of man before he sinned. Redemption restores men to the Edenic state of fellowship with God, human perfection, and eternal access to a SUSTAINED LIFE. But those elect sons of God who lay hold upon the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, many sons brought to HIS GLORY, become partakers of a life which far transcends in wisdom, glory and power the sustained life of redemption's provision-even IMMORTALITY AND INCORRUPTION! The wonderful everlasting life provided by redemption is the FREE GIFT of God to all who believe on the name of the Lord, receiving Him as Saviour and Redeemer. The dimension of life which transcends redemption is a glorious PRIZE to be sought after and WON.

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

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

that OVERCOMETH (not believeth.) will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE, which is in the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

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

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

A moment's just reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again. "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). In the Greek language the resurrection "of the dead" is NEKRON or TON NEKRON and is applied to all classes of people because all will be raised. But the term EK NEKRON-"out of the dead"-is not once applied to the unjust or the ungodly, or in any general sense. The resurrection of which Paul spoke was not the general resurrection of saints. Paul knew that he was a saved man, and as such knew there was positively no way he could escape the resurrection of the just. Now, if there were but one resurrection of the saved, as modern Babylon teaches, then all of his strivings were altogether uncalled for and useless. But no: Paul was not striving in vain; and unto the saints at Philippi he wrote, "But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as one combined loss for Christ's sake. Yea, furthermore I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege-the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may WIN Christ.. . that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from HIS RESURRECTION; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be

continually transformed in spirit into the likeness even to His death, in the hope that IF POSSIBLE I MAY ATTAIN TO THE.. . RESURRECTION THAT LIFTS ME OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD EVEN WHILE IN THE BODY. Not that I have now attained this ideal or am already made perfect, but I PRESS ON to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me" (Phil. 3:7-12, Amplified).

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

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

It will be worth our time to examine prayerfully just what is actually stated in the passage of scripture now under consideration. "For our citizenship is in heaven, FROM WHENCE WE LOOK.. ." "We LOOK." I ask you to notice this particularly. 'From whence WE LOOK.' "FROM WHENCE we look." It does not say, "from whence we SHALL look." Nor does it say, "from whence the Lord shall come." "From whence WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who shall change our vile body.. ." It does not at all say that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven, although that is how our superficial reading and carnal mindedness has taken it. Nothing is said here about where Christ dwells, or where He is coming from. The subject is not where Christ is, but where WE ARE and WHAT WE ARE DOING THERE. Where are we? "Our citizenship (residence, homeland) is in heaven." This lovely passage shows the believer to be a

heavenly man, positioned in the heavenlies--living out of the realm of SPIRIT. And what are we doing there? From that lofty vantage point and exalted state of consciousness we are LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR to change our vile body. Just as a man may sit in a 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-a spiritual body. We are to possess a fully developed body which belongs to the celestial world. This change from mortality to immortality takes place as Christ rises from within us, coming out of heaven (spirit) to manifest finally in the visible world. As we find CHRIST IN US as the source of our life, tremendous changes take place. Oh! the mystery of it. It is not from earth that we look for heaven to swoop down and change us; it is in heaven that we look for our outer man to catch up with our inner man. "FROM HEAVEN we look.. ." Hallelujah!

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

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

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

But note, precious friend of mine, I did not say that God would make us SPIRITS-but SPIRITUAL BEINGS. What God is creating is a NEW CREATION-something that has never been before! It is God (spirit), but not just God. It is man (form, image), but not just man. It is God and man brought together in a union producing a race of beings that are not God or man, yet God AND man! It is the NEW CREATION. In the vast storehouse of truth embraced by the holy scriptures no part nor phase thereof is in any way more outstanding or clear than the truth that man was designed by his Creator to possess a body. Man is not designed to have his spirit flit about through eternity without a body. The apostle Paul echoes the sense of revulsion found in the heart of every man at the thought of being found "naked" or disembodied. Speaking of the earthly tabernacle of flesh, he writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us FOR THIS SELFSAME THING IS GOD..." (II Cor. 5: 1-5).

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

THE CROWN OF MERCY

There are several crowns promised to the overcomer. In II Tim. 4:7-8 Paul says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." It is my duty before God to tell you that the VICTOR'S CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is not that "imputed righteousness" accredited to your account at the time you placed your faith in Christ, but an ATTAINED RIGHTEOUSNESS acquired as

one's STATE OF BEING through the deep processings of God in the life. Imputed righteousness justifies you from your sins; attained righteousness transforms your nature, qualifying you to reign in righteousness in the Kingdom of God. "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness.. ." (Isa. 32:1). "And they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

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

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

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

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

Think of it! God's Crown, God's Ruling Authority and Power! Crowned with MERCY! Ruling by MERCY! This is truth of unfathomed depth. What kind of a crown do you have in mind when you think of "wearing a crown" in the Kingdom of God? It is my prayerful

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 15

Scorpio-The Scorpion

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

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

The second Decan is the picture of a great and powerful man whose name is ORPHIUCHUS, meaning "the serpent-holder." It portrays a mighty man who is struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep him from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty effort to reach up and grasp THE CROWN (CORONA), which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. You will discover that the strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion! The man is grasping the Serpent with both hands, disabling the monster by his superior power and effectually holding him fast so that he cannot get the Crown. With one foot lifted from the Scorpion's tail as though stung and hurt, he is in the act of crushing the Scorpion's head with the other. He thus appears as the One who has power over the Serpent and over death, holding, conquering, and destroying them, though himself wounded in His conflict with them. The scene is drawn from the very heart of the Gospel - the ages-long battle between the "seed of the woman" and the "seed of the serpent." The very heart of the message of the Bible talks about a great warfare between the forces of righteousness and the forces of evil in this world; between faith and unbelief; between truth and error; between life and death; between the carnal mind and the mind of Christ;

between the followers of Christ and the followers of anti-Christ; ultimately it is the battle between Christ and Satan. The contest is for Dominion. ORPHIUCHUS is, first and foremost, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who at the cross was wounded in the heel, but in His resurrection, ascension and glorification has crushed the head of the Serpent, conquering sin, sickness, limitation and death! "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might DESTROY HIM that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:9-10, 14-15). In that long ago Eden the sublime message of the constellation of Scorpio was expressed prophetically in the pronouncement of the Almighty to the Serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel" (Gen. 3:15). We are told in chapter one of Genesis that God put the stars in the heavens for Signs, and these Signs convey a message. God has revealed that message to Adam and to his sons and grandsons. That message has gone into all the civilizations of the world as the Signs of the Zodiac and is passed down through the centuries. At the time of the building of the tower of Babel, this was corrupted into astrology, whereby, instead of these being Signs of God and His salvation by which we should worship the God of heaven and earth, they were changed into deities themselves and people began to worship the host of heaven: the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars. Some fail to see what the Signs of the Zodiac have to do with the Gospel or with the call to sonship. But with the Signs we have considered thus far it should be clear to every thinking mind that all the major themes of God's great plan and glorious purpose in creation and redemption are distinctly, expressly, precisely, accurately, methodically, graphically and comprehensively portrayed in the Signs of the heavens! Coincidence? Hardly!

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

country and people. They could not make out their greatest hero, or any meaning to his works! Not with them, therefore, did the mythic story of the powerful laborer originate. its true original is in the ancient constellations of the primeval astronomy, which, like the Scriptures, pointed to the coming Seed of the woman, to bruise, vanquish, and destroy the Serpent, and everything of the Serpent born or belonging to the Serpent's kingdom" -- end quote.

The old Hebrew name (shown on ancient star charts) for Hercules was GIBBOR, the word used of the "strong man" in Ps. 19:5, and translated as "mighty" and "mighty man" throughout the Old Testament. GIBBOR means "warrior, powerful, champion, valiant man." Hercules (Gibbor) is shown on the star charts down on one knee; in his right hand he wields a heavy club and in his left he grasps CERBERUS, the three-headed monster. He has the skin of a lion, which he has slain, thrown around him and his left foot is set directly on the head of the great Dragon. Ah, my beloved, beyond all the pagan distortions and confusions, there is the glorious revelation of the great work of our God and Saviour. How good it would be if God's elect people could comprehend the magnificent glory God has in store for us! Jesus Christ is the forerunner, the pioneer, the apostle, the first Son, the beginning, and the first born from the dead. He is the first Son to be exalted through the terrible sufferings of the realm of death and, seeing Him, we know that the promise to all others is certain, for it was not of Adam alone of whom God spoke, saying, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion," but the promise was to ALL the sons of men, of whom the first Son, Jesus Christ, is now exalted and has taken His seat at the right hand of power. We see Jesus and by seeing Him we know the glory that is available for those who follow in His steps just as the first golden leaves of fall are the herald of millions of flaming colors and hues to follow. It is a glorious thing to see that in the unchanging stars of the heavens and the shining Signs placed there by God in the night sky, we have a gallery of Truth, a picture of the conquering Christ whose members we are. We see that the hand that made those Signs is divine. It is the same hand which had penned the revelation which we have before us in our scriptures. It is the same hand which formed and sent into this world the first born Son, the Christ of God, and led Him through His mighty works on to Calvary and the open tomb, unto the position of all power in heaven and in earth. It is the same story of creation's hope of deliverance as God declared through Paul the apostle, "All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons. You did not receive the spirit of slavery again, inspiring terror; but you did receive the spirit of adopted sons-in which spirit we cry ABBA! FATHER! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs too--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ; if indeed we share Christ's sufferings in order to share also His glory. Why, the sufferings of the present I deem not worth considering compared with the glory soon to be disclosed to us. All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to futility, not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set free from the caldron of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation is moaning in the pangs of childbirth until this hour. And more than that, we ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a foretaste of bliss, yet we ourselves inwardly moan as we wait for full sonship IN THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODIES" (Rom. 8:14-23, Weymouth).

These inspired statements become crystal clear once we apprehend God's purpose in His many-membered son. These members of the Christ-body are members of His flesh and of His bones. These people have drunk deeply of His Spirit, for it is in one spirit that

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

"Come, Lord, and burst the captives' chains,
And set the prisoners free;
Come, cleanse this earth from all its stains,
And make it meet for Thee!
Oh, come and end Creation's groans-
Its sighs, its tears, its blood,
And make this blighted world again
The dwelling-place of God!"

THE SERPENT

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

Hardly had the human race been called into existence, than we find a strange enemy making his attack upon it under the guise of a serpent. Although the writer of this account gives no name to this creature, except "the serpent," other scriptures leave us no doubt as to who it was. Mere serpent, mere animal, it could not possibly be; for speech is the distinctive characteristic of intelligent mind, and that this Serpent possessed the faculty of both speech and reason was and is enough to prove that someone of a higher kingdom and order than that of beasts and reptiles was acting. The preachers are always telling us that the Serpent in the garden was one of these long, slender reptiles that have backbones and ribs and scales on the outside of their bodies. Numerous pictures have been sketched of the snake dangling from a tree limb, conversing with Eve. But the inspired Word of the omniscient Creator contradicts the uninspired word of the tradition-ridden theologians! John the Revelator stood transfixed in the visions of God on Patmos and beheld in spirit the splendor of the scene which unfolded before his wondering eyes as "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which IS THE DEVIL, AND SATAN, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 12:9; 20:1-2).

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

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

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

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

He is called "that old serpent the devil." He is called Leviathan, the crooked serpent. He is called the Dragon. He is called a Lion. He is called a Scorpion. He is called the Wicked One. He is called the Accuser. He is called the Adversary. But let no one imagine that in writing about the old Serpent the Devil, I am writing about the traditional Devil preached

so loudly by the church systems. If there are any who have the idea that I am speaking of the "orthodox" Devil of popular religion, they will soon be undeceived.

Oriental imagery is never more graphically displayed in all its eloquence than in the use of the biblical word SERPENT as a figure of Satan, the Devil. This symbol, along with a number of other word pictures, is very expressive of his nature and activity. Let us remember that there is much language in the scripture that is figurative and much that is allegorical. When our Lord Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," He was speaking quite evidently in figurative language. He did not mean that Christians were to be put into a gigantic salt shaker and shaken over the globe. Nobody would be so ridiculous as to believe that. And when Christ said, "I am the light of the world," He did not mean He had to be lit like a candle and put up somewhere where He would shine! There are figures of speech in the Bible. In our everyday conversations we make numerous referrals to the nature, character or personality of creatures or things, such as: "That guy is a real turkey," "He is a snake in the grass," "She can swim like a fish," "He is sharp as a tack," "She is neat as a pin." These are all figures of speech designed to express an image we are seeking to convey. All of us are accustomed to using symbolic language to communicate an analogous idea on a different plane of understanding. When Satan is spoken of as a serpent it no more means a literal snake than when Dan is so called in Genesis 49:17. "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." When Satan is called a serpent it no more means that he is a snake, or appeared in the form of a snake, or incarnated himself in the body of a snake, than that the Emperor Nero was a LION (II Tim. 4:17), or king Herod a FOX (Lk. 13:32), or Judah a LION'S WHELP (Gen. 49:9). It is the same figurative use of words when "doctrine" is called "leaven" (Mat. 16:6). When a figure of speech is thus employed it is for the purpose of expressing truth on a higher plane, and is intended to be a figure of something BEYOND THE LETTER OF THE WORD.

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

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion..." (Gen. 1:26). That man would bear the image of God and have dominion over all things is the first announcement of God's intention regarding man and the first announcement of His purpose; and locked up in that wonderful declaration is a universe

of meaning that does not reach the eye and that the mind has never understood. Furthermore, after God announced that man should have dominion over all realms, He then commanded the man, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply (reproduce the image of God), and replenish the earth and SUBDUE it" (Gen. 1:28).

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

It seems to me that if Adam was to guard the Garden against something, there surely must have been things that were not in harmony with man in God's image! Would not divine sense, or human sense, or common sense indicate that if Adam was to tread down and conquer and subjugate things upon earth, there were things that were overtly hostile to him. It should be crystal clear that we have had a false notion if we have been among those who assume that in the beginning EVERYTHING WAS HARMONIOUS in God's creation. How could they have been when we read of one, that ancient Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, who was already in the earth in the beginning, of whom it is written, "The devil sinneth from the beginning... he was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him; for he is a liar and the father of lies (I Jn. 3:8; Jn. 8:44, Amplified Bible).

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

And beyond all this, it is evident that in nature all creatures are not savage by nature. But even the domestic animals must be trained and guided. Proofs abound on every hand

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

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

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

The dove is the well known figure of meekness, purity, perception, love and constancy, and so was a fit symbol for the HOLY SPIRIT who at Christ's baptism came "like a dove" and abode upon Him. The other fowls of heaven, as the law of Moses shows us, clean and unclean, each bespeak a kind or quality of nature, expressing those characteristics that originate in the spirit realm. Hence, in scripture unclean birds are a type of evil natures, as John the Revelator shows in Rev. 18:2, "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of DEVILS, and the hold of every FOUL SPIRIT, and a cage of every UNCLEAN AND HATEFUL BIRD." I know the Lamb, the meek and sacrificial nature of the Son of God, which is oppressed and afflicted, and yet openeth not its mouth; but I have known also the nature of the beast, wild and ravenous, that spirit, so obvious in the world, which

stomps and rends and breaks in pieces and devours, of whom Peter warns us, saying, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour' (I Pet. 5:8).

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

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

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

SATAN-A SPIRIT

What scientists have discovered makes it relatively easy to believe in the existence of worlds, or spheres of life, beyond the comprehension of human senses. In the realm of sound, for example, we know that the human ear is quite limited, that sounds which are very real are inaudible to us if they are below or above a certain range of frequency. And the same is true of sight. The existence of radio waves, gamma rays, ultra-violet light rays, etc., also helps us to realize the power of invisible forces which are beyond our comprehension. In Eph. 2:2 Satan is described as "the prince of the power of the air, the SPIRIT that now worketh IN the children (sons) of disobedience." The Amplified Bible says, "At one time . . . you were following the course and fashion of the world . . . following the prince of the power of the air. You were obedient to him and were under his control, the demon spirit that still constantly works (Gr.:energeo, energizes) in the sons of

disobedience . . . for we are not wrestling with flesh and blood--contending only with physical opponents--but against the despotisms, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (spiritual) sphere" (Eph. 2:2; 6:12).

The message is clear-we have had the FALSE GOD in us! It came as a revelation to me when I saw that the Holy Spirit lives in those who have been "begotten of God" and "born of the Spirit." The spirit that is born of God is renewed in the image of God. But then I read that if the Holy Spirit is in the children of God, there is also a spirit in the children of the Devil. "The spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." Who can dispute the poignant words of the apostle John: "Ye are of God, little children... because greater is HE that is IN YOU, than HE that is in the world" (I Jn. 4:4). Then two verse later John clearly identifies these TWO SPIRITS which are in the people of God and the people of the world: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby we know the S-P-I-R-I-T OF TRUTH and the S-P-I-R-I-T OF ERROR." Paul adds to this his testimony: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:12).

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

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

there be spirits many, to us there is but ONE SPIRIT, and one body, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

I am sure that it would be correct to conclude that in the physical world a man's SUBSTANCE is flesh, but his BEING is much more! So it is with God. His substance is SPIRIT-but His being is MUCH MORE THAN THAT In connection with this truth I am deeply impressed to share the following thoughts from a letter received from a friend of many years. She writes: "It is on this account that I say that God is not God because He is spirit. God is, rather, God because He is LOVE! He is God because He is UNIFIED! God is spirit—that is His SUBSTANCE. God is love—that is His BEING! The very fact that God IS—as a state of being—LOVE speaks of His plurality, for without that plurality, God could not be love as a state of being. He could only have love for that which is outside Himself. God I-S LOVE—and love is UNITY—because love is cohesive. When the holy men declared, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE LORD," they were announcing the UNITY within the Godhead—the LOVE and cohesive force among ELOHIM. This love, of course, is far more than a sentimental virtue. LOVE is a very real power and is the very essence of the BEING of God by virtue of the cohesiveness of His plurality, and the nature that makes HIM all that He is. It is the LIFE-FORCE of God which makes Him ONE although He is MANY!

"I re-iterate: God's substance is spirit—but His being is love. 'God is love (unity, cohesiveness); and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him' (I JN. 4:16). By the same token, whatever is not dwelling in love is NOT God though it be constructed of the same substance—namely spirit. Where there is still EGO, dividing a man's spirit from the whole, there is not God but Adam. Spirit is not good—neither is spirit evil. Spirit is just a type of thing, just as flesh is a type of thing. For that matter, flesh is neither good nor evil. It is just there. That's all. Flesh becomes evil when its use is perverted. Flesh is good when it is properly used as the temple of God or in another manner of speaking, when it is used to give visible manifestation to the nature of God. As Paul said, 'There is nothing impure of itself' and, again, 'to the pure all things are pure.' Spirit, then, like anything else is neither good nor evil until it is expressed through usage. Only then does it take on an evil or unrighteous character.

"Even though, the, spirit came out of God and by virtue of its substance is like unto God, still it is not God because God is LOVE AND UNITY—and the spirit of man is not even unified within himself as an individual, much less on the corporate plane of existence. God is unity—Adam is duplicity, he being that DOUBLE-MINDED MAN who is unstable in all his ways. He is a 'son' of God, because he came out of God, but he is a BASTARD SON (Heb. 12:8). He is an erring son, as depicted throughout scripture in the types of Cain, Ishmael, Esau, and Adam himself—and in the firstborn of David and Bathsheba who died and was superseded by Solomon. There is only ONE FATHER (Eph. 4:6) – but as seen in Abraham, with Hagar and Sara, and in Jacob with Leah and Rachel, there are TWO MOTHERS. The one is SENSE-KNOWLEDGE and she tendeth to bondage. The other is INSPIRATION, REVELATION—the New Jerusalem which is above and is the mother of us all (who are born of the Spirit). Bastard sons are born of Father-God, because mind can only issue from Him—but they are born also of the SENSE-KNOWLEDGE mother and though they are allowed to continue in the Father's 'house' for a season there comes the time when the word is given, 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son.' Let me make it perfectly clear—the bastard son is the double-minded man: DUPLICITY—a mind divided against itself—and the son who is the heir is that which is UNIFIED. If you can receive it, duplicity is Satan; unity is Christ! Thus when man's mind

fell from that SINGLENESSE that is in Christ, from that place of unity into duplicity (soul and spirit), it lost its godlike nature and became satanic.

“In Eze. 46:16-17 there is a passage that reads this way: ‘If a prince gives a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons’; it shall be their possession by inheritance. But if he gave a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return unto the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons’ for them.’ In this, I see that the gift of His (God’s) inheritance is the gift of LIFE! This is given to every man, as is testified by John in his Gospel, saying, ‘In Him was life and the life was the light of men... that was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world’ (Jn. 1:4,9). This is that ‘breath of lives’ that is breathed into Adam to cause him to become a living soul—not only in an even in the past but in an event that is ever occurring in God’s eternal NOW. We see, however, in Ezekiel’s account that this gift is merely ‘on loan’ to the servants (or bastard sons) who are allowed to keep it until the year of LIBERTY—which is the time of death. At that time, the gift returns to the prince, which is in keeping with the statement made in Ecclesiastes: ‘Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (of life) shall return unto God who gave it’ (Eccl. 12:7).

“This gift, however, is merely ‘on loan’ to the servants becomes the PERMANENT POSSESSION of those who ‘follow on to know the Lord’ and come into mature sonship. Thus, it becomes to them ETERNAL LIFE! ‘The servant abideth not in the house ever, but the son abideth ever’ (Jn. 8:35). That is why there must be a SECOND BIRTH—for the first birth resulted in an ABORTION. Perhaps you recall that the root word for NEPHILIM (the giants; Gen. 6:4) means ‘the fallen ones’ or the ABORTED ONES!

“When Adam (mind) was born as a son, he was an aborted son—immature—an unripe fruit, an untimely fig. In order, then, to come into that fullness and permanency of life, we must RETURN AGAIN TO THE WOMB and be born out again, this time full-grown. That is why the Greek indicates that the manchild of Rev. 12 is born a FULL-GROWN MAN. The first birth produces an ABORTED CHILD—the second birth produces a FULL-GROWN SON. The first birth gives life ‘on loan’; the second birth gives a permanent inheritance. That is why it is written, ‘Ye MUST be born again!’

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

"Now, we may also see this in terms of resurrection. The spirit needs to be revived or resurrected. This, of course, presupposes that the spirit within man is dead, which it certainly is—but not dead in that it is non-existent. Dead, rather, in that it is UNRESPONSIVE to that sphere from which it fell, which is the sphere of Godhood and the realm of LOVE. Its deadness (unresponsiveness) is the result of INDIVIDUALITY in the form of EGOTISM, it having the sense of its own god-likeness apart from the recognition of the CORPORATE GOD. EGO is not in the soul, it is a matter of the spirit, and is nothing in the world but a remembrance somewhere in the depths of man of his

former nature of godhood and of that lofty state from whence he fell. Ego states, 'I am God'-if not in words, at least in attitude--and in action, for it always seeks to bring the spirits of other men into subjection to itself. That is why demons are called in the Greek DEIFIED SPIRITS- it is that godlike thing in man that wants to be god all by itself, saying, 'I am God and will therefore exalt my throne above the stars (spirits) of God and will be a god apart from fitting into my place in a corporate life.' The truth that Ego fails to see is that there is One that is greater-greater because it is plural and corporate and unified-the GREAT ELOHIM. Thus, the very state of individuality, which is divisive, has robbed us all of the nature of God and plunged us into that duplicity which separates man from himself, man from man, and man from God. So the human spirit is dead-unresponsive to that cohesiveness which is in the Godhead, unresponsive to the love principle that binds God together, unresponsive to that law which is written eternally in the heavens in the VERY BEING OF GOD HIMSELF.

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

Chapter 16

Scorpio- The Scorpion

(continued)

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

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

The third Decan in the house of Scorpio is HERCULES, and describes more fully the out-working of Christ's triumph. What it really depicts, in fact, is Christ in and through His many-membered body, the sons of God, accomplishing the totality of the victory which He came into this world to effect. The old Hebrew name for Hercules was GIBBOR, the word used for the "strong man" in Ps. 19:5, and translated as "mighty" and "mighty man" throughout the Old Testament. GIBBOR means "warrior, powerful, champion, valiant man." Hercules (Gibbor) is shown on the star charts down on one knee; in his right hand he wields a heavy club and in his left he grasps CERBERUS, the three-headed monster. His left foot is set directly on the head of the great Dragon. Ah, my beloved, beyond all the pagan distortions and confusions, there is a glorious revelation of the great work of our God and Saviour. How good it would be if God's elect people could comprehend the

magnificent glory God has in store for us! It is a glorious thing to see that in the unchanging stars of the heavens and the shining Signs placed there by our omniscient and omnipotent God in the night sky, we have an immense gallery of Truth, a vast and awesome portrait of the conquering Christ whose members we are. May the Spirit of God make it wonderfully real to all who read these lines that the elect sons of God are members in particular of GOD'S CHRIST, GOD'S ANOINTED, GOD'S MESSIAH, GOD'S HERCULES, GOD'S GOD-MAN, by whom He shall wield His victorious club, subdue every enemy, and plant His foot on the Dragon's head-obliterating forever that ancient Serpent of error, sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, limitation and death. To these younger sons of God Jesus has proclaimed, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Lk. 10:19). "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). Of these mighty sons of God the Psalmist David also prophesied, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder. the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. 91: 13).

THE SERPENT A SPIRIT!

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

Some teach that in all the universe there is but ONE SPIRIT--the Holy Spirit of God. I solemnly tell every person who reads these lines that the scriptures are clear, and give us a wonderful understanding of the workings of SPIRIT. SPIRIT, like everything else in nature, has its opposites-positive and negative, good and evil, light and darkness. As was pointed out in our previous message on this subject, spirit is not good-neither is spirit evil. Spirit is just a type of thing, just as flesh is a type of thing. For that matter, flesh is neither good nor evil. It is just there. Flesh becomes evil when its use is perverted. Flesh is good

when it is properly used as the temple of God or when it is used to give visible manifestation to the nature of God. As Paul said, "There is nothing impure of itself." Jesus displayed the wonder of glorified flesh when He appeared to His disciples following His resurrection and said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Lk. 24:39). Spirit, then, like anything else is neither good nor evil until it is expressed through usage. Only then does it take on a holy and righteous or an evil and unrighteous character.

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

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

Another kind of energy of which we, the people of God, are aware is SPIRIT ENERGY. In physics energy is known as the capacity for doing work. The Greek noun for energy is ENERGEIO and its verb form is ENERGEIA. These words are used in the Greek New Testament several times. Because of the association between "doing work" and "energy,"

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

The Holy Spirit is God's ENERGY FORCE. It is God's energy force projected and exerted upon creation. It is God's motion, action and influence in one measure or another upon, in, and through man. Yahweh accomplished the creation of the universe by means of His Spirit or ENERGY FORCE. Regarding the planet earth in its early formative stages, the record states that "The Spirit (energy force) of God was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath (spirit) of His mouth." Like a powerful breath or living wind, God's Spirit can be sent forth to exert power even though there is no bodily or visible contact with that which is acted upon. Where a human craftsman would use the force of his hands and fingers to produce things, God uses His Spirit. Hence that Spirit is also spoken of as God's "hand" or "fingers." Jesus told the Pharisees, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you" (Mat. 12:28). But Luke, in recording the same event, expresses it thus: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you" (Lk. 11:20). The Spirit of God is the finger of God, the working, the activity of God usward. How great is His working!

There are two basic characteristics of the wind which qualify it to so fittingly serve as the supreme symbol of the Holy Spirit. The wind is first of all a powerful force, and secondly it is Invisible. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the spirit (Jn. 3:8). You cannot see the wind, and yet you are aware of its reality because of its

power with the visible effects of that power manifested all around you. In earlier times the wind was used broadly as a source of energy. Man has always known how to use sails on a boat or ship. Later, he learned to use the same principle to construct a windmill, using the force of the wind to turn grindstones, pump water, and do many other kinds of work.

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

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

As I am writing, equal rights is still an issue in our land. There are people filled with the spirit of equal rights. They don't have time for anything else. They are consumed with a desire to petition, lecture, organize, march. Nothing else matters. They eat, sleep and dream equal rights. Their money, time, talents and energies are exhausted as they pour themselves into the struggle for equality. They are FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT of equal rights for all people. These people are filled with an attitude, a mind, a disposition, a will, a passion, and all these characteristics produce a tremendous INFLUENCE upon the thinking, attitudes and actions of multitudes of citizens. Perhaps now we can understand what it really means to be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. It means to not only be filled with the consciousness of the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit of God, but with all the characteristics within that Spirit: His nature, will, mind, ways, virtues, disposition, purpose, etc. How many believers settle for something far less than this! We are living in an hour when it is popular, the "in thing," to be a "Spirit-filled" Christian. But truly I say to you that multitudes have settled for a superficial experience of "tongues," or some "gift," or "feeling," and have never even dreamed of what it means to become literally filled with each and every characteristic of the divine nature and power of God! Becoming filled with the Holy Spirit must do far more for us than cause us to repeat some foreign syllables suggestively whispered in our ear, or to become ecstatic in our emotions. To be Filled with the Spirit means to be filled with ALL THE SPIRIT IS. It means that the life and nature and power of the indwelling Spirit must control and swallow up completely soul and body until there is no manifestation but of the Spirit. Jesus, that blessed firstborn

Son, was so filled, for He possessed the Spirit "without measure." And Paul prayed for the saints that they might be FILLED WITH "A-L-L THE FULLNESS OF GOD" (Eph. 3:19). This measure is reserved for all who will go all the way with God, to be sons even as Jesus was "the Son of God." Sonship is the hope of creation, and the SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE is the hope of the sons! It is there that sin, sickness, limitation and death are swallowed up, and the wisdom, nature, life, power and glory of the living God is revealed through His people.

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

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

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

As mentioned previously, there are brethren who are convinced that all spirit is the same spirit and that there is only one spirit in the world, which is the spirit of God in every man. But we are constrained to take heed to the testimony of the Holy Spirit wherein He says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but TRY THE SPIRITS WHETHER THEY ARE OF

GOD: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jn. 4:1). Both the HOLY and the UNHOLY spirit bear the characteristics of personality, both alike are invisible, both are powerful, both are spirit, both are energy!

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

I would draw your reverent attention to some of the characteristics of the unregenerated spirit of man. Duet. 2:30 speaks of a certain Sihon, king of Heshbon, of whom it was said, "The Lord thy God hardened his spirit (RUWACH) and made his heart obstinate." Dan. 2:1 shows Nebuchadnezzar dreaming dreams "wherewith his spirit (RUWACH) was troubled and his sleep brake from him." David had this to say: "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile." The latter statement would indicate that there are those in whose spirits there is guile. That is why Paul had to say, "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the spirit. (II Cor 7:1) If the spirit were always a holy thing, it would not be at all in keeping with the truth for Paul to exhort us to be cleansed in our spirits. That there is filthiness in the spirit of man is testified by Job who said, "My breath is corrupt." The word "breath" is misleading, for it is the Hebrew word RUWACH—spirit. "My spirit is corrupt" would be a more literal translation. That is why David also said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10). The very fact of the need for renewal speaks of a WRONG SPIRIT that needs to be set right. Who can deny that the spirit of man has been contaminated?

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." (Ps. 34:18). On the other hand, "pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). There is a generation with whom the Lord is not pleased, as this is His testimony against it. "They set not their heart aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God" (Ps. 78:8). Another contrast is drawn in Eccl. 7:8 where the Holy Spirit says, "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." It is all SPIRIT—but one is separated unto God, as seen in the fruit it bears, and the other is not. How awesome this indictment by the Lord, "Thus saith the Lord God: Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing" (Eze. 13:13). Malachi warns, "Take heed to your spirit that ye deal not treacherously" (Mal. 2:15). And to cap it all off (though scripture could be piled upon scripture), James says, "The spirit (pneuma) that dwelleth in us LUSTETH TO ENVY!" (James 4:5). That cannot in any way be the spirit of the New Creation, nor can it be of the spirit of the image of God in every man. It is in this passage that James goes on to say, "RESIST the devil," and the method whereby we resist that "spirit within that lusteth to envy" is shown in the following verse: "Draw nigh unto (be separated unto, enter into union with) God... purify your hearts... ye DOUBLE MINDED!" (James 4:5-8).

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

In words fraught with eternal significance the inspired apostle exhorts, "Be renewed in the S-PI-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND" (Eph. 4:23). One has so aptly written, commenting on this verse: "Note that it reads: in the SPIRIT of our mind, for this is far more than just mental gymnastics of our own self-efforts. It is the energizing of His Spirit upon our human spirit which in turn takes dominion over our mind and brings our mind into subjection to the Spirit of truth. There is beneficial results in the power of positive thinking, even on natural realms. But true transformation comes when it is in THE S-P-I-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND. Oh, it may become the norm of our life to just be thinking HIS thoughts, because of the enlargement of His Spirit force within us. It is more than merely a renewing of the mind-it is the renewing of SPIRIT-the spirit of the mind. It is an absolute must to receive from a realm higher than Adam can give in order to have our minds renewed. The change comes from the Lord from heaven, out of the spirit realm of God, uniting with our spirit. It is the heavenly Jesus dwelling in our hearts, making us ONE IN HIM."

Elwin Roach has shared this illuminating thought concerning the transformation of the mind: The word, renewing, is adequately rendered in Rom. 12:2; however, to be a little more accurate, the word could be translated RENOVATION (see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance). We are then transformed by the renewing of our minds. There is only a slight difference in the two words, but when renovation is used, we get the thought of a complete house rearing, house cleaning, and then a total refurbishing. Everything old is removed and replaced with all new furnishings. God, however, does something differently in His renovation. He does it just the opposite. He does not clear out the old things and leave our minds a total void and then start filling them with new thoughts. He starts bringing in the new thoughts first, and with this the old passes away and gives place to the new-and all this is of God. Think about it!"

The activity of the mind is primarily in the realm of THOUGHTS. Thoughts are very real and alive. Thoughts are SPIRITUAL REALITIES, transmitted energy, coming upon your person via the gate of your mind. This energy (thoughts) is transmitted into your conscious mind from the unconscious to cause you to act and react in a certain way. Thoughts do not originate in mortal brain. Thoughts are invisible and powerful entities which have their origin in the dimension of SPIRIT. Thoughts do have an objective! You should know and become aware of the objectives of the thoughts that enter your mind. Every decision you have ever made or ever will make has its origin, intent and power in

the INVISIBLE REALM, the realm of spirit. You will never understand the mystery of life until you thoroughly know that there is a negative and a positive spirit force. The negative leads to death; the positive to life. The mind is the gateway, the channel through which these energy forces affect our lives. The thoughts that come to us bear the characteristics of the spirit force operating in us. Let us list some of the characteristics of the negative realm: "...unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, debate, deceit, malignity, whispers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" (Rom. 1:29-31). What a list. Search your mind...stop and think! Are some of your thoughts carrying these characteristics? They carry within them the power of death!

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

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

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

This passage contains two significant phrases: "Who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament... OF THE SPIRIT" and "the ministration of... SPIRIT." The New Testament is not the black, leather covered, book called the Bible. This book is what Paul

calls "the letter." It is the law, the record, the history, the form which tells us many things about the historical man called Jesus. The twenty-seven books called the New Testament are merely the guide given to point us to the TRUE NEW TESTAMENT, Jesus, the Christ of God! "Search the scriptures," said Jesus, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which TESTIFY OF M-E." (Jn. 5:39). Our scripture says that God has made us able ministers of the New Testament! To minister the New Testament does not mean to minister sermons, doctrines, laws, commandments, or facts about Jesus Christ. To minister the New Testament is to minister the very life of God which is CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT. "He hath made us able ministers of the SPIRIT." The word minister implies the thought: to serve, impart, give out or wait on. As a member of the New Creation you have been called to be an able minister of the New Testament-a minister of the SPIRIT!

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

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

What kind of fruit does a natural tree bear? You will answer, "Natural fruit, of course." That is right. In nature everything produces "after its kind." Apples produce apples, oranges produce oranges, vegetables produce vegetables, etc. If natural trees produce natural fruit, what kind of fruit should we expect from SPIRIT?. The answer is simple: SPIRIT FRUIT!. The fruit is of the same nature and substance as that which produced it. If God is Spirit, Holy Spirit, then it follows that the fruit of the Spirit is likewise Spirit. To minister Spirit, therefore, means nothing more nor less than to minister the virtues of the fruit of the Spirit to another person. It does not mean to minister the letter of the Word, or pronouncements of judgment, to preach sermons, or convince people through argument of a doctrine, or show people where they are wrong, ungodly, or under condemnation. NO! That is all the ministry of the letter which killeth! We are called to minister the SPIRIT WHICH PRODUCES LIFE!

God is not complicated. Spirit is not complicated. God is Spirit, and God is love. Love is not complicated. Love has no problems communicating, influencing, ministering. When those around us are discouraged or distraught, we can minister encouragement to them

by our word, attitude and action. When people are sad and sorrowful, as ministers of Spirit, we will minister joy and faith unto them. In the presence of fear we will exude and speak peace. When our enemies hate us we will love them in return. When men curse us we will do good to them, when they revile us we will bless them. When our friends are depressed, uncertain, and frustrated, we will manifest such calmness and confidence that will lift them from the shrouding gloom of despair into faith and victory.

It is a significant fact that all the virtues and characteristics of the Holy Spirit are spirit, and therefore ARE ENERGY-POWER! In the area of will, attitude, nature, mind, disposition, etc., there is always a transmission of energy. Haven't you noticed how one person's attitude will "rub off" on to another person? One can begin complaining and soon everyone is complaining. One begins to be argumentative and before you know it everyone in the room is in a heated argument. Or a whole group of people may feel frustrated and hopeless in a situation, and just one person can enter the room with a cheery smile, radiating the aura of confidence and assurance, speaking a positive word of encouragement and victory, and soon the whole atmosphere changes, becoming charged with this new expectation, the spirit of the whole group being raised up into hope and anticipation. What is this? It is the work of spirit-invisible, intangible energy - POWER! Invisible, but very real. And very powerful! There is constantly, in this world, the definite transference of spirit energy from person to person, negative or positive. The rise and success of false religions, ideologies like nazism and communism, rock music, immorality, etc., are the direct result of negative spirit influence transmitted to the masses through faithful ministers of unrighteousness who have become FILLED WITH THE UN-HOLY SPIRIT, and consequently transmitters of the same.

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

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

THE SERPENTS MEAT

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

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

Science will tell you that snakes which crawl upon the ground do not eat dust. They eat frogs, insects, rats, birds, rabbits, fish and eggs. When God inspired Moses to write Genesis the latter certainly knew that snakes do not eat dust These terms are symbolic and spiritual. This is not speaking of a literal snake dangling from a tree limb in some ancient paradise. The serpent in Eden had not only the faculty of speech, but reasoned upon matters relating to God and man; he speaks of good and evil as though possessed of a thorough knowledge of the laws of the Kingdom of God; he argues against the divine prohibition; steals upon the woman with the most alluring subterfuge, and finally persuades her to disobey the commandment of the Lord. No mere animal, it is evident, could be capable of what is here attributed to the serpent! Furthermore, loss of speech was not part of the curse; if the serpent in Eden were a literal snake his descendants crawling around on this planet today should be able to talk!

This is a symbol and the Deceiver, Satan, that old Serpent, the Devil, has to eat dust! What is the dust? Not the dirt of the ground. Not even the dust of the frogs, rabbits, field mice, etc. In the passing of the judgment-sentence, God began with the Serpent and said, "DUST shalt thou eat." Then to the man, God said, "In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for DUST THOU ART, and UNTO DUST shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). So that first Adam, fleshly, sinning, and cursed is declared by the counsel of the Lord God to BE DUST. Said the wise man, "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14). That we are DUST! Not very flattering, not very complimentary, is it? This great gob of mud called man, strutting his superior know-it-all attitude even in the face of the Almighty! Dust! Our FRAME! DUST! What for value is a frame of dust? HE remembers that we are dust whether we do or not.

Words are helpless, hopeless, and inadequate when necessity demands that we explain the things pertaining to the spiritual realm. Only in spirit can we understand the incomprehensible. The spirit of wisdom and revelation from God must enlighten the eyes of our understanding. Here we have a word picture describing the relationship which exists between "that old Serpent the Devil" and the realm of death. Just as "dust" speaks of a waterless soil, so the realm of the Serpent is separated from the realm of the Holy Spirit. Adam was formed of the dust of the ground, of the physical, carnal, earthly sense-realm, and as such, became the rightful food for the Serpent. This means that the Serpent-the negative spirit realm--now finds its base of operation and fulfillment of its nature, desires, and purposes in and through mankind. By the very nature of things, when the Serpent eats, he seeks to SATISFY HIS APPETITE and GRATIFY HIS

DESIRES. Originally he found pleasure and purpose in higher things and had access to higher realms (of spirit), but the curse of "eating dust" limits the object of his devouring. Today, the sphere of Satan's activity is earth, and the object of his devouring is the man of the earth. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). As the creatures of the forest are constantly alert lest some other animal of prey catch them unawares and devour them, so are we admonished to be sober and vigilant-for as sure as the snake swallows the rabbit, so certain is it that Satan seeks to DEVOUR YOU! Your dust, your earthiness, your flesh, your carnal Adam-man-nature is the Serpent's meat! By feeding upon the dust-man who loves earthly things, Satan devours him - makes him part of himself. It means your whole being swallowed up into the negative spirit-realm, captive to and expressing the negative energy of that realm. This gives fresh and clear meaning to the statement of the apostle, "The whole world lieth in the Wicked One" (1 Jn. 5:19). The whole world has been consumed-is captive to and living out of the NEGATIVE REALM! Who can deny it?

The message is clear. Adam and those belonging to him are of the earth, earthy. The Holy Spirit bears witness: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that they are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:45-49). The Amplified Bible reads, 'The first man was from out of the earth, made of dust earth-minded; the second man is the Lord from out of heaven. Now those who are made of the dust are like him who was first made of the dust--earth-minded; and as is the Man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven-heaven-minded. And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, so shall we and so let us bear also the image of the Man of heaven.'

Ray Prinzing has aptly written: "The curse was on the serpent, for deceiving, and the seed of the serpent still carries that curse, and the nature of the deception that caused it. There are two seeds which are spoken of, the woman's seed, and the serpent's seed. One bespeaks of the positive realm, the other bespeaks of the negative. However, it is to be pointed out that if the woman's seed has a literal fulfillment, personified in a man, and a people, so also the serpent's seed has to be literally fulfilled in a man, and a people. A seed line that is evidenced in those 'after his own kind.' That the serpents seed was also expressed through people is evident when we read that Cain 'was of that wicked one' (1 Jn. 3:12). This is more explicit in the Greek text, where the word 'of' is 'ek', literally OUT OF the wicked one. Then Jesus spoke of some, saying, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do' (Jn. 8:44). If they are of the same spirit, then they will do the lusts of that spirit realm. Obviously Cain, who was OUT OF the wicked one, received the curse reaffirmed on him, for he slew the truth and propagated a false system. Righteous Abel fell victim to the cursed one, for a time, but there is One, whose blood now speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, and through Him victory comes.

"It is not the creature, but the negative spirit force motivating the creature, against whom we take dominion. When the 'spirit of the world' is now energizing to disobedience, there is an immediate conflict between that spirit, and the Spirit of God dwelling within us. In some this is but a small thing, and the 'contrary spirit' is held in control by their normal, congenial disposition. But in others, this serpent spirit is so aggressive, that when you walk into their presence, or they come into yours, there is an immediate clash without

either one saying a word. Our warfare is not with the various races on earth today, nor yet with men of our own lineage, but we do contest the spirit of the deceiver that motivates them. It is not the man or woman-but there are natures, spirits, curses that remain in the earth today, that the CALLED - OUT-OF-THE-LORD are facing in this conflict of the ages. That is why we need to be filled with the Spirit of God, lest we become carnal and start fighting flesh on a carnal realm" - end quote.

Whenever we live in the earthly life of Adam, we are earthly and also on earth and fall into the sphere of Satan's activity, becoming the object of his devouring, drawn deeper and deeper into that negative realm. Dear saints, you wonder why Satan tempts you, pressures you, torments you, and you have constant battles with that realm? It is because you are still bearing at least a portion of that image of the first Adam, the man of dust. And dust is the Serpent's meat. He has the power to eat on you as long as you have that nature of Adam in you. On the other hand, whenever we live in the heavenly life of Christ, the identity of the image of God, we are heavenly and in heaven. Thus, we TRANSCEND SATAN'S SPHERE of activity and are no longer subject to his devouring. This is the son realm where no dragon abides, for he is cast out of this heaven where the manchild reigns! Would you, dear reader, like to starve that old Serpent, the Devil? Then get rid of the dust! Stop bearing the image of Adam, renounce that mistaken identity, and as Paul exhorts, "Let us bear the image of the Man of heaven." When you have been completely transformed into the image of Jesus Christ, then you will have nothing in you for Satan to feed upon, nothing to satisfy his appetite or gratify his desires. And it is there that death will be conquered! As a brother once wrote: "I can tell you, beloved, that already Satan is finding short rations and skimpy meals in some of God's sons that are pressing on to the High Calling. Victory after victory they are gaining, because they are crucifying that earthly nature. They are letting the Christ come forth in His fullness in their lives, and beginning to bear more and more of His blessed image. They have no fear of Satan or of his weapons. They could walk through the midst of hell itself, and no devil could touch them. Thieves, murderers, drunkards, gamblers, and harlot's cannot contaminate them. Filthy lucre cannot tempt them, apostate religion cannot attract them, nor fleshly methods or soulish ministry ensnare them. They are Overcomers, witnessing to the world of the image and power of the Living Christ! This is the purpose of God for His sons! It is for you, beloved...believe, and enter in!"-end quote.

Can we not see that the more we live and walk in the Spirit, the less we are disturbed by the agitations of the soulish realm, or the shenanigans of the flesh? Caught in the lowlands of the flesh, one is an easy prey for the serpents and scorpions and creeping things which inhabit that low realm. Rising up to walk in the Holy Spirit a new perspective is found, flesh is both seen and recognized for what it is, and left behind, while the horizons of the Spirit beckon onward, and upward, in the realm of the heavenly where no dragon dwells. So many of God's precious people dwell in the dust realm, and, as someone has said, there is no need to describe at length the "dust storms", we have all faced them far too often - the jealousies, the envyings, the back-bitings, gossipings, anger, agitations, lusts, fears, bitterness, strivings, and all the other expressions of the carnal nature, the realm where the Serpent dwells and eats to the full!

UPON YOUR BELLY YOU SHALL GO...

It's not news to any of us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Neither is it news to us that WE are the battleground! More particularly, the major focal point of the battle is our mind. There the

battle rages at its greatest intensity, because the war is a struggle for our hearts and loyalties-the very souls and lives and beings of men. This fact is highly relevant to the subject I am dealing with in this message-the Serpent that dwells within us. It is that force within us that opposes the ways of God in our lives and tries to keep us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

This brings us back to the curse laid upon the Serpent in the beginning: "Upon your belly shall you go." This judgment speaks of infinitely more than a literal snake slithering along upon his literal belly, just as the word "heel" speaks of infinitely more than a location on the foot, and the word "head" speaks of something greater far than a mere physical head in the words of the next verse: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy HEAD, and thou shalt bruise His HEEL" (Gen. 3:15). So, "upon your belly you shall go," paints for the eyes of our understanding the picture of the Serpent crawling in humiliation, prostration, limitation, and subjection upon the ground. The Psalmist uses a similar expression in Ps. 44:25, "For our soul is bowed down to the dust, our belly cleaveth unto the earth." Such denotes a prolonged prostration and a depth of subjection as could never be conveyed or expressed in normal terms.

The very fact that God states that the Serpent was now to crawl upon his belly, which obviously he had not done before, reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, from a greater to a lesser, from a higher to a lower. Moving on his belly limits the sphere of the Serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground. Previously he had access to loftier realms, his sphere of activity extended to higher domains-exalted realms of pure spirit expression-but he is now lowered into the dust-realm, into the world of man, and confined to the earthy, restricted to action upon and expression through THE MAN OF THE DUST How truly this accounts for the words of the apostle in Eph. 2:2, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, THE S-P-I-R-I-T THAT N-O-W WORKETH I-N THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE."

Ah, yes, this evil spirit is IN MAN! When the serpent was lowered into the dust realm, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to declare to you, my beloved, that you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe! You do not meet the Devil in rocks, trees, fish, mountains, rivers, clouds, birds, nor on far-away planets, in distant galaxies, in flying saucers, nor in any other object or location outside of man. You don't have to worry about the Devil stealing the keys to your car and driving off with it! But you may have to worry about the devil in men doing so! You need not fear the Devil walking into your living room with a shot gun and blowing your brains out, but the devil in men has done so tens of thousands of times! The Devil as an invisible spirit, or a hideous creature in a funny red suit will never try to seduce your wife, but the devil in some man may surely attempt it. I must tell you frankly that have not had any problem with that Devil out there someplace, but I have had a great deal of difficulty with that Devil whose countenance I behold when I look in the mirror!

Can we not see that under the curse God limited Satan to the dust of the earth, to the realm of the First Adam-the man of dust? Many have seen the connection between Satan and the carnal mind and , not understanding by revelation the origins of these things, have assumed that the carnal mind is Satan. The truth, however, runs deeper than that-it goes to the spirit of the mind. Through the curse Satan became one with man, the energy

force of human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, selfish desires, distorted emotions, in the illusions and delusions of the sense-realm of the world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. May God graciously give us enlightenment to see that included with Satan is the kingdom of Satan; therefore, since Satan is in man, the kingdom of Satan is also in man. Satan is the prince of this world, so the world too is included in the kingdom of Satan and is also in man. Man is the very center of the OLD CREATION in every aspect. If one would meet Satan, there is no need for him to go to any special place-by going to man he will meet Satan. If he desires to find the kingdom of Satan, there is no need to go to some distant planet, nor to some far-away hell; by going to man he will encounter the kingdom of Satan. It is the same with the world. Within man there is world, sin, Satan, death, flesh, the carnal mind--all that pertains to the negative realm, the kingdom of darkness. The first Adam is not a small man! On the contrary, he is a big, all-inclusive man! The whole vast realm of reality, positive and negative, is CENTRALIZED AND PERSONIFIED IN MAN.

The reason why so many fail when it comes to the wiles of the Devil is that they don't really want to resist him. You see, Satan never appears as a monster with horns and a forked tail, carrying a pitchfork. HE COMES IN YOUR THOUGHTS! HE APPEARS IN YOUR DESIRES! HE COMES IN YOUR IMAGINATIONS AND REASONINGS! Some people are always saying, "I hate the Devil." Well, you may as well say, "I hate myself." One day I asked God, "God, why don't you just kill the Devil and let it be over with?" You will never guess the answer I received. The Lord said, "If I kill the Devil, YOU WILL DIE!" And verily I say unto you, Except a man hate his own life, and will count all things but loss, and reckon himself indeed to be crucified with Christ, he will never know victory over the Wicked One.

You will find men and women who claim to hate the Devil and all he stands for, but no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it. In so doing he gives place to the Devil. It is the flesh that lusts against the Spirit! The flesh unceasingly wars against the King and His Kingdom that is within you. Just as the religious leaders of the Jews cried, "We will not have this man to rule over us," so the flesh, your flesh, and my flesh, desperately striving to perpetuate the corrupt nature of Adam within, would push Christ from the throne of the heart and reign in his stead. The energy force and motivating power of the flesh is the ancient Serpent of Eden. Multitudes do not understand this mystery, and few will proclaim this truth. The sacred mysteries of God are revealed only by the Holy Spirit of Truth. This is one of those mysteries which I unfold before you today. It is never our striving against the evils of the world, the flesh and the Devil that gains any victory at all; the almighty Christ within us would destroy them all in one smashing defeat; but we have the wretched habit of refusing to yield our hearts to the King. Christ alone can put the adversary under foot and forever bruise his head! Our responsibility is to resist the Devil and YIELD OURSELVES UNTO GOD THAT HE MAY REIGN.

Praise God! The heavens declare that God has a man-ORPHIUCHUS the serpent crusher- HERCULES the strong man, the mighty man, the valiant champion who slays the three-headed monster and crushes the head of the dragon. It is a glorious thing to see that in the unchanging stars of the heavens and the shining Signs placed by God in the night sky, we have a gallery of divine truth, a portrait of God's TRIUMPHANT CORPORATE MAN, THE CHRIST OF GOD. Ah, He's a wonder-this CHRIST WITHIN! Just as surely as Satan is incarnated in mankind, so is the living Christ of God enthroned

within the saints! The greater, grander, transcendent truth is, beloved, that THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU! The Christ that we preach is nigh at hand. "He is not far from every one of us," the apostle Paul says. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The Word (Christ) is NIGH THEE, EVEN IN THY MOUTH, AND IN THY HEART" (Rom. 10:6-8). "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and for ever." Unless we are sure that He is unchanged and unchangeable, that He is right here WITHIN US in every rum of life as really as He was in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, unless we live daily in the power of this, our life will never be pure, we will never see His works, we will never know His quickening, we will never conquer sin and death, and be brought to the Father. Therefore, why strain your eyes to pierce the clouds? The cloud that hides Christ from us is in ourselves, in our love of self, in our blind adherence to traditions, in our devotion to the outer world of appearances. Let us ask God to send the living wind of His Spirit from the innermost part of our being, that bloweth where it listeth, to sweep it aside, and then we will see Christ as our life at every step of the journey. You can never overcome your seducing enemy by your own wisdom or strength. Christ alone can put him under foot and forever braise his head. AND CHRIST IS YOUR LIFE! Arise, O ye mighty ones, and conquer-for the MIGHTY ONE I-S W-I-T-H-I-N Y-O-U!

Chapter 17

Scorpio-The Scorpion

(continued)

We continue with our study of the Sign of SCORPIO — THE SCORPION. This Sign of the heavens brings before us a gigantic Scorpion, larger than a man, with its tail uplifted in anger, endeavoring to sting in the heel a mighty man, but is crushed by the man, who has his foot placed right on the Scorpion's heart. The minor constellations around Scorpio enhance this scene of obvious conflict. The first is that of SERPENS — the struggling Serpent. The second is the picture of a great and powerful man whose name is ORPHIUCHUS, meaning "the serpent-holder." It portrays this mighty man struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep him from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty effort to reach up and grasp the CROWN which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. The strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion!

The whole scene is one of conflict — the conflict of a great and mighty man, a warrior, with the Serpent, the Monster, and the Dragon. Oriental imagery is never more graphically displayed in all its eloquence than in the use of the biblical terms SERPENT, SCORPION, and DRAGON as figures of Satan, the Devil. The Devil is portrayed in the Word of God as the great antagonist of God's people and of the Kingdom of God. He is presented as the deceiver of the nations, the perverter of mankind, the enslaver of men's lives and the destroyer of creation. He is presented in many guises but always as a malignant, venomous, hostile and dangerous creature. And his story begins right at the beginning of time, at the dawn of human history, in the drama of the opening chapters of the story of the Bible.

The book of Genesis is probably the most important book ever written. The word "genesis" of course means origin or beginning, and the book of Genesis gives the only true and reliable account of the basic entities and conditions of the universe and of life. Genesis yields vital information concerning the origin of ALL THINGS — and therefore the meaning of ALL THINGS! Let every man know that in the whole of the universe there is no greater truth than this one sublime truth that THE FUTURE IS BOUND UP IN THE PAST. A man's belief concerning his origin will inevitably determine his belief about his purpose on earth and his eternal destiny.

The first several chapters of the book of Genesis lay a ground-plan for the entire revelation of God's purposes in relation to man. As a piece of literature the story is sublime; magnificent in range, in profundity of design, and the unparalleled heights of spiritual revelation it attains. I can confidently say that every revelation of Himself and His purpose that God has ever given from the foundation of the world can be found in these opening chapters of Genesis. There is no revelation of scripture, spoken by holy prophet or apostle, or revealed to the spirits of worshipping men who have come into holy contact with the presence and power of God, that cannot be found in seed form as type, shadow,

parable, or allegory in the book of Genesis. The entire plan of the ages is there portrayed from its majestic beginning to its triumphant conclusion. Each and every experience, situation, condition, capacity, potential and destiny of mankind, with all the principles and processes by which God shall bring man to perfection in the image of God is there set forth in awe-inspiring wonder. And nowhere is this more obviously true than in the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is the greatest parable in the Bible. How shall we speak of God's great and wonderful purpose in man except in the language of parables? God prepares an exceedingly beautiful and fruitful garden for man, whom He has created with His own hands. Precious stones, rare odors, refreshing streams, trees full of fruit and splendid colors surround that first man. Who can speak of the marvelous realities there initiated except in the language of pictures? Pictures are not lies: they denote things, realities; they let the things that are meant shine through. When we come to the Garden of Eden it is evident that this is more than merely a piece of real estate somewhere over in Mesopotamia! No such place has ever been found, neither the angel with the flaming sword to keep men out. The garden of God is not a physical place located on this or any other planet. It is a STATE OF BEING. It is a higher existence for man than this cursed state we find ourselves in by physical birth and mortal consciousness. It is the state of being that man was in when he was first brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed here upon earth. It represents man in the presence of God! Man with the incorruptible life of God accessible to him! Man as master and lord over all things! Man living above sin, sickness, pain, limitation or death! Blessed realities, one and all! And yet — the Garden also represents man together with all the factors and conditions, internal and external, of being and environment, which ultimately were to lead to his ruin and alienation from God. In one sense, man was the Garden. And yet, man was in the Garden. The Bible reveals it as a "Garden within a Garden." Man both in a state of being and an environment — the two corresponding. All the conditions which surrounded man also were obvious realities within the heart of man. The original man with his nature, characteristics, capabilities and potentials is what we see in the Garden of Eden. The external conditions of man's environment corresponded precisely with man's inward nature for either good or evil, carnal consciousness or spiritual consciousness, life or death. This was man in the Garden! It is a Garden within a Garden, a world within a world, man within and without

Against the background of this picture of the Garden of Eden it is related how man was put into this Garden in order to live in it and how two trees stood in the middle of the Garden: one the tree of life, the other the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And upon these two trees IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN the destiny of man was to be decided. There were, indeed, three kinds of trees in the Garden. There was the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and then all those other trees denoted as "all the trees of the garden." Man began his sojourn upon earth living in the realm of "all the trees of the garden." But man's future experience and destiny were to be decided by his relationship to the two trees in the middle.

Two trees in the middle. First of all there is the tree of life. It is clear from the context that man was not forbidden to eat of it. It was there, revealed, offered, available: LIFE, abundant, immortal, incorruptible, eternal! For this reason the tree of life is mentioned very casually in Gen. 2: 8-9. It was IN THE MIDDLE — that is all that is said about it! It was right there in man's consciousness, in man's nature. The life that comes forth from God is in the middle. This means that God, the source of life, is in the middle. In the

middle of the world which is at Adam's disposal and over which he has been given dominion is not Adam himself but the tree of God's eternal and incorruptible life. Adam's life was to come from the middle which was not Adam in his self-consciousness, but in his God-consciousness. This means that with God as his center man would have life. It means that man was created and formed with the wonderful capacity to LIVE IN THE SPIRIT and WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT. "For. . . to be SPIRITUALLY MINDED is life and peace" (Rom. 8: 6). One of man's inherent potentials was to know God within as the source and center of his life.

But, like the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil also stands in the middle of the Garden! To this tree is attached the command not to eat of it upon penalty of death. Death in the middle. Within. In man's very nature. Thus is it declared with unquestionable certainty that man was formed with the capacity to LIVE IN THE FLESH and WALK AFTER THE FLESH. "For to be CARNALLY MINDED is death" (Rom. 8:6). One of man's inherent potentials was to know Self as the source and center of his life. But alas! Self would not bring life, it would mean death. Man could make the world of appearances, the physical realm, mortal consciousness, the bodily senses and appetites his center but death would be found to dwell in that center. Life and death were in the middle. Two trees, two realities IN THE MIDST of the Garden of man's experience and being. Both realities are in the middle — within man. One or the other is every man's center, the plane of his consciousness, the sphere of his existence. But mark it well — both cannot be the center of any man's life! He who eats of the tree of life will find that the death realm will come to have no more dominion over him. And he who eats of the tree of death will discover that he becomes alienated from the tree of life. Thus, both trees, both realities are in the center of man's life but both cannot be the center of his life! "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8: 13). "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 16). How simple! God would at once be the limit and the middle of our existence.

But how could Adam grasp these mighty realities? How could Adam, living as he did in the "soul realm" of "all the trees of the Garden" understand what divine life is when he had not yet tasted of the tree of life? How could Adam comprehend what death is when he had never yet experienced anything of its dread power? How could Adam even know what difference there is between life, good, evil, sin, and death, living as he did in the unblemished innocence of his child-like beginning? As well explain the mysteries of biology or astronomy to a new-born infant! Could all of this really mean anything more to Adam than empty words? No, Adam could not be expected to understand such awesome things, but under the gracious and skillful hand of God he would be instructed and taught. To this end man was placed on earth in a Garden with two trees in the middle — and with both God and a Serpent walking and talking with him!

The drama of Adam and Eve in the Garden is of supreme importance because it explains the real nature of our life here on earth. It is the portrait of ourselves, our state of being, and how we fashion the environment in which we live. It is the Creator's instruction manual on spiritual and psychological anatomy. When you thoroughly understand the teaching of the Garden of Eden you will understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of Satan. This parable is placed at the outset of human history and in the opening scenes of God's divine record because it is the foundation of all understanding, the blueprint of man's experience on earth and his destiny in God. Adam and Eve in the Garden represent the whole of humanity in the first Adam. They represent you and me

and every man and woman who has ever lived or shall live. What happened to him happens to us. What he was we are. His experience is our experience. His destiny is our destiny. May the mighty spirit of wisdom and revelation from God give enlightenment to the eyes of your understanding that you may see and know of a truth that what was happening to Adam in the Garden speaks of spiritual realities even in the beginning of history, before history, beyond history and yet in history; it is we ourselves of whom the Garden speaks, it is we ourselves who are confronted, intended, addressed, accused, expelled, instructed, and redeemed. GOD HIMSELF is the One who blesses and curses. It is our pre-history, truly our own. It is the beginning, innocence, guilt, redemption and perfection of every one of us. What happened to Adam there is what is happening to us here! Adam and Eve stand for what man is, how man is, why man is.

THE DEVIL IN MAN

Now it was in the midst of the Garden that man first encountered the ancient Serpent. It is not news to any of us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Neither is it news to us that WE are the battle ground! More particularly, the major focal point of the battle is our mind. There the battle rages at its greatest intensity, because the war is a struggle for our hearts and loyalties — the very souls and lives and beings of men. This fact is highly relevant to the subject I am dealing with in this message — the Serpent that dwells within us. It is that force within us that opposes the ways of God in our lives and tries to keep us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

This brings us back to the curse laid upon the Serpent in the beginning; "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3: 14). These terms are symbolic and spiritual. This is not speaking of a literal snake dangling from a tree limb in some historic paradise. This is a symbol and the Deceiver, Satan, that ancient Serpent, the Devil, has to eat dust! He was cursed to this low realm of eating dust because that is exactly what he was doing when he tempted mother Eve. Adam was formed of the dust of the ground and bore the image of the earthy — and as such became the rightful food for the Serpent. The Serpent — the negative spirit realm — now finds its base of operation and the fulfillment of its nature, desires, activities and purposes IN AND THROUGH MANKIND. By the very nature of things, when the Serpent eats, he seeks to SATISFY HIS APPETITE AND GRATIFY HIS DESIRES. Today, as in Eden, the sphere of Satan's activity is earth, and the object of his devouring is the man of earth — the carnal nature. Whenever we live in the earthly life of Adam, we are earthly and also on earth and fall into the sphere of Satan's activity, becoming the object of his devouring, drawn deeper and deeper into that negative realm.

The very fact that the Serpent was now to crawl upon his belly reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, and man, with the Serpent in him, now grovels in the dust, trapped in the humiliating quagmire of trouble, pain, sorrow, sin, sickness, limitation, fear and death. Moving upon his belly limits the sphere of the Serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground, lowered into the dust-realm, confined to the lowlands of the earthy and material, restricted to expression through THE MAN OF DUST. Truly he is "the S-P-I-R-I-T that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2: 2). Because of this remarkable curse you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in God's vast universe! Satan is one with man, the energy force of human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in

the crooked thoughts, perverted desires, depraved emotions, in the illusions and delusions of the outer world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh.

I want to tell you where everything is — everything is right there where you are — WITHIN YOU. Everything. On the positive side — God is in you, Christ is in you your hope of glory, the Word of Christ dwells in your heart by faith, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, the glory of God has come upon you and is arising upon you from within, the wonderful mind of Christ is in your mind and the Kingdom of God is within you. On the negative side — the spirit of antichrist is in you, the man of sin sits in the temple of God which is your body, the beast rages in the ravenous emotions of your soul, the image of the beast is seen in you by your outer actions, the nature of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters (peoples) is in you, and that ancient Serpent, the Devil, and Satan is within you, the spirit that now worketh IN the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2: 2).

Men dream of a Devil — a hideous and obscene monster in human form; a short, skinny elf in a red body suit, with impish face, horns, pointed ears, a spade beard, thin mustache, having a long forked tail and a pitchfork in his hand. If you ask one thousand church-going professing Christians to describe for you, the Devil, would not all of them describe him in the fashion portrayed above? Or would they describe him to you as a snake? Millions of professing Christians suppose they would recognize the Devil instantly. But would they, really? I do not hesitate to tell you that the Devil of Christianity is a myth. The famous preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, was once correcting the sermons of a class of preacher boys. One young man waxed eloquent on the subject: "Putting on the whole armor of God", and dramatized each piece put on. Then when the armor was on, he cried out: "Now where is the Devil!" Mr. Spurgeon cooped both hands around his mouth, and whispered: "inside the armor." Let me illustrate. The following story has been chronicled by another. The year was 1941. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and they began to conquer in Southeast Asia. The British were told, "Be careful. The Japanese are going to conquer Singapore, too." But the British said, "No need to worry. There is absolutely no danger of that happening. Look at all the cannons we have." Singapore, you know, is a nation at the end of the Malaysian peninsula. If you look at your hand and think of your thumb as the Malaysian peninsula, at the top of the digit, where the fingernail is, that would be Singapore. And from the hand to that first little digit, that's jungle. At the top of the thumb, Singapore is cleared of jungle. Civilized. It was well defended with guns pointed out to sea so that no ship could possibly invade. Nobody could ever attack them without running right into the British guns. That's why the British weren't worried on Dec. 7, 1941, as the smoke rose from Pearl Harbor, when they heard that the Japanese would be hitting Singapore next. The British only laughed. They felt secure. Then came February. Out of the jungle, from the hand up through the thumb came the Japanese. And when, suddenly, on Feb. 24, 1942, the British heard the crack of rifles, they turned around and saw the Japanese coming from their rear. In only ten days, Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese. Why? Because the guns were pointing in the wrong direction. All of their guns were pointed to the sea. They were defenseless. And let me assure you, precious friend of mine, there are vast multitudes of the Lord's people in this hour, maybe even you, whose guns are pointed in the wrong direction! The guns are pointed on that hideous, monster Devil roaming about that world out there. In our minds he belongs to the Garden of Eden, spoiling life for Adam and Eve; to the plains of the East, wrecking havoc upon poor old Job; to the Judean Wilderness, tempting Jesus; to Berlin during the thirties and early forties, possessing Adolf Hitler; to the prisons and mental hospitals, possessing the criminals and mentally insane; walking up and down the isles of the

church building, trying to hinder the meeting; he is always on the outside of us or possessing someone else!

But go with me now into that long ago when Jesus walked the dusty trails with His disciples. He had asked the twelve disciples who they thought He was. Peter promptly answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Then Jesus said to him, "Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal this unto you, but My Father which is in heaven." In other words, "This understanding didn't come from your fleshly mind. You didn't think this up by yourself. This is not the product of your own nature, or the result of your reasoning and logic; this came to you from My Father." So remarkable was this revelation to Peter that the Lord said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona!" So here we have an instance of the Father working in Peter, imparting His thoughts and understanding to Peter.

Only minutes later Jesus began to introduce to His disciples the subject of His coming suffering and death on the cross. The possibility of the death of their beloved Lord was a prospect so foreign to the thinking of the disciples that they were hardly able to comprehend His presentation of this unspeakable fate. Was He not the Messiah? Was He not the Son of God? Did He not come to establish a great Kingdom? Were not they, the disciples, to reign with Him in that Kingdom? With these questions in mind, they could hardly endure the dark foreboding which grew in their minds as Christ talked about the future. Then Peter, who had just been pronounced blessed, took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee!" Ah, when Jesus mentioned the cross and dying, Peter began to rebuke Him. Where did he find the senseless courage that would dare to rebuke the Lord? The answer is disturbingly evident — far, far too clear to be a comfort to any of us! The Lord Himself gives us the answer, for He turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind Me, SATAN! thou art an offence unto Me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." What a shocking way to talk to the great apostle Peter, the one possessing the revelation of the Christ's identity, the one called blessed, the one to whom the Lord had just given the keys to the Kingdom Heaven! Atrocious to say to this man of deep revelation and keen perception, "Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!" Indeed, "Get thee behind Me, S-A-T-A-N!" How unthinkable!

Hearing Peter's entreaty to the Lord, which of us would not have said that this was the language of genuine affection, tender solicitude, and loving concern? No doubt we would have chimed in and said, "How kind! How true! How good! Amen!" But Jesus replies, "Get thee behind Me — SATAN!" And our Lord was not merely on a name-calling spree when He uttered these words, either. He never uttered words in vain, without a definite meaning. Jesus did not speak merely to Satan in Peter, neither did He say, "Peter." Furthermore, He did not tell Peter that his words sounded like the words of Satan. He simply addressed Peter AS SATAN. Peter as Satan — on what basis? That he was demented, insane? That he was a medium, bringing spirits out of the supernatural sphere? No — merely that he SPOKE AS A MAN!!! "Get thee behind Me, Satan, you who think and speak like a man!" Is this not also what James was saying when he described the wisdom of man in these words: "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. THIS WISDOM descendeth not from above, but is EARTHLY, SENSUAL and D-E-V-I-L-I-S-H!" (James 3:14-15). Here we see that that which is earthly and sensual is that which is considered by the Spirit of God, DEVILISH!

On the surface there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with what Peter said. It was a good thought, a kindly thought. He didn't want to see His Lord and Master suffer and die, and he said so. What was wrong with that? Wasn't that a good sentiment for him to have? What was wrong with it was that it was the product of Self, it emanated from human sympathy and not from the heart of God. Anything that proceeds from Self, by the very nature of things, is bound to be opposed to the mind and will of God, for if His thoughts, and His ways, are as far from being like ours as the heavens are above the earth, there can be no unity in them at all. Self and Satan despise and hate the cross. They will scamper wildly in any direction to avoid it. They will turn their backs upon it, dig under it, try to go around it or climb over it, but they will never embrace it. The cross is the death knell of Self, and Self is the arch enemy of the cross. The friendly sympathy of Self is the cunning mind of the Serpent.

Again in Jn. 6: 70 we read, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you I-S A D-E-V-I-L?" Here our Lord of course referred to Judas. In the scriptures we have some very plain statements to the effect that certain men WERE SATAN or DEVILS. Please, let us not forget that we are still studying the fully inspired Word of God, and not some infamous fairy tale. The Devil, about whom we are studying, hates above all else to have his real identity and location made known. The only way he can carry on his business is to deceive men and women into thinking he is what he is not. As long as we think he is some funny little man with horns and a pitchfork we can never be deceived by him! I fearlessly declare, beloved that Satan and the carnal mind are so ONE that you cannot have one without the other! Satan and Self are so ONE that they are indivisible! Satan and human nature are so ONE that they cannot be separated! Is it any wonder, then, that the friendly hand of Self, yea, the friendly hand of Satan, was so quickly extended to prevent our Lord from going to the cross? "This shall not be done unto Thee," exclaimed Peter. "You must not talk that way, Lord. You are the Christ, you can never go to the cross! You must save yourself. Don't go to Jerusalem. Don't let them lay their hands on you. We shall fight against it with the sword, if necessary, or you can call twelve legions of angels to save yourself from the cross." Save yourself, save your-SELF is the eternal cry! Escape the cross! Turn aside! Turn back! Ah, what voice is this? Truly it is the voice of Satan. But never forget for one moment, my beloved, that it is also the voice of the carnal mind. Oh yes, there must be a death to Self, that brash, ego-centric devil that would and does usurp the throne of Christ's Kingdom within. He no more wants you to go to the cross than he wanted Jesus to go.

And now we uncover some other startling facts. The Greek word DIABOLOS is the Greek word for "devil." In all the Greek New Testament it is never used for anything or anyone else. But in three appearances of the word in the New Testament, the men who were supposed to translate that original, instead of translating it in harmony with every other use of the word rendered it in such a way as to mystify and hide the truth. When translated in harmony with the rest of the scriptures, here is what I Tim. 3: 11 actually says. It is talking about deacons. And it says this, "Even so must their wives be grave, NOT DEVILS (diabolos), sober, faithful in all things." Just imagine a deacon marrying a funny black thing with horns, a pointed tail and cloven hoofs! In Titus 2: 1-3 Paul is giving some instructions concerning the churches and the believers in those churches. And here is what he writes to Titus: "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, NOT DEVILS (diabolos), not given to much wine, teachers of good things." In Tim. 3: 1-5 we read this: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce

breakers, DEVILS (diabolos), incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What an indictment against human nature, and against modern religion! "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be ...DEVILS...having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Jesus, on many occasions, drew this analogy of men as serpents — devils. In my mind when Jesus uttered the following parabolic phrase, He was revealing one of the most important and foundational truths of all times. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Mat. 23: 25,33). John the Baptist used the same terminology. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?" (Mat. 3: 7). Various translations render this passage..."Ye generation of vipers," "Ye offspring of vipers," "Ye broods of snakes," "Ye serpent's brood," etc. You see, Christ and John were well aware of who and what and where the Enemy was and ever shall be.

As in Christ's day, so today, the churches are, indeed, full of devils. And they have no more desire to go to the cross than Peter did. Well does this enemy of God, enthroned in the human heart, this adversary of redemption and of all mankind, know that, in the blessed hour when the "I" is crucified and brought to death, all his power and all his authority and sway in that life is broken forever. His appetite is denied, his desires are rejected, his base of operation is destroyed, and his work is abolished in every life that has become identified with Christ in the cross. Once a man has embraced fully the cross of Christ and Self has become forever dead with Him, then it is with him even as the firstborn Son in triumph declared: "I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me, there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, he has no power over Me" (Jn. 14: 30, Amplified). Satan has no power at all when SELF is gone. Then he has no more power in your life or mine than he had in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. How unspeakably wonderful the hour for any man when Satan shall find nothing in him upon which he can feed or lay hold, nothing upon which he can satisfy his evil desires or his corrupt nature, nothing that responds or corresponds to him! When Self is crucified with Christ the lust of the flesh is mortified, the lust of the eyes is dead, and the pride of life is nailed to the cross. The man of dust exists no more and from then on it is NOT I, BUT CHRIST!

OUT OF THE HEART

Do you believe, precious friend of mine, that Satan can work in someone right there where you are, and in someone in New York City, in someone in London, in someone in Moscow, in someone in Hong Kong and in someone in Nairobi all at the same time? It is true — but how? Can he travel at the speed of light and be in that many people around the world at the same instant? Is he omnipresent? Absolutely not! He dwells IN MAN — he is right there in every man's mind and heart and nature.

We see this principle fulfilled in the story of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1: 6). May I reverently add that every time the sons of God present themselves before the Lord — Satan comes also among them! It bespeaks of a condition within these sons — our minds vs. His mind, our will vs. His will, our ways vs. His ways. It is a heavenly place within the sons of God wherein we must be tested to show whether we be

sons indeed. This impudent Devil of self-will is in every man, and even our Lord Himself surrendered His own will to the Father's, saying, "Father, if Thou be willing remove this cup from Me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done" (Lk. 22: 42). Until every son has been completely perfected and thoroughly tested it is not possible for the sons of God to come and present themselves before the Lord without Satan coming also among them. Does he not walk in the natural mind of every man? It is written, "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence cometh thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1: 7). Now the Lord's questions are never for His own enlightenment. He knew well whence Satan came. Oh, yes, Satan had been walking to and fro throughout the earth — God knew this — for he walks in our earth, even that earth which we are, from the east to the west, from the north to the south, from sea to sea and from pole to pole he walks in the earthly planes of our souls, in the secret chambers of our minds, in the fleshly motions of our bodies; he travels up and down in us from the heights of our heavens to the depths of our hells. There is not a day that he leaves us! Dust is his habitation.

All the way to glorification this inner antagonist is present. This is why every revival God has ever sent through the ages ended in apostasy. Satan — not the Devil with horns and pitchfork — but that inward Devil of fleshly wisdom, sense-knowledge and carnal zeal — has a subtle way of identifying himself with every move of the Spirit of God, so as to corrupt it from within. Many years ago F. J. Huegel wrote: "Students of the great Welsh Revival (1900-1903) say that the wonderful stream of Divine Life little by little lost its saving efficacy, as another stream from a very different source, naturally very filthy, began to mingle with the River of Water of Life proceeding from the Throne and from the Lamb. 'Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them' (Job 2: 1). Beware of false fire. Beware of the counterfeit glow. When the soulish takes the place of a pure working of the Holy Spirit, you have a 'revival' whose fires, though they purport to be from Heaven are more likely to be from Hell. There are any number of 'doors' through which Satan may enter to get control of revival. An undue stressing of the emotional; excitement which grieves and suffocates the Holy Spirit who works quietly; a glorying in the evangelist rather than in the Saviour he preaches; clap-trap methods; self whatever the form in the ministry itself, obstructing Christ, veiling His cross and His glory; these are some of Satan's keys" — end quote.

The same sad story has been chronicled for us in our generation by George Hawtin in his excellent booklet, MYSTERY BABYLON. Speaking of the events that surrounded the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit in 1948, he says, "The spirit of Babylon goes much deeper than sects and denominations. It is a mystery the spirit of which seems to be deep-rooted in the heart of man. It is like an octopus with many arms reaching in all directions. If it cannot catch you with one of its arms, it will enfold you with another. It is like a demon which, being cast out, will return with seven other demons more powerful and cunning than itself. You do not have to look for the spirit of Babylon in some great and powerful denomination: you will find it in your own heart if you look close enough. Mystery Babylon is in the forehead.

"Perhaps it was a miracle. I do not think it was chance. I learned that men could be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So I sought and found this blessed new experience in God, and joys flowed like a river as the Comforter came in. But here again the arms of another daughter of Babylon began to enfold me. Was I going to join their church? Was I going to preach for them.? Was I going to take out papers and credentials? This time I was

persuaded, and I did, and for seventeen years thereafter I was a faithful slave of the organization, speaking its language and building its visible tower. But I was never fully satisfied, though I loved the work, I loved the people, and I loved the students of my old Bible School. Many dozens of them went out to minister far and wide and many found their way to distant and foreign lands. I am sure their rewards will be many, indeed. All the while there was a longing for a freedom which I did not know, a relationship with God that I did not have. Many times I taught the people that some day God would send a revelation of truth, but the very denomination we had so faithfully built would not be able to receive it. When finally that revelation did come, they were not able to receive it, and those of us who did receive were vomited like Jonah from the belly of the denominational whale, thrown up upon dry land, for we had sickened his stomach.

"God does not leave you in a dry land for long if you are bound to be one with Him. Should my life be very long on earth, I shall never be able to forget the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power that came to our classroom as we waited on God that glorious 13th of February, 1948, when God began to do a new thing that was destined for a time to shake the church all over America. How we sang the songs of deliverance! How the praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and re-echoed among the battlements of heaven! Music of heavenly choirs on earth went sweeping up the sky steeples while angels stood at heaven's gates and swept their harps of gold. Day after day, month after month the celestial wonder continued. Heaven came down our souls to greet and glory crowned the mercy seat. People came for thousands of miles to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life and it looked for a time as though the walls of Babylon were to be broken down and the whole church would come marching to Zion,

"But the Babylonian captivity was not over yet. As I look sadly in retrospect now, I can see with great clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head and men began to hide the Babylonish garment in their tents together with the silver and the wedge of gold. The old Babylonish garment was well hidden deep beneath the earth of the tent, but it was there nonetheless, and the whole move was becoming more and more enfolded by another tentacle of the great octopus. Stricter and more rigid became the teaching and the discipline. There was to be no fellowship with anybody who was not within the confines of our ever narrowing circle. We were the true church. We were the elect. We stood on the foundation and all other men stood on sinking sand. No man must cast out a devil unless he followed us. No teaching was worth the time it took to tell it unless it originated with us. We were the most spiritual people in the world. We were going to reign in the kingdom and even now we were beginning to reign. We had the gifts of the Spirit, and we were going to 'call the shots' in the tribulation. The elders were no longer fathers, but men who were to carry out the will of those who were lords over the heritage of God. Everything was cut and dried and firmly enfolded in the arms of another of the harlot daughters of the Babylonian system. We boasted of the gifts of the Spirit, but what had become of them? Where were the healings? Where were the miracles? Where was the faith, the gift of languages, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge? The only thing that was left was prophecy and it became a weariness to the flesh, flowing continually from the mind of man and scarcely ever having any fulfillment. Prophecy that has no fulfillment comes from one of two sources: from the mind of Satan or from the mind of man, but never from the mind of God. How often I have listened to people fumble for words as they prophesied thus giving the lie to their words having been inspired of God. How is the faithful city become a harlot!" — end quote. To this faithful testimony I would add — again

the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord, and how clearer can it be that SATAN CAME ALSO AMONG THEM!

The entire religious world is today walking in fleshly wisdom which seems so logical to the carnal mind. Fleshly wisdom always seems to "make more sense" than does the wisdom of God! Satan causes carnal wisdom to prosper because it is denial of the life of the Spirit, so that many times Christians and churches operate contrary to the Spirit with the argument, "It works!" Their method of evangelism is contrary to the ways of the Spirit, but since it works they continue in it. The "program" of the church is contrary to true spirituality, and is built generally around flesh-appeal activities of ceremonies, concerts, social activities, sports, Sunday School contests, puppet shows, movies, special speakers, sensationalism and other carnal tactics and techniques, but the organizations continue in it because "it works" and causes the "church" to prosper in numbers and in finances, while their spirits remain dwarfed and hideously shriveled and stunted, if indeed they have been quickened at all! It must be remembered that if anyone or anything prospers on principles other than the life of the Son of God, that person or thing is being prospered by the Devil and not by God!

Turn with me to two verses of scripture in Gal. 3: 3 and Phil. 3: 3-4. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit... and have no confidence in the flesh." The flesh is the name by which the Word designates our fallen condition — Satan in man. Well did William Law write these words of keen insight: In this antagonism of the flesh to the Spirit the flesh has TWO DISTINCT STRATEGIES. On the one hand, the flesh lusts against the Spirit in its committing sin and transgressing God's commands. This is the evil of the flesh. On the other hand, its hostility to the Spirit is no less manifested in its seeking to serve God and do His work! This is the good of the flesh. In yielding to the flesh, the soul sought itself instead of the God into whom the Spirit could have raised it. Self-effort and self-development prevailed over God's life. And now, so subtle and mighty is this spirit of self, that the flesh, not only in sinning against God, but even when the soul learns to serve God, still asserts its power, refuses to let the SPIRIT ALONE LEAD, and in its effort to be religious, wants to serve God independent of the Spirit and is still the great enemy that ever hinders and quenches the Spirit. It is because of this cunning deceitfulness of the flesh that there often takes place what Paul speaks of to the Galatians; "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Unless the soul is brought into absolute submission to the Spirit, the surrender to the Spirit being very entire, and the holy waiting on Him be kept up in great dependence and humility, what has begun in the Spirit, very early and very speedily passes over into confidence in the flesh.

Just where the flesh seeks to serve God, there it becomes the strength of sin. Do we not know how the Pharisees, with their self-righteousness and carnal religion, fell into pride and selfishness, and became the servants of sin and the children of the Devil? Satan has no more crafty device for keeping men out of life than inciting them to a religion, even a serving of God, in the flesh. He knows that the power of the flesh can never conquer sin nor please God, that in the flesh and the serving of the flesh no one will ever become a son of God, for those who become sons not only defeat the Devil in the wilderness of temptation, but also deny their own souls, wills, plans, abilities, desires, ambitions, hopes and dreams to declare: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me; for I do always those things that please Him. The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what

things so ever He doeth, these also doeth the Son. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (Jn. 8: 28-29; 5: 19; 14: 10).

If there is one lesson a son of God needs to learn it is this: If I am to deny self in my relationships with others, to conquer selfishness, anger, and lack of love, I MUST FIRST LEARN TO DENY SELF IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD! There the soul, the seat of Self, must learn to bow to the Spirit, where God dwells. Listen, my brother, my sister, to the voice of the blessed Spirit of God. It is confidence in the flesh that motivates men to busily and craftily work for God rather than seeking the Lord until He works. It is Self doing what the Spirit alone can do; it is the Soul taking the lead, in the hopes that the Spirit will second its efforts, instead of trusting the Holy Spirit to lead and to do all, and then waiting on Him. Oh, brethren! How we need to watch this! All that is not of life, of the Spirit, is merely the good of man—soulish. How much of our religious exercises have been soulish! I can tell you of a truth that most of the "power" in the modern "revival meeting" is nothing at all but soul power. Have you not noticed yourself that in many church services, revival meetings and crusades a kind of atmosphere is first created psychologically to make the people feel warm and excited? A chorus is repeated again and again to warm up the audience. The people are feverishly urged to "get into the spirit" of the meeting. Some stirring stories are told. Special music is sung. The people are instructed to stand up, sit down, say "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" When the atmosphere is thoroughly heated up, the preacher will then stand up and preach. If he does his job skillfully he can anticipate a large "altar call." These are methods and tactics, but they are not the power of the Holy Spirit! Many preachers today think they have power (even many so-called sons of God); but they are merely employing psychological soul power to influence people and manipulate congregations. Many have become self-made experts in manipulating people and crowds. The Bible Schools of Babylon's religions offer a course for ministerial students called homiletics. Homiletics is the art of writing and preaching sermons. The sad truth is that the vast majority of religious activities is just that—an art. You can go to school and LEARN HOW TO DO IT! How to prepare sermons. How to speak persuasively. How to use gestures. How to tell jokes. How to preach. How to stir people by the skillful use of sentimental stories about death, repentance, hell, heaven, needs, miracles, etc. This all seems so desirable, so good'. But I say to you that you can learn these very same psychological techniques, apply them in the business world, and sell vacuum cleaners! The fact is, most all salesmen employ these same proven procedures of presentation, sentimentalism and pressure to sell insurance, automobiles, real estate, and thousands of other items daily! They don't need any Holy Spirit to do that! All that is necessary is some good human personality mixed with some proven techniques and one can persuade people to buy almost anything! These are means and methods, but they are not the power nor work of the Holy Spirit. They are no more spiritual when used religiously than they are when employed commercially. In the Kingdom of God they are flesh!. To which our Lord says today, as He did to Peter in that long ago, "Get thee behind Me—SATAN!"

There is no life in methods, techniques, or formulas. How much better it would be if the Lord's servants would expend their energies, like Mary of old, at His feet, learning to know Him and to know His ways. How much better it would be were the time spent on our knees, low and humbled before God, that He might place within a deep distrust of the flesh. How I pray that God would truly reveal to all those apprehended to sonship that the one great hindrance to the life of sonship is the power of the flesh and the efforts of the self-life. Open our eyes, we pray Thee, to this snare of Satan. May we all see how secret

and how subtle is the temptation to have confidence in the flesh, how easily we are led to try and perfect in the flesh what has been begun in the Spirit. May we learn to trust Thee to work in us by Thy Holy Spirit, both to will and to do only those things which THOU ART DOING! Today, after hearing the Father's call to sonship, after partaking of the deep and vital dealings of the Spirit of God, I have had to totally repudiate all such soulish wisdom of the carnal mind, all such fleshly tactics of Babylon's kingdom to bend low before the disciplines of the Father of sons, to travail mightily that God would bend me, break me, bind my soul power, bridle my Self, and block all that would proceed from my carnal mind. If I have learned anything of the ways of the Father I have learned this one thing: He who would be a son of God must be able to discern what is done from his soul power and what is done by the Spirit of God; further, he must confess and utterly forsake all that pertains to his own soul power, nailing it to the cross of Christ, that ultimately his own faith, as well as that of his hearers, may be found to stand solely in the power of God and not in the wisdom of the flesh. This is the only route, my dear brother and sister, into the glorious reality of sonship to God. All the good works of the soulish realm can never, in a billion years, deliver the creation from its bondage to the tyranny of corruption. Only the mighty working of THE LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD can accomplish this. It is the Spirit that QUICKENETH; the flesh PROFITETH NOTHING. Therefore—"Get thee behind me, SATAN!"

Can you not see now how it is, my beloved, that when the sons of God present themselves before the Lord, Satan comes also among them? This very same experience happened to none other than our blessed Lord Jesus—the Pattern Son. Did you notice how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? "And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil" (Mk. 1: 12; Mat. 4: 1). What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the Son to be PROVEN, to be made STRONG, to OVERCOME in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious ministry and the agony and death of the cross.

Do you suppose the Devil came to Jesus there as a weird-looking figure, with little, evil-looking horns protruding from his temples, and a pointed tail? How often with our childish and distorted understanding, have we pictured Jesus confronted by that legendary figure in the red suit, with a pitchfork in his hands! This is naught but foolishness, for Satan is spirit, and spirit is INVISIBLE ENERGY! How many times have you been tempted by the Devil? Can you count the times? How often has he spoken to you, enticing, suggesting, compelling? Have you ever seen him? Have you ever heard his audible voice? Certainly not! And yet—you HAVE sensed his presence, you HAVE heard his voice, you HAVE felt his power! It was all in your MIND, in your EMOTIONS. And does not our Lord, the Spirit of Truth, speak to us in the same way? That still small voice, the inner urging, the inward knowing, the spiritual consciousness—all from a dimension beyond the natural senses. Because it is all in our mind and heart does not mean that it is imagination or hallucination! In the depths of my spirit I am absolutely certain that there was not some hideous spirit-being materializing before the eyes of Jesus in that Judean wilderness. Remember—Jesus was not only the Son of God, He was the Son of man. And being both He was capable not only of hearing from God, but hearing those things that be of man. So when we speak of that ancient Serpent which is the Devil and Satan, we are not talking about some mighty fallen angel, but that mind which savors the things of man—the carnal mind. The apostle James put it this way: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth

forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1: 14-15). The Moffat Translation reads, "Everyone is tempted as he is beguiled and allured by his own desire, the Desire conceives and breeds sin, while Sin matures and gives birth to death." Everyone has desires of one kind or another, and that really can be quite natural. When we see the word "lust", most Christians think it is used exclusively in a negative, sensual, or sexual context. The word simply means desire, and a person's desires are not always evil. The Greek word EPITHUMIA is translated primarily as "lust" in the King James Bible, but the same word is also translated "desire" in Lk. 22: 15 where our Lord Himself told His disciples how much He longed (desired, lusted) to eat the Passover with them. A related Greek word, EPITHUMEO, is often translated as "desire" and is used in several places in a positive context, as in desiring to know the things of God (Mat 13: 17). Even in the things of the Spirit one must keenly discern between his own desire and the desire of the Spirit.

The record states that after fasting for forty days, Jesus hungered. When you're hungry, what kind of desire do you have? You want to eat! In that crucial moment the Tempter came to Him. He began to feel the physiological pangs of hunger, and then the thought occurred to Him. Jesus dropped down from the high and holy thought of God, into the reasoning of the human mind. He descended in consciousness from the Son of God to the Son of man. He said, "I know who I am; I can turn these stones into bread." And in His natural mind the voice cunningly suggested, "If you are the Son of God, go ahead and do it! Use your sonship to fill your belly! Use it to satisfy your own needs and desires!" But Jesus quickly discerned that wily Devil and knew how to nip that idea in the bud before it had time to blossom. He got to it before it could conceive, before it could start making a baby of sin. Jesus answered out of the depths of His spirit, "It is written—man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4: 4). And that ended that temptation! The battle lay not with some mythical personage outside of Himself. The conflict was within. The voice was an inner voice. The suggestion was in His mind, its power in His emotions and will. God speaks to us in our mind and spirit. Satan also speaks in our mind and heart. There is no monster without. There are three things in this vast world, and only three— the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. I do not think you will be able to avoid the conclusion that all the inventions, creations, and contrivances of man are in existence to cater to these three things. It was with these three things that Eve was tempted. She saw the tree was good for food (the lust of the eyes), a tree to be desired (the lust of the flesh), a tree to make one wise (the pride of life), and the temptation was not from without but from within. How remarkably the three temptations of Jesus in the wilderness parallel these three! Every temptation of the Devil comes to us through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. There are no others. Not for Adam and Eve, not for Jesus, and not for us.

Humankind has an enemy—a wily Nemesis, an adversary, described in God's Word as desperately wicked, deceitful above all things. This enemy has adversely affected every generation of humankind from the Garden of Eden to the present. Just who, or what, is this inimical deceiver? The prophet Jeremiah unmasked this enemy in these words of inspiration, "The HEART is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and he went on to ask the searching question, "who can know it?" To the enlightened mind of this prophet, the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of any man to comprehend. How many times have you heard it? Someone perpetrates an unbelievably ghastly crime; like the axe murders of an entire family by a young lad barely in his teens, or the brutal murder of a father and a mother by

a teenager a few years ago, who buried them in a shallow grave, and then repeatedly drove a tractor over the site, in an attempt to cover the crime — and yet relatives, close friends and near neighbors all said, in a state of bewilderment and shock, "But he was such a nice, quiet, decent boy!"

A motion picture some years ago portrayed the dual lives led by a judge, who had two families, some distance apart! He had "married" two different women, was actually living with each for a certain number of days each week; would then disappear, as if he had some important responsibilities in a distant town, when in actuality he was going to spend the remainder of that week with a second family. Obviously, each wife thought she knew this man, thoroughly! After all, just how well do you know your own spouse? Interesting, isn't it? We feel we truly know our husbands, wives, children; our closest and dearest friends. But according to the word of God we don't even know ourselves. We, perhaps above all people, are most often deceived by our own hearts! There is a deeper part to all of us—a part that only God knows! As a friend has so aptly written: "We should not find this so amazing a passage of scripture if it were not for one important thing. Jeremiah did not list an exception, saying, The heart is deceitful above all things except the Devil. He merely stated that the heart is deceitful above all things, PERIOD! Since Jeremiah spoke by the Spirit of God, this could not possibly have been a slip of the tongue or something uttered before it was thought through. If the heart is deceitful above all things, it naturally follows that there is nothing more deceitful. The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE WORLD!

"There is no doubt whatever in my mind that Jesus had this very scripture in mind when He spoke the words recorded in Mk. 7: 15-23. 'There is nothing, ' He said, 'from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile the man. ' Having said that, He uttered the statement that so often followed His teachings when there was contained in them a mystery. ' IF any man has ears to hear, let him hear. ' If we will be honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that we have fostered and taught for generations a concept that directly contradicts the words of Jesus Christ, for we have, indeed, declared that there IS something from without a man that can enter into him and defile him. We have called him Satan (an adversary), and so he is! We have called him a murderer and a liar, and so he is! We have had much truth about him — but the one thing we have NOT known about him is his LOCATION! We have said that he was without — Jesus said that he is within! If there is nothing from without a man (and in the Greek that reads: not one thing) that entering into him can defile him, then we must conclude the Satan's activity is not without, but within.

"As we continue to read this passage, we hear Jesus say, 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within and defile the man. ' Every sin category imaginable is contained in this discourse. Everything that a man could ever think or do that is evil is said by Jesus to come — not from outside of man but from within! In our consideration of this passage, there is one all-important phrase that we must be careful to note, for it is the key to the true nature of Satan and the heart of man. Jesus said, 'For from within out of the heart of men. . . ' It is imperative that we notice the grammatical number of the two words here. The word 'heart' is singular being in the Greek in the genitive singular case. The word 'men' however is plural being in the genitive plural case. We have, then, ONE HEART but many men!" —end quote. This heart is the heart of the

Self, the inward nature of man, one great nature shared by all the inhabitants of the world, the very heart of Adam shared with his many-membered body!

The natural mind is the mind channeling the condition of the human heart. It is not the same mind that understands how to drive your car, or lusts after someone of the opposite sex, that also understands the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Not at all! The promise is sure: "Then will I sprinkle dean water upon you, and ye shall be clean...a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony (spiritually unresponsive) heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a (soft, pliable, responsive) heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statues, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (Eze. 36: 25-27). This new creation of which the Spirit speaks is blest not only with a new heart and a new spirit but with a NEW MIND as well. For, Paul says, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord. But WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST" (I Cor. 2: 16). There is by regeneration within ourselves, beyond the realm of our conscious knowledge, a divine life, the child of God's Spirit, ever unwearied, ever growing and maturing, to gain control of our whole being, and transform us into the image of God.

There is still a fierce battle raging between these two hearts, these two spirits, these two minds, these two conditions, these two natures. This is the conflict so graphically portrayed by the Sign of Scorpio in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY! Praise God, the mighty man, God's Orphiuchus, God's heavenly Hercules, that blessed company of the sons of God, is disabling the Serpent, crushing the head of the Scorpion, and placing his foot determinedly upon the Dragon's head. Today, although the Kingdom of God has not yet completely triumphed upon this earth in all realms, although God has not yet gained a sphere wherein He can express the authority of His life in a full way, and although His glory has not yet been fully manifest, nevertheless there is a place, a small sphere, thank the Lord, where there exists the condition of God's reign, which thereby manifests God's glory, wisdom and power. This is the body of Christ! Today the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led members of Christ's body are the expression of God's reigning here on earth. What God desires today is to perfect and expand and intensify His reigning sphere within His people and through His people. It is through the body of Christ, the sons of God, that God will bind Satan and destroy his power of sin and death in all men. It is through the sons of God that life, yea, incorruptible life, and blessing shall be ministered so that all the families of the earth shall be blessed and made to live unto God. Thus His name will be honored in the whole earth, His Kingdom come, and His glorious will done. This is the commission of God's sons—God's MIGHTY MAN! This is the grand conclusion of the ages-long conflict of Scorpio!

Chapter 18

Scorpio -The Scorpion

(continued)

The Sign of Scorpio portrays the conflict between the "Mighty Man" and the "Scorpion" and the struggle between the great and powerful Orphiuchus (the serpent-holder) and the Serpent. The scene is right out of the pages of the opening chapters of Genesis, and the closing chapters of the book of Revelation. Its wonderful message, in fact, runs like a scarlet cord through all the pages of the Word of God —for it is a picture from GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY.

In Genesis 3:1 we read, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The word serpent in our language comes from the Latin "serpo" meaning "to creep," but the Hebrew term has no relation to the form or motion of any external attribute of a serpent. The word used here for serpent is the Hebrew word NACHASH which is a primitive root meaning "to hiss or whisper." It, furthermore, means "to search or scrutinize closely, to find out by experiment, to practice divination, augury, incantation or enchantment." According to Webster incantation means "the chanting of special words or a formula in magic spells or rites," Incantation may speak in addition of hypnotism. The Serpent, then, is a HISSER, a WHISPERER, a DIVINER, an EXPERIMENTER, an ENCHANTER, a MAGICIAN, and a HYPNOTIST! And, I might add, so is the carnal mind!

In Isaiah 8: 19 the Holy Spirit has recorded for our learning a most significant exhortation. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?" The same inspired prophet penned a prophecy concerning Jerusalem under the prophetic term "Ariel," saying, "Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be. . . out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust" (Isa. 29: 4). Here we read of spirits that "peep and mutter," which speak "out of the ground" and "whisper out of the dust." Is this not reminiscent of the Serpent in Eden, the hisser and whisperer, calling to Eve and speaking hypnotically from the dust realm?

Whisperings out of the dust — there is something sinister in the thought, but beyond the evil that is suggested, there is also the thought of subtle suggestion — a whispered temptation — something so subtle one could wonder from whence it comes, a word so low and so whispered as to be almost imperceptible —or is it a thought, a desire, a command from an inner nature? These whisperings ARISE FROM THE DUST OF THE CARNAL MIND, OUT OF THE GROUND OF THE ADAM NATURE where lies the Serpent! It is significant to note that "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Gen. 3: 1). The contrast is drawn between the Garden and the field. Adam lived and walked in the Garden, and his responsibility was to

"dress and keep it." Garden is from the Hebrew GAN, meaning a fenced or protected area. It was, furthermore, cultivated and tended. Field is from the Hebrew SADEH, indicating that which is spread out; flat land; wild farm or wilderness. The field where the Serpent dwelt was an unfenced and uncultivated area. This field bespeaks of the mind of the flesh — the unbroken, unharnessed, unbridled, untended, unplowed, unprocessed, undisciplined, unprotected sphere from whence the Serpent "whispered out of the dust" — the subtle voice whispering enticingly from the unexplored wild lands of the FLESH! This whisper, this tantalizing hiss is communicated through the thoughts, reasoning, desires, passions, plans, hopes, fantasies and cravings of the CARNAL MIND! In the first age of Adam's creation, God used the Serpent to reveal what lay dormant, undiscovered and uncultivated within man's innermost being — a CUNNING NATURE — EGO — SELFHOOD independent of God. If by the grace of God you can see the truth of this, you will then plainly discern in all the propensities of the carnal mind the CREEPING, SLITHERING, WHISPERING, DIVINING, ENCHANTING, HYPNOTIZING SERPENT OF EDEN!

Before pursuing this thought, we do well to consider also the word translated "subtle" in this passage. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field." The Hebrew word for "naked" in Gen. 2: 25 is AROM. The English word that describes the Serpent's nature in Gen. 3:1 is "subtle," and the Hebrew word here is ARUM. Both AROM and ARUM are derived from ARAM which means "to be bare, to be cunning." Hebrew scholars say that originally these three words were the same word — ARAM. Now, why should the expression "naked" and the term "cunning" be the same word? What is the connection? We can answer with only one word: SEDUCTIVE. By way of illustration, a naked woman may be a seductive woman. There is a close connection between the two. The ideas of naked and cunning come together in the word SEDUCTIVE or SEDUCE. Can we not see by this that the Serpent was actually more seductive than anything in the bestial realm. Ah! the mind of the flesh is, in truth, the most seductive thing in the world!

In this connection a friend has written, "There was a tree set in the midst of the garden called the Tree of Life. God had given man the right to eat of that tree and in eating of it, man would enter into eternal life. The tragedy that we have seen is, however, that man did indeed eat of that tree — for if one will read carefully he will find that the Tree of Knowledge of which man ate was also in the midst of the garden, which can only mean that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge are ONE AND THE SELFSAME TREE. The Tree of Life, however, is the essence of the truth and the Tree of Knowledge is the form of truth!" Here is the key — form vs. essence. It is just the difference between the letter of the Word and the spirit of the Word; between law and grace, between ritual and reality, between doctrine and life, between shadow and substance, between facts and truth. And vast multitudes of Adam's descendants today have not learned the difference between these two trees, or between the voice of the Lord God in the Garden and the hissing of the Serpent from the field. So many of the Lord's people have not to this day discerned between flesh and spirit, between the letter that killeth and the spirit that giveth life, between the external ritual and the internal reality, between the outward shadow and the inward substance, between facts and truth, or between form and essence. Jesus never said, "Ye shall know the facts and the facts shall make you free." He stated, rather, "Ye shall know the TRUTH!" And what a difference there is! Facts are merely the FORM OF TRUTH, the husk of the kernel, truth held by the carnal mind in the intellect as dead-letter doctrines, laws, creeds, forms, rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, works, activities, etc. — all figures representing or standing for truth and reality, but within themselves containing NO LIFE. "The letter killeth," the apostle assures us. "The spirit giveth life."

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," saith the Lord. Jesus proclaimed, "I am the truth, I am the life" The Serpent said, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened!" That was a fact — and "ye shall be as GODS, knowing good and evil" was also a fact, for after Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree, the Lord God Himself verified the Serpent's statement as being a fact. "Behold, the man is become AS ONE OF US to know good and evil," God said (Gen. 3: 22).

Again a friend has aptly written, "In form, then, the serpent had the truth. He had, in fact, drawn on the very Word of God itself to tempt Eve, for the Lord had said, I will create man in My own image. ' What the serpent failed to reveal, however, was the essence of the form which is that INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD man can never be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been a self-evident truth, but man failed to see it. He was deceived by the very form of truth — taking the Word of God which had promised to make him in the image of God, receiving it as a doctrine rather than a revelation, as form rather than life, and was thereby brought to ruin, cheated out of the very thing he sought. Man became a god, alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — but he became a god in the wrong realm, for at the same time that God acknowledged man's 'deity' He also CAST HIM FROM THE GARDEN — cast him from the heavenly realm — and set him in the earth 'to till the ground from which he was taken. ' Musing upon this incident years later, the prophet David wrote, 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him. . . for Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. . . ' It was as a god that man had dominion, but a further reading of this passage reveals that the works of the hands of God over which man was given dominion under the first covenant was limited to the earth realm. Thus, we find that Adam truly became a 'god' — as the serpent promised and the Lord confirmed — but he was not an heavenly god. He became, rather, the 'god of this world' (1 Cor. 4: 4)" — end quote.

The Serpent did not preach truth, he preached facts. Form apart from essence. Dead doctrine about God instead of participation through union with God. Man came into knowledge, but he lost his life. In fact, man became a partaker of that wisdom possessed by the Serpent, the wisdom of this world. It is significant to find that in the contrast of the wisdom of the world, as over against the wisdom of God, James says, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3: 15). This is always the Serpent's approach to us. EARTHY — that which appeals to the flesh, the natural senses. SENSUAL — literally, soulish, that which appeals to the ego and the mind. DEVILISH — that which touches the human spirit realm to defile with the negative spirit of the world. But, thank God! there is also "the wisdom that is from above" which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3: 17).

THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

In his first epistle, the apostle John informs us that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1Jn. 5: 19). "This present evil world (Gal. 1: 4)" is now governed by those who obey the carnal nature, the Serpent within them. Satan, "the god of this world," rules through carnal individuals (old Adam), thus filling this world with the wickedness and corruption so evident everywhere. The result of the Serpent's work, through the carnal nature in mankind, is the conglomerate world system — economic, political and religious — prophetically called Babylon. The most outstanding characteristic of the Serpent is his ability to deceive. From the very opening chapters of the Bible, he is depicted as a liar and a deceiver. "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat," was Eve's cry, and in the

closing chapters of the Bible, the fact of his deceiving nature is further emphasized in the inspired words penned by the Revelator wherein he says that he is "that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD" (Rev. 12: 9).

To properly understand the "wisdom of this world" which is "foolishness with God" we must first understand what is meant by the "world." The Greek word for world is COSMOS, which means system, arrangement, or organization. There are two things which have captured our attention, having been quickened for our consideration by the Spirit of God. These two are sin and the world. Because both are contrary to the Spirit of God, they must be dealt with and purged from all who would walk in sonship to God. However, the defilement of these two aspects differs. The contamination of sin is savage, hurtful and ugly, while the contamination of the world is cultured and refined, appealing to the intellect and the artistic in man. The contamination of sin is like dirty motor oil poured on a beautiful white wedding gown. But the contamination of the world is like a colorful pattern printed on white doth. From the human standpoint, a wedding gown with dirty motor oil splashed on it is considered filthy and undesirable, whereas a cloth with a colorful design is not dirty, but rather desirable. However, in the sight of God, BOTH ARE UNDESIRABLE! God's standard has always been neither a stained garment nor a colorful piece of cloth, but a pure white garment. "And to her was granted that she would be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. 19: 8). "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment" (Rev. 3: 5). Just as a dirty spot is not pure white, even so a colorful design detracts from the pure whiteness. Likewise, the world appears better than sin, but when related to the divine nature, both are contaminating and require purging.

Furthermore, the effect of sin and the world upon man differ greatly: sin defiles and degrades man, whereas the world possesses man. It is just as serious for man's life to be controlled and dominated by the world as to be defiled by sin. If Satan only uses sin to contaminate man, he only causes man to be perverted and shamed, but if he uses the world to possess man, then man is alienated from God into a realm of ego-centric self-sufficiency and self-deception. Sin may be defined as an act of disobedience to God, while the world may be defined as man's organized system or kingdom by which he lives in independence from God.

A study of Genesis makes the difference apparent. Although Adam was corrupted by sin, he was still living in the presence of God. It is not until Genesis 4 that we read of Cain: "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. . .and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch" (Gen. 4: 16-17). This is most significant! "Nod" is the Hebrew word for exile or vagrancy. Thus, Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, away from the life of the Kingdom of God, away from his inheritance in God, into exile, to walk totally independent from God and outside of God. This "land of Nod" or condition of exile is stated to be "on the east of Eden." The Garden of Eden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, was westward, but Cain travelled eastward. Adam was driven away from the Tree of Life, driven eastward (Gen. 3: 24), and now Cain continues on yet farther in an eastward direction (as all the metaphysical religions do today!) away from even the presence of God. Oh, what spiritual realities lie hidden in these simple words of Holy Writ! The Word of God clearly reveals that the route of spiritual progression is from east to west. Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God, is pictured by the Psalmist as a bridegroom typified by the sun who comes out of his chamber to run a race through the heavens (Ps. 19: 4-6). Malachi speaks of Christ as "the sun of righteousness, arising"

(Mal. 4: 2). Everyone knows, of course, that the "race" of the sun is run from east to west. The lightning referred to in Mat 24: 27 is actually the sun, for the Greek word merely means a bright shining, and lightning, as we know, does not flash from east to west, having no specific design or direction. Thus, Jesus said, "For as the bright shining (sun) cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Cain, had it not been for sin, would have been living in the Garden of Eden, which typifies the Kingdom of Heaven on earth — man dwelling and walking and living in the economy of God, the Spirit. In spite of sin, he was still able to know the presence of God, which typifies the anointing. But now Cain is rejecting even the presence of God and moving in the opposite direction of the course of the anointing, moving further and further from the life of the Spirit. His final end is that of an exile, a vagrant, living on a territory not pertaining to him, not his true inheritance or possession. There, alienated from God, and severed from the anointing, the record states Cain dwelt. He settled there. He built there. How happy is the man who clearly understands that the pathway of the anointing is ever from glory to glory, and as long as we are short of the image and incorruptible life of God we must never settle anywhere! The very condition of settling precludes our re-entrance into the Paradise of God. The man who settles is lost from the on-going purposes of God. Those blessed ones who in this hour hear and heed the call to sonship cannot settle in any zone until they stand in holy splendor with the Lamb upon the pinnacle of Mount Zion in the heavenly sphere of life and glory and dominion. But men always settle when, following the spontaneous moving and revelation of God, they begin to organize and systematize it, building walls of formulated creeds and dogmas about it, endeavoring to preserve it, as though the almighty Spirit who gave the outpouring in the first place had never commanded, "leaving. . .let us GO ON to perfection!" Once the move of God is creedalized and organized those within its walls are nevermore free to follow the course of the anointing, or to walk with God in His on-going unfolding of His glory.

Sin began with Adam in the Garden, for Adam sinned and was corrupted by sin and overcome by death, but he did not fall into the world at that point, neither was he possessed by the world then. The word "world," as we have pointed out, translates the Greek word COSMOS meaning order, arrangement, system of things. The world is a negative thing in relation to God. James declares, ". . .the friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4: 4). The apostle John adds his testimony, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2: 15-16). Many Christians have the mistaken notion that the world is the movie theater, the dance hall, stylish clothing, and such like. Others confuse the world with the earth. But the world is the present system of things upon this earth conceived by the carnal mind and generated by the natural man. The world consists of all that man has instituted that replaces God in his life. The present political, economic, educational and religious systems are not of God, but of the world. When people, activities, or things — whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly — enslave man and usurp God, they comprise the world. Anything that causes man to disregard the Spirit, be removed from the anointing, or be independent of God is the world. All that does not come from the Father, all that originates outside of the consciousness of God, all that man institutes by his own carnal wisdom and fleshly activity is of the world, and is contrary to the life, nature and ways of God. There is an interesting statement in Eph. 1: 4. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." The word "foundation" translates

the Greek word KATABOLE which is a compound word made up of BALLO meaning "to cast, to throw" and KATA meaning "down." When man fell from his high and holy relationship with God and was cast down into the carnal realm of existence, the "foundation" of the world was laid in his heart and actions. But — blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that God the Father elected some sons in Christ "before the foundation of the world"! The word "before" translates the Greek word PRO meaning "to go before, to precede." Hence, the Father's act of choosing us in the Christ preceded the fall of man and the establishment of the world system. We are not told how many days, years or eons this choosing preceded the world, but methinks it was away back there when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy!

Since the world is in such opposition to God we must consider its origin and process of development. The world began with Cain. Cain built the first city — organized society, civilization — which typifies the worldly system of independence from the SPIRIT. The world did not exist when man was created (except in abstraction), but developed gradually after the fall, as man removed himself from the anointing and walked in his own carnal way. When man was brought forth from the formative hand of God there was already the universe, the heavens and the earth, and all created things; but the world did not exist. Following the fall, when unregenerated man began to multiply upon the earth the Serpent in man gave direction and character to the "New World Order" of man, thus the scripture speaks of the natural man as walking "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the SPIRIT that now worketh IN the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2: 2).

There are three primary requirements for man's existence and well-being on earth: provision, protection, and pleasure. For man to live an abundant and fulfilled life in the earth realm he needs the provision of food, clothing, shelter, etc., a means of defense to protect himself from adversaries, and a form of recreation and amusement for his happiness. Prior to the fall GOD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THESE THREE NEEDS OF MAN, and they were supplied abundantly in the Garden of Eden experience. After Cain's departure from the anointing, the scripture describes him as "of that Wicked One" (I Jn. 3: 12). The preposition "of" is in the Greek EK — "out of" — "Cain was OUT OF that Wicked One" — the seed of the Serpent! Out of the descendants of Cain were produced the founders of man's own system of supply for these three great needs of life. These were the three sons of Lamech. Jabal was the father of tent dwellers and cattlemen (Gen. 4: 20). Tents and cattle are for the supply of man's living and therefore belong to the category of provision. In the beginning God intended that HE should be our provision and so made Himself available to man in the Tree of Life, that in union with Him we should have all things, even the supply of God Himself. Jabal represents man's own efforts, apart from the anointing, to make provision for himself. Spiritually, this symbolizes the carnal religious systems with their rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances designed to "feed" God into man. All religion is the invention of man in his effort to meet man's spiritual need — apart from the anointing! Alas! they understand not that the reality of God's life is not contained in, nor ministered through, doctrines, programs, rituals, ceremonies or ordinances. Those who live in that realm know nothing of the mighty power of the indwelling Christ of God. Man's religion is of the world, for it is outside of God, being not of the Spirit, nor by the anointing.

Another of Cain's sons, Jubal, was the father of all that handle the harp and organ. Playing harp and organ is for pleasure and inspiration and thus pertains to the category of pleasure. This worldly aspect is fulfilled, spiritually, in the maze of social activity in

religion, as well as in much of the music, programs, and sermonizing, all of which is designed to be pleasant, acceptable and entertaining to the people. I personally have little use for most of the concerts, programs, and pulpit showmanship which constitutes much of the so-called "ministry" among God's people today, for it is, without doubt, very appealing to the carnal mind which is ever wont to feed upon soulish entertainment rather than with reverential awe and holy brokenness to drink at the fountains of living water from the throne of God. I am convinced that our faithful heavenly Father has given the ministry of the blessed spirit of Truth for the perfecting of the saints, whereas the worldly church system has given us a veritable smorgasbord of religious shows for the entertaining of the saints. Most solemnly do I declare unto you that all such ARE OF THE WORLD, and not of the Father, for their methods and means lie outside of the anointing of the Spirit and can never lead God's people beyond the husks of man's own vanity. Thank God! a people is arising who are finding their way out of Cain's pleasure land of entertainment and sentimentality, back to the Paradise of God, back to the Tree of Life, where they partake deeply of this sublime truth: ". . . in Thy presence is fullness of Joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore!" (Ps. 16: 11).

The third son, Tubal-Cain, was the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron instruments. These instruments were formed for the purpose of defense, thus referring to the category of protection. Ignorant of the power and sufficiency of the indwelling Spirit, with what pompousness do the religious systems construct about them their walls and implements of defense! Church history is replete with examples of revival after revival in which men were sovereignly caught up into heavenly places of glory and power, only to have man put his hand of flesh upon the workings of God, to control, protect and preserve it, as though the omnipotent Spirit needed man's useless wisdom and regulations to preserve His mighty work! Out there in Cain's world you must have the earthly brass and iron implements of Tubal-Cain — the implements of organization, denomination, creed, coverings, fellowships, rules, regulations, boards, etc., to defend and preserve the work; but, blessed be God! as one moves westward into the anointing of God's presence and life the omnipotence of the indwelling Spirit Himself becomes our fortress and exceeding strong tower! With what deep comprehension of the ways of the Lord did the Psalmist pen the words of faith in the power of God alone when he wrote, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. For THOU art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favor shall our horn be exalted. For THE LORD IS OUR DEFENSE; and the Holy One of Israel is our King" (Ps. 89: 15-18).

In these three important inventions of the sons of Cain man found within himself the answer to his need of supply, defense and amusement. Man found no need of God, of the anointing, for he set about to establish his own world, independent of God. This was the civilization produced after mankind departed from the presence of God — a godless life created by men. This present world system of things is patterned after the order of Cain. It is all outside of God. That does not mean that it is all evil. It simply is not of the Spirit! How clear that in this earth the politics, economics, education and religion is outside of God! When we have learned how the world was formed, it is easy to define the world. Originally, man was in the family of God, lived by God, relied entirely upon Him, and had at his disposal ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. Now the Serpent, through subtlety, sophistry, the carnal mind, the wisdom of this world, has systematized the world to replace God in being all to man. Man, having forsaken his inheritance, having departed from the presence, and having lost the anointing relied upon the world and was overcome

by the world. Therefore, the world consists of everything that replaces God and possesses man.

Cain built a city — as did Nimrod after him. "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch" (Gen. 4: 17). There was no city in Eden, no fleshly system, no carnal arrangement of things. Not system, but LIFE! I wish to speak with utmost solemnity here. Throughout the centuries the religious systems have accumulated a great number of traditions, rites, ordinances, methods, institutions and practices, each of them supplanting something of the pureness and freshness and glory of the SPIRIT. These things have become so universal in the churches of the world, and in the lives of their members, that there is no thought of ever being able to "run" the church and its business without them! Generation after generation, people have been raised up from childhood in this atmosphere and have absolutely no knowledge of anything else or another way. It never even enters the minds of these people that THE CHRIST WITHIN is the Head of the church, the life of the church, and the whole sufficiency for the church, its people, its work, and its needs. Each church must be constantly creating new plans, programs and activities to keep the people busy "doing something". The idea is to keep the people busy and to keep up the interest, so that they may be kept in that church. In the church world such a church is known as a "lively" church, and the pastor is known as one of the "successful" pastors. Spirituality has little, if anything, to do with it, for the whole group, including the so-called pastor and church leader, is simply a natural body of people, carrying on what they imagine is a church.

He who makes God's house of living stones depend on mere outward forms; he who confounds Truth with the shibboleths of sects and denominations, or the usurpation of preachers, builds upon the baseless and shifting sands. The true and eternal church depends solely on the presence of Christ. Sweep away from your spiritual walk as much as you will the infinite cobwebs which the ambition and the ignorance of men have spun for centuries over the surface of the faith. Fling to the four winds the voluntary humility and all the vain deceits, traditions, and ordinances, which, like those of the Pharisees, are but "weak and beggarly elements." It is not the form but the essence which constitutes true religion. Christ knew nothing of external paraphernalia, and those who follow the Lamb know nothing of it either. Distinguish between the flickering shadows of outward symbols and the verities of eternal life. Distinguish between the valueless injunctions of touch not, taste not, handle not, and the divine nature which produces love, joy, peace, righteousness of heart, and all the fruit of the Spirit. The Kingdom of God standeth not on food and drink, but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. You will not find Christ by following the sects and self-promoting ministries who shout with anathemas, "Lo, He is here!" or "Lo, He is there!" but if you faithfully walk with the Christ you will discover that He is within you. Seek truth and you will find it, because God is the God of truth. If you desire heaven you must win it; for heaven is the realm of the Spirit and a state of being, not a place. No preacher can give it you; no ritual can give it you; no creed or message can give it you; no mere ordinances of men can open its doors for you so much as a single inch. You must find it by forsaking the world and self, and all the carnal religious exercises of the world, to hear the quickening voice of the Spirit, to walk after the Spirit, to live in the Spirit. The home and heaven of God is within you, precious friend of mine, for you are the temple of the living God, as God hath said. Apart from this all else is but fringes and phylacteries. If, by the aid of God's Holy Spirit, you have discovered the King and the Kingdom which is within you, though all parties excommunicate you, and all priests and preachers anathematize you, nothing can harm

you; and when you pass from the babble of the world's malediction, and the falsehoods of erring religion, and have passed through the portals of Eden, and scaled the heights of Mount Zion, clear and high for you shall peal the eternal verdict, "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased!"

The world today has its own religious dictionary of definitions of "God" and "Spirit" and "Church" and they think and speak in the framework of those definitions. But GOD SPEAKS A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE and has a different dictionary of definitions by which He speaks to His people and according to which He works. If all the multiplied practices and methods employed by the churches today were suddenly swept away, it would in all probability cease to function. If the churches had to drop all their rituals, forms, programs and ceremonies; all their confirmations, baptisms, and communion services; all their special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the churches is not in God, but is in the trappings they have accumulated to themselves throughout the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able and fully willing to run His church without the aid of anything in the way of fleshly contributions, is found to be abhorrent to the average church member.

God's true church, in contrast to the false religious system of Babylon, has never been contaminated by the world. You may be assured, my beloved, that the Father has faithfully answered the prayer of Jesus, "And now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify (separate) them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (Jn. 17:13-17). There is a little flock, there is a body of Christ, but its members are scattered abroad and almost invisible to the great Babylon. They are the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and they are the called and chosen and faithful who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are those who have turned to God, the Spirit, and to wait for the glory that is revealed as the sons of God come into their own. They are those who have not the form, but the power of god-likeness, those who keep themselves unspotted from the world, and overcome all things by the faith of the Son of God within. Its ministers are not robed in material robes of scarlet and gold; they are robed in the righteousness of Christ. They are not trained in the seminaries and teachings of man, but by the spirit of grace and wisdom and revelation from God on High. They are not busy enthroned within their hearts. They have no interest in persuading people of what they believe; their whole ministry is to bring people into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with GOD and His CHRIST. In other words, GOD IS SUFFICIENT for this church He has placed in the world of men! Because God is sufficient, because the Christ within is All-in-all, this church is left entirely free from all carnal encumbrances to pursue the work God has given it of developing those elect ones so that the church may be the revelation of God's manifold wisdom to all the principalities and powers in the celestial realms, and the hope of all creation for deliverance and restoration to the Kingdom of God. Let all who treasure the call to sonship know once and for all that CHRIST WITHIN IS S-U-F-F-I-C-I-E-N-T! all else is —the world.

The truth that is set like a diamond in the pages of God's Word is the absolute and total sufficiency of the Christ within. To say that the Christ Himself is not sufficient for our whole life as sons of the Most High, that the indwelling spirit of life is not enough, that

there is something the outer man must do to add to, supplement, or improve on what He is within us is an insult to God and a blasphemy against our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we see men doing this on every hand. The carnal mind is never able to take God at His word! It continually seeks to initiate some additional actions or services on the natural plane to take the place of pure spiritual reality.

When Jesus came in the flesh, He came into a world steeped in religion. He came into a condition brought about by centuries of teaching the law and the rites and sacrifices of the temple worship. Into this had been woven the traditions of the elders, an accumulation of those same centuries. It had come to include also even the washing of pots and cups, together with ceremonies of washing of hands before eating and a multitude of other practices imposed upon the people by their leaders. The temple in the city of Jerusalem was the symbol of all this to the people. Their whole life revolved around that building and the rites and sacrifices the priests offered in it. It was the sacred spot of the nation and of all Jews wherever they were in the world. Every Jew had that one desire to go to Jerusalem and worship. This system of religion was imbedded in the lives of the people, and had been for long centuries. It had become a part of their life and they endured it all with the hope perennial within their hearts that some day the Messiah would come and lift not only this yoke, but that of the Roman empire as well. But when the Messiah came, they did not recognize Him. For here was all this great mass of law, ritual and Pharisaical teaching and tradition, while the Messiah was but an unknown man, of almost unknown origin. Jesus brought a new and revolutionary way of life. It was a way of believing, and not a way of doing. It was faith in the Christ and right relationship with God and did not consist in the doing of anything, or the keeping of external observances. It was simplicity in the highest degree, set up against organized worship of the highest degree. The revolutionary way of life which Jesus brought to the people was in exact and complete opposition to the bondage under which the people now found themselves.

The people were constantly taught and instructed that they must observe all the things the priests and Pharisees told them, or they would perish. Jesus came into their midst and said that all those things would do them absolutely no good whatever, but if they wanted life they should come unto Him and drink — merely by believing into Him! He was placing the Christ and faith in the Christ against all the accumulated tradition of the nation. He was assuring them that they would NOT LOSE A SINGLE THING by coming unto Him, and casting all else away from them. And they would gain life. But who could hear such a thing in the day of Christ. In fact Jesus Himself said that no man could come unto Him, except the Father who had sent Him, would draw that man. It is just as true today! Ah, beloved, if you were to go into any church on any Sunday and say to the people, "If you will cast aside all your form, all of your traditions, all of your rituals, all of your ordinances, all of your cherished and time-honored creeds, all of your solemn assemblies, all of your myriad activities, all of your committees, and SIMPLY COME UNTO THE CHRIST AND BELIEVE INTO HIM AND DRINK OF H-I-M, YOU WILL LOSE NOTHING, but you will gain the glorious and eternal reality of God forevermore," what kind of reception would you receive? You would actually be asking the people to give up everything they are doing and all the things they have been given by their ministers and church orders with which to serve and worship God — exchanging it all for GOD ALONE. What an unbearable burden it would be for the people to be REDUCED TO GOD, to possess nothing but GOD HIMSELF! You would find this an almost impossible thing to accomplish. Truly Christ has been usurped by the world!

THE TRADUCER

As we have pointed out, the most outstanding characteristic of the Serpent is his ability to deceive. From the very dawn of human history, as recorded in the Bible, he is depicted as a liar and deceiver. "The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat," was Eve's plaintive cry, and in the closing book of the Bible, the fact of his deceiving nature is further emphasized in the words of the Revelator who described him as "that old Serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12: 9). The apostle is referring back to that significant statement in Gen. 3: 1 wherein we read, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."

The Bible was not written in English, but Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. It is to the ancient Hebrew words we will refer, to glean the truth from this passage. From a casual view of these words comes the ancient myth of a snake wound around a tree in the Garden of Eden. However, the Hebrew word translated "serpent" is NACHASH. This word NACHASH means "to hiss, mutter, whisper; as do enchanters." Secondary meanings are "to divine," "enchant." It is because of these expressions that the noun "serpent" appears. An allied Chaldean word means brass, actually polished brass, from a root word meaning to be bright. Dr. Bullinger, in the Companion Bible, says, "the Hebrew term probably includes the sense of fascinate, enchant" This element of fascination connects with the later use of Nachash as "serpent." Satan, then, is a WHISPERER, an ENCHANTER, a FASCINATOR, and a SHINING ONE! He is a speaker, a teacher, a diviner, a creator of illusions and appearances — a deceiver!

And just how does Satan deceive? A key is found in the Greek New Testament name for Satan — the devil The Greek word is DIABOLLOS. DIABOLLOS is a compound of two words — DIA and BOLLO. DIA means "a channel of an act" and BOLLO means "to throw — either with force, or without force, yet with a purpose, or even carelessly." Hence, the Devil is A CHANNEL SOMETHING PASSES THROUGH. The pipe through which water enters your home is a channel — a means of passage. The frequency bands assigned to a single transmitting station for either radio or television is called a channel — the frequency or means of passage of communication from the station to your receiver. Any channel is the vehicle through which a thing passes from one location or state to another. And, may I add, the Devil is the channel (DIA) through which a carnal thought, idea, concept, desire, passion, etc. passes before it reaches your CONSCIOUS MIND. This explains very well why Strong's Analytical Concordance has rendered the compound word DIABOLLOS as "a traducer." The English word "traduce" means "TO TRANSFER FROM ONE ORDER OF REASONING TO ANOTHER ORDER OF REASONING, as to translate from one language to another language." Hence, the Traducer, the Devil, the Translator, the Interpreter sits enthroned in the mind of man and his primary job is to transfer or translate KNOWLEDGE!

I have a photo of an ancient Phoenician coin, which was minted long ago in the bustling commercial city of Tyre, which bears a curious image. The coin shows a serpent entwined around a tree stump. To the left of the stump stands an empty cornucopia. To the right, a flourishing palm tree. Curious, yes. But is it significant? Amazingly, the story these symbols tell is of great relevance to our spiritual understanding!

To classical scholars, the symbols on the coin are familiar ones. They are found in the art and mythology of many civilizations through the millennia. What do they all mean? First, consider the snake. The snake on the Phoenician coin is the symbol of a powerful god whom the Romans called Aesculapius, the Greeks Asklepios. Who was this personage? Aesculapius was an ancient pagan god of healing. To his temples sick people came from

all over the world. His symbol was the serpent! This symbol has come down to us today in the two snakes which intertwine the staff on the shields of the medical profession. Persons wishing healing from this god were instructed to lie down in his temple so that the tame snakes of the priests could slither over them. The sufferer who was "fortunate" enough to have this dubious honor take place was said to have been touched by the hand of the god of healing! His healing powers are reflected in the meaning of his name, Aesculapius. It means, literally, "THE MAN-INSTRUCTING SERPENT." Now we see a significant connection! The Serpent who sought to teach mankind is mentioned, of course, in the third chapter of Genesis, where he seduced our first parents, Adam and Eve. It is none other than man's adversary, "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (Rev. 12: 9). In mythology, Aesculapius was believed to be the child of the Sun, and thus the "enlightener" of mankind. He was often represented in art by a serpent or as an old man holding a staff around which a snake is entwined.

This "Traducer," or "Translator," or "Enlightener," is nothing more nor less than the spirit of your mind! Those elect saints who read these lines know that the metaphysical and occult "channelers" have no light of truth or Holy Ghost power to set men free or transform into the image of God, but how often we fail to realize that there is a MASTER CHANNELER sitting as a god right within our own minds, and how often we yield our lives into his hands of illogical reasoning — deception and delusion. The words coming from this Translator may be enticing and exciting — but only to the natural man; and, my beloved, they minister death! Hence the need to heed the apostle's inspired admonition, "Put off the old man. ..and be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4: 22-23). The simple truth is: YOU CAN'T TRUST YOUR INTERPRETER! Of him our Lord stated plainly, "There is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn. 8: 44). And he is "that crooked serpent" (Isa. 27: 1).

The magicians of Egypt were diviners and enchanters. God spoke unto Moses and said, "What is that in thine hand.?" Moses replied, "A rod." God said, "Cast it on the ground." He obeyed and the rod became a serpent. This was a very important lesson to him because the symbol of the serpent to an Egyptian represented WISDOM. It did not symbolize evil, Satan, or the Devil. Remember what Jesus taught his disciples... "Be ye as WISE AS SERPENTS and harmless as doves." God took that dry, lifeless stick and made it come alive. The lesson was plain to Moses. The rod is a type of the Christ. Isaiah spoke about a rod coming out of the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11: 1). Jesus became the WISDOM of God. Later, Moses and Aaron his brother went to meet Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. They went in to Pharaoh and asked him in the name of the Lord to let the people of Israel go. And Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord? Why should I obey His commands? What sign can you show me that your God has sent you?" Then Aaron threw down his rod, and it was turned into a snake. But there were wise men, magicians, in Egypt who heard of this. They came in and threw down their rods, and their rods also became snakes. But Aaron's rod, in the form of a snake, ran after them, overtook them, and swallowed them all; and then it became a rod again in Aaron's hand. The message is clear — Christ, the wisdom of God, swallows up and consumes all the wisdom of this world— of the carnal mind!

Again I would quote the timely words of a friend who has shared with us her keen insight into the mysteries of God. "Paul in II Cor. 11: 3 warns the church at Corinth to beware lest they fall into the same trap that ensnared Eve. 'I fear,' said he, 'lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds be corrupted from the simplicity

that is in Christ.' The English here does not tell the full story. It is, therefore, to our advantage that we delve into the Greek that we might receive in greater depth that which was intended by the Spirit of God for our hearts. When it was said that the serpent "beguiled" Eve, the Greek indicates that he cheated her out of something, for the word used is a combination of the Greek word EK which means 'out' and the word APOTAO which means 'to cheat.' She was, then, 'cheated out' — sold short — and it was no less thing than the glory of God that she lost. That is why it is written of all mankind, 'All have sinned and come short of the GLORY of God.' The means by which the serpent — the Seer — beguiled Eve and cheated her out of her inheritance was through subtlety. Again, delving into the Greek, we find that the word used is PANOURGIA meaning 'adroitness, trickery, craftiness, and sophistry.' It is this word 'sophistry' that has captured our attention, having been quickened for our consideration by the Spirit of God. The English definition of this word is, 'Reasoning that is superficially plausible but is actually fallacious.' It is a synonym for intellectualism and has to do with sophism which is 'an argument that is correct in form or appearance but is actually invalid.' It is, also, 'an argument that is used for deception or displaying intellectual brilliance. '

"We find, then, that in cheating Eve out of her inheritance, in causing her to fall from the Glory, the serpent employed the use — NOT OF AN OUTRIGHT LIE—but of a TRUTH! He used an argument that is correct in form, but because it was only form and had lost the essence, Eve was deceived by it. What was the argument, that he used that was 'correct in form but was actually invalid'? Hear it! 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened.' That was a truth — and 'ye shall be as gods' was also a truth, for after the man and the woman had eaten, the Lord God Himself verified the serpent's statement as being absolute truth. 'Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil, ' God said. In form, then, the serpent had a truth. What the serpent failed to reveal, however, was the essence of the form which is that INDEPENDENTLY OF GOD man can NEVER be a partaker of the divine nature! This should have been a self-evident truth, but man failed to see it. He was deceived by the very form of truth and was thereby brought to ruin, cheated out of the very thing that he sought. Man became a god, alright, in the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — but he became a god in the wrong realm, for at the same time that God acknowledged man's 'deity' He also CAST HIM FROM THE GARDEN — cast him from the heavenly realm — and set him in the earth 'to till the ground from which he was taken. ' It is one thing to be 'a partaker of the divine nature' and it is quite another thing to be the 'god of this world!' In the former, there is contained the thought of TOTAL DEPENDENCE — in the latter, the principle of INDEPENDENCE. Though the terminology is the same — that is, 'ye are gods' — the essence is not. 'The man has become as one of us' but he did not become, in his rebellion, an actual partaker of divinity. The serpent, then, through reasoning that is superficially plausible but is actually fallacious, beguiled Eve. It was through a mere intellectual grasp of the word of God that Eve was 'cheated out' of her inheritance in the Living One and fell into the realm of death. We must not, as we consider these things, lose sight of the fact that the apostle Paul had a fear for the church that BY THE VERY SAME DECEPTION, our minds should also be corrupted!' I fear,' said he, 'lest... as the serpent beguiled Eve through SOPHISTRY (the form of truth without the essence), so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' May we have ears to hear!" — end quote,

The apostle Paul, in speaking of Christ as One in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, hastily adds: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." The word "beguile" here is in the Greek PARALOGIZOMAI meaning

"to mis-reckon, to wrongly reason." It is a compound word consisting of PARA meaning "along side of" from which we get our English terms paralegal and paramedic. In medicine the word PARA is used to denote something disordered or abnormal. The second half of the word is the Greek LOGOS which is translated to mean the WORD OF GOD, as in Jn. 1: 1. Ah—the great Traducer, the Translator, the Interpreter, the Beguiler is he who causes us to NOT REASON GOD'S WORD CORRECTLY. The deceiver adds an idea along side of God's Word — the form added to the essence, the letter added to the spirit, the shadow promoted instead of the substance, and the results are very DISORDERED AND ABNORMAL! Eve did not correctly reason the things the Traducer communicated to her conscious mind and this whole world of illusion, deception, sin, pain, limitation, sorrow and death is the tragic result!

Earlier I pointed out that the second half of the Greek word DIABOLLOS (Devil) means "to throw or to cast, or to cast right through." Another word that has been quickened in my spirit is "input". We get "input" from the negative realm of spirit — the spirit of our carnal mind. This dart throwing of the adversary refers to thoughts, beliefs, concepts, ideas, feelings, moods, desires, etc. injected into your conscious mind out of the invisible realm. Though we may be alert for danger from without, the greatest danger always lies within ourselves. Both our ability and our wisdom are but foolishness in the sight of God, and should we consciously or unconsciously set our hearts upon them, we find ourselves leaning upon our own meager resource, devoid of the Spirit of God, and abandoned to our own devices. With what holy unction does the apostle Paul exhort the saints, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, ..above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6: 13,16).

You want to watch that crafty Translator within! In the temptation of Jesus we discover this wily adversary-coming upon the Master with Bible in hand, so to speak. "It is written!" — this was the glittering weapon, the fiery dart, the master-stroke of the Traducer. "If Thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." "It is written!" he thundered as he offered the kingdoms of earth to Jesus if He would bow to the shrewd worldly wisdom the Traducer outlined in His mind by which He could have conquered even the might of the Roman empire. An easy way to popularity was pointed out — it was suggested that He cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. No harm would come to Him for God had promised to send His angels to care for Him. And the multitude, amazed, would follow Him. What gave immeasurable force to the Traducer's suggestions was his appeal to the awful authority of God's Word. He cast about the things he offered the glow of Divine approval. He enforced his ideas with the sacred sanction of the scriptures. It was with the Bible in hand that he approached the Son of man. "It is written!" If the Word of God supports it, if the Bible sanctions it, why it must be good. How the Traducer loves to come to us with the Bible in his hand! It casts about him such a holy air. But here is where we discover the awful depths of the Traducer's duplicity. He is no stranger to the scriptures, and he will quote the Word when such a procedure will serve his purpose. When he deals with a chosen one of God, obviously, he must meet such a one upon the high plane on which he lives. He could get nowhere by suggesting the gross sins of the flesh to one separated unto God. It must be through the Word. It must be through a carnal, twisted, literalistic and erroneous understanding of that Word — the letter that killeth. The letter killeth, and Satan has the power of death! The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are the same tree in the midst — the tree of knowledge is the outer form of truth, whereas the tree of life is the spirit of truth. To be carnally minded is death, says the apostle. How much plainer can it be that the crowning

work of the Traducer is to put a natural, carnal, reasoned, intellectual interpretation to the Word which is spirit and life. He takes the language of SPIRIT and translates it into the perverted, garbled dialect of fleshly wisdom and carnal understanding. People sometimes accuse me of spiritualizing away the Word of God. How, I ask, can you spiritualize something that already I-S SPIRIT AND LIFE? The danger lies not, precious friend of mine, in spiritualizing away the Word — it is, rather, in canalizing away that which is SPIRITUAL! To bring the spiritual thrust and essence of the Word down to the low lands of carnal forms of religion is the subtlety of the Serpent. Ah, what a Translator he is! What a liar and deceiver! And all the time he is quoting the Word of God and rejoicing in what a really sound "fundamentalist" he is.

There isn't a vice you cannot justify, there isn't a doctrine, however contrary to the heart of God, you cannot prove, there isn't a religious methodology you cannot deify, there isn't a Babylonian garment you cannot glorify, by appealing to the scriptures. All have an, "it is written" to fall back on. The damndest lie can be made to appear true. All the Traducer needs to do is to quote scripture. Every dirty heresy abroad, every false cult, all find in God's Word their foundation. "They that are unstable and (spiritually) unlearned wrest the scriptures unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3: 16). I have learned that one can prove or disprove anything with scripture. Brethren sometimes write to me trying to engage me in lengthy debate over some point of doctrine—the letter that killeth. The hour is too late, the time too short, the purposes of God too urgent, my friend, to give myself and the precious time and energy Father has placed in my care to such foolish wranglings and carnal disputations. This is not a moment to jot every doctrinal "i" and cross every creedal "t". There is a truth that runs like a golden thread throughout all the pages of Holy Writ, teaching us that the elect whom God has chosen must become aware of the abiding presence and indwelling life of the Spirit. Students of theology, poor souls, pour over their musty volumes, they learn all the arguments and proofs of the doctrines about God, but the almighty God Himself they do not know. They become ineffective and spiritually impotent because they have separated Truth from the Person, knowing the form, standing on the letter, reciting the doctrine, articulating the facts, but having no vital, living relationship with Him who alone IS THE TRUTH. A lifetime of walking with God has taught me that it is possible for one to know all the arguments and appear to have all the answers, but still be a stranger to the heart of God. I testify to every man who reads these words, however, that the moment any man begins to know Him wonderful changes take place in his understanding, for to know Him is to be like Him. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3: 18). His Word is SPIRIT, His Spirit is LIFE, and His Life is POWER to transform, to awaken our consciousness to the abiding reality of Himself, to raise our being up into that heavenly, eternal sphere where I AM THAT I AM.

My good friend Elwin Roach, in his PATHFINDER PUBLICATIONS, some time ago wrote a series of timely articles on this subject of The Traducer. In closing I would share a portion of the wisdom that flowed from his anointed pen.

"When we hear religious teaching and acquire knowledge, if the thoughts are not coming from the Spirit of Christ (the anointing), they are passing through this soothsayer (traducer) before reaching our minds. This is the sayer who is soothing, he is lying, and is calculating. He is the translator for the humanistic, Adamic mind. The Traducer is very accomplished at what he does. Therefore, we should become more cautious WHAT we are hearing and HOW we are hearing, as Jesus warned in Mk. 2: 24 and Lk. 8: 18. Men

and women alike have the tendency to try and grasp any and all things with their own minds that has been so logically put together by this brilliant Traducer, but let us be reminded of this: The carnal mind cannot receive the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned, and there is nothing about it which desires the things of God, for that mind is enmity against God (I Cor. 2: 14; Rom. 8: 7). However, as we have already mentioned, the Traducer does make the word of God pleasing and understandable to this dusty mind. Very often, when we read the Bible, the words coming off its pages go through the channel, through the dia, that thing in the mind called the traducer, the translator. This is what has produced so many fictions, frictions and factions in the church. The Traducer has helped to form many thoughts, ideas, reasonings, imaginations, images and idols — in other words, A LOT OF WIND, A LOT OF WINDY DOCTRINES! This translator is very consistent, for he can only translate one way. He always conveys dusty thoughts and carnal revelations, because this is all that the mind of man can receive. All scriptural truth (the reality of God) comes from above, even from Jesus who is the truth, the Lord from heaven. In other words: THE TRADUCER VEILS THE TRUTH, while JESUS IS TRUTH REVEALED!"

Chapter 19

Scorpio-The Scorpion

(continued)

In this message we continue our meditations upon the great drama portrayed by the Sign of Scorpio, the conflict between the "Mighty Man" and the "Scorpion" and the struggle between the great and powerful Orphiuchus (the serpent-holder) and the Serpent. It shows this mighty man struggling with a giant Serpent, trying to keep him from accomplishing what he is attempting to do. The Serpent is putting forth a mighty effort to reach up and grasp the CROWN which is situated immediately over the Serpent's head. The strong man, Orphiuchus, is restraining the Serpent while crushing the Scorpion! It is interesting to stand in the still darkness of the early morning and watch the breaking of the dawn: first the gray streaks in the East, and then the brighter light, until the full-orbed sun ascends above the horizon. There is a sunrise with its dawn like that in the Bible. The fore gleam begins with the promise in the curse upon the Serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head. It grows brighter as God calls Abraham and covenants to make of him a great and holy nation, who should bless all the nations of earth. We see it in the miracles and authority exhibited by Moses as he challenges the tyranny of Pharaoh and by a mighty hand leads the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. We see it in the conquest of the promised land, in the victories of God's people over the pagan nations and kingdoms entrenched in that theatre. We see it in the prophetic reign of king David and the peace, glory and dominion of Solomon's expanded kingdom. We see it in the ministry of Jesus, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, healing all that were sick, casting out devils with a word, raising the dead and proclaiming the Kingdom of God in the midst of men.

The disciples were greatly perplexed when Jesus died. But then He arose the conquering Christ! The fact of the Christ's resurrection is historic. The man who disputes it disputes the best established fact in history. He was seen by those who had despaired of His existence. He ate with them. He drank with them. He walked with them in a bloodless body. He talked to the despondent and broken-hearted apostles, the eleven, for nearly forty days. It was impossible to be deceived. He spoke, and was seen and heard on one occasion by five hundred, the most of whom were living at the time that Paul made the declaration that they knew Christ and had seen Him after His resurrection. He proved His resurrection by telling them that if they would go to Jerusalem and enter into an upper room, and wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit's power would come. The promised outpouring took place. Christ went up and the Holy Ghost came down. They saw Him go and they saw Him come. It shook the place where they were sitting. The divine earthquake shook Jerusalem. It shook Israel. It shook the Roman Empire until it fell, to rise no more. It shook the world. The Spirit's power came. The Christ returned in mighty Spirit-power. He who IS the Truth came again as the Spirit of Truth. He came as an indwelling Life. Men who were weak became strong. Men who were wicked murderers and devils were transformed into men of virtue and power with God. Men who were illogical became great and mighty reasoners. Men who were feeble stood up, and in their

spiritual majesty tower today over all the men of their time. All history substantiates the claim. Every philosopher and potentate of their time had to recognize them so that Peter, Paul, James, John, and many of their successors, became the mightiest Powers even in a heathen Empire.

The day had dawned, the shadows were fleeing away, darkness dispelled. We would but deceive ourselves were we to conclude that the conflict of the ages between Orphiuchus and the Serpent, between Christ and Satan, between truth and error, between light and darkness, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between life and death has ended. The second thousand years is drawing to a close since Jesus came, died, conquered death, and poured out His life-giving Spirit and, blessed be His name! He pursues His mission still and reigns in majesty over His Kingdom by entering into these temples of clay, and filling our spirits and souls and bodies with His own eternal presence and power, making us one with Him, members of His very own body, of His flesh, of His bone, and of His blood. He is redeeming a vast company of sons into whom He is putting His mighty Spirit, inworking His glorious mind and nature, inscribing upon the heart His Law of Life. And the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when there shall be a further transformation, the bodies of His elect sons shall be changed in likeness unto His body of glory as this mortal puts on immortality and this corruptible puts on incorruption, so that we, who were destined from the beginning to be the revelation of HIMSELF to creation may complete His mighty work for the redemption of humanity.

A new day has dawned! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. A new age has arrived. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me. It is done" (Rev. 21: 4-6). Blessed promises of a mighty deliverance, which we even now begin to see fulfilled. The time has come for the nations to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. There shall be a glorious victory as the head of that ancient Serpent is crushed and he goes not out any more to deceive the nations. The un-deceiving of the nations means a new mentality, new understanding, new thought processes, the unveiling of the truth about all things in the minds of the vast multitudes of earth. What anticipation this evokes in our hearts! "And it shall come to pass, that...all the nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14: 16). "And the nations.. .shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.. and there shall be no more curse." (Rev. 21:24; 22:3).

HIS MAJESTY THE DEVIL

Down through the centuries many books have been written, many songs have been sung, many sermons have been preached, and many things have been said about the Devil. Satan has been blamed for everything from ingrown toenails to the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle. It pains me to say it, but to most Christians Satan is their GOD ALMIGHTY, for they fear him more than they do the Lord of glory. I do not believe, as the above title suggests, that Satan is worthy of one iota of respect or honor, but none can deny that the vast majority of Christians certainly do, by word and action, ascribe to him the attribute of omnipotence. Most professed Christians do not believe in ONE GOD - they honor at least two, one good God and one evil God. And to

hear them articulating their esteem of these Gods you would be led to believe that the Devil is certainly the more accomplished and the most powerful of the two, for they talk far more about the Devil, and spend more time lauding his praises, ascribing to his negative realm dread of mammoth proportions. Some continually worry that he is lurking around every corner, and when they least expect it he is going to hit them from behind with everything he has. The average testimony meeting is full of praises for the Devil. If a score were kept, the Devil would come out the winner by about two to one over the Christ, relative to what has been done. I heard the story once of this certain minister who dreamed one night that on his way down the road he met the Devil. "Alright, you old Devil," he shouted, "I am going to kill you and put an end to you for all those nasty things you've been doing. I am going to let you have it, you old Devil!" As he drew near to the Devil with fists clenched, ready to smash the Devil's face, the Devil said, "Hold it! Don't do that! Remember — if you kill me, you will have nothing to preach about." What a word!

The good God, according to the common testimony of church goers, is ever trying to do this and that, while the Devil is continually interfering with His plans, frustrating His purposes, usurping His instruments and defeating the issue. On some good days the good God wins, on some bad days He loses. They go about continually talking to the Devil, praying to the Devil (though they call it commanding and rebuking), and give place to him over and over again. They "bind" him in this meeting or in that situation, but, like Samson breaking the cords of Delilah, he bounces right back in full regalia at the next meeting or occasion. These "devil-worshippers" ever beat the air against him and do occasionally, they claim, win a battle against him, but the war rages on. If they do not get an immediate answer to their prayer, they are sure the Devil is hindering. If everything does not go according to plan, the Devil is interfering. If obstacles appear along the way, the Devil is fighting them. The outcome of this battle exceeds the ludicrous —it is a terrible blasphemy. Not only are most Christians constantly defeated in their spiritual life, but they actually consign to the Devil the final victory in God's creation. The majority is thoroughly convinced that in the end the Devil wins at least 90% of humanity and carries them down with him into everlasting damnation and hell-fire. The picture drawn is of a frustrated God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to be its Saviour, but alas! only a handful of the teeming billions of earth can be persuaded to take advantage of His gracious provision, the rest led captive by the ruthless and unrelenting grasp of the Devil. The bad God is thus far more effective in his designs for mankind than the good God. I long with intense longing that the Lord's precious people will repent of ever having believed the insipid and useless traditions that make the almighty God seem to be a victim of the will of His own creation. It is my opinion that most of the theology of the Christian world is stupid prattle that seeks to render the almighty God impotent by robbing Him of His omnipotence. It teaches that God gave His Son that all the world through Him might be saved and then renders His sacrifice hopeless by leaving ninety-nine percent of all His creatures in the hands of the Devil for all eternity. In this view God finally gives up, throws up His hands in defeat, and says, "I've had enough!" He then turns the billions of souls over to the Devil, consigning them all to banishment from His presence into the unending torments of fiery damnation. The fact is, precious friend of mine, a scene such as this would be comparable to the President of a country handing the masses of his nation over to the enemy as punishment because his General lost the war— while he (God), his General (Jesus) and the army (the saints) are rewarded with peace, wealth and pleasure forevermore. Everyone becomes a prisoner, burning forever in torment, EXCEPT THE ONES WHO HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WINNING THE WAR! I tell you solemnly and reverently that the God I serve is not the author of this kind

of nonsense. Such a doctrine as that belittles the power and wisdom of God and does despite to the spirit of grace, the atoning work of Christ, and the precious blood that He shed so that the world through Him might be saved. Such a doctrine as that is, undoubtedly, one of the "doctrines of devils" of which Paul warned. I say that because I cannot think of anyone outside of the Devil himself who would be happy with the prospect that Calvary was such a colossal failure! But the preachers, including some who profess to be in the "Kingdom Message," would lay down their lives for such an abominable heresy!

I say to all who read these lines that OUR GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND OMNIPOTENT. If ever there will come victory over the negative realm, the adversary, it will be when we come to KNOW THAT GOD IS GOD, AND THERE I-S N-O O-T-H-E-R GOD. He is sovereignly in control of all that touches our life, and of the march of history and the final outcome for all creation. The nations know not this God, nor do the professing Christians in the church systems know Him. So the Lord almighty within must bring forth those who can be His witnesses — people who have come to experientially KNOW THAT HE, and HE ALONE I-S GOD. Those whose very lives convey the message and bear the evidence that there is but ONE GOD. We have had enough of the world's stupid witness, those who believe in a God for good, and another God for evil, and oft times it is not clear which "GOD" they are declaring, especially when they spend more time exalting the prowess of the Devil than they do proclaiming the praises of their Creator and Redeemer. Let all men know — God is even now producing His witnesses WHO KNOW that HE alone is God, that HE controls the interplay between good and evil, that all is by HIS design and at HIS word, and the evidence of this reality is demonstrated by their lives. Once Christ truly and experientially becomes LORD OF ALL IN YOU, then He will have abolished for you all Devil-consciousness and HE will be both the Center and the Circumference of your reality. In that day, my beloved, for you, THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE!

I do not wonder sometimes that those who only read my writing think that I am a hard and vindictive man, especially as I warn men of the error and abominable apostasy of the nominal church systems. But if you only knew, I am one of the most peaceable and gentle men in the world. I am a very quiet man (except in the pulpit!), and believe that I am merciful and compassionate toward every sinner, I have only been a fighter because I had to fight. Was Jesus Christ not a great fighter? Is He not a great fighter still? And is He not the Prince of Peace? Is He not God's Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah? And is He not the Lamb of God? God's Lion is a Lamb! God's Lamb is a Lion! I call God to witness and you to witness that when I have been called upon to fight — for whom have I fought? I fought for God. I fought for Truth. I fought for reality. I fought against the false shepherds who were taking away the key of knowledge, who entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered. I fought those who withstood the right ways of the Lord, deceiving the people and holding them in bondage to slavish forms of empty religion and superstitious conceptions of God. Stephen fought the devils in the Jewish system to their very faces although he knew he would die. He saw his Master in the heavens. Do you see your Master in the heavens? Do you see that the only Reality is that which emanates from the Christ-Spirit? Do you know Him within, in the depths of your being? Do you hear His voice? Do you know what He wants you to do? He wants you to follow in His steps, to BECOME HIS SALVATION unto the ends of the earth. He wants you to grasp hold of life, and deliver His creation from sin, sorrow, death, hell and the demonic power which curses this world. The peace of God means war with sin. He that is a friend of evil is the enemy of God. This is the kind of peace Jesus left. He made

warriors of men. They went forth to fight the world and the Devil, in Greece and Rome, with thirty thousand gods. They marched up the Acropolis; they marched upon the Parthenon; they threw down the altars of the boni dei, they threw down the altars of Venus; they destroyed the altars of Jove, They demolished the altars of Mercury. They smashed them, by the Spirit's power, with the sword of TRUTH they trampled upon them; they triumphed and brought in a dimension of the kingdom of God.

Oh, that is such a sublime verse where Jesus said, "ALL AUTHORITY is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations..." (Mat. 28: 18-19). Do you see that? There is a tremendous power in that "Therefore," I am with you. I will back you. Every angel in heaven if needful will come forth and surround you. Fight! What does it matter, the puny governments and armies and courts of THIS WORLD? All authority is given to the Christ of God, and we are the members of God's Christ! The hosts of God will troop over all the skies, ten thousand times ten thousand millions, if need be. Embrace TRUTH! Speak TRUTH! Live TRUTH! "I COMMAND...Go ye therefore, you poor fishermen, and tax-gatherers and discredited rabbis, go, I am with you." If only we realized what power there is behind us!

God is raising up a SONSHIP COMPANY that will go for the Devil's fortresses, to batter him, shatter him and break up his kingdom. God is even now preparing an army of OVERCOMING ONES, transformed in the spirit of their mind, triumphing over sin, error, limitation and death, who shall go forth in the power of the SPIRIT to pull down the strongholds of creed and ritual and religious foolishness and ignorance and set the captives free; who will beat down the strongholds of miss-conceptions, miss-information, miss-understanding — sin and death — and let the prisoners go free! Satan is not a God like unto the Lord my God. He does not interfere with God's purposes nor frustrate God's plans. ALL AUTHORITY is given to the Christ of God — in heaven and in earth! How much authority is "ALL" authority? I shall fight that battle against the lies of religion and for the supremacy of the Christ while there is a drop of blood in my body. I shall claim that every foot of this earth and every man upon this earth and under the earth belongs to Christ, for He made the earth and He made every man. He tasted death for every man, and therefore, every foot of the earth; and every man on the earth and under the earth belongs to Christ my Lord. They are His by right of creation and they are His by right of redemption. No Devil anywhere can gainsay that fact. I claim for Him this great and universal Kingdom. The church has forgotten that Christ came to establish a Kingdom and that it must break in pieces and CONSUME (take into itself) every other kingdom including the Devil's kingdom. The Gospel which Christ preached was the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The hope and aim of all His work was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. When the end shall come, He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, and in it will be everything God created, that God may be ALL-IN-ALL. We who preach this Gospel of the all-inclusive redemption of Christ preach not a Gospel of limited atonement, nor of a partial Kingdom, nor of a Christ who was a failure, nor of a Devil who wins the battle for souls and possesses the souls of untold billions throughout an endless eternity. Such a doctrine would be blasphemy! We preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of the triumph of that Kingdom in every realm. We demand that every man upon this God's earth, and under the earth, and in heaven and hell and throughout the universe, shall bow the knee and glorify God by calling Jesus Lord and serving and obeying Him with a willing heart. God shall grant it. If it takes ages upon ages, God shall grant it!

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

WHO MADE THE DEVIL?

Yes, my friend, there is a Devil — but the Devil of orthodox Christianity is but an invention of the imagination of man. What people say about the Devil and the testimony of scripture about him are two altogether different things. Well did the apostle warn, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Tim. 4: 1). "Doctrines of devils" does not mean necessarily doctrines spawned by devils, rather, doctrines about devils. The theologians and saints of the middle ages spent aching hours working out the shapes, sizes and special responsibilities of the various demons that Satan commanded. There was even a demon called Ukobach, who was credited with the invention of fried food! Many of the contemporary teachings on demonology are straight out this Dark Ages superstition. The whole system of demonology which came to us from medieval times had its origin in the idea of animism which influenced the thinking of the pagans in early history. They believed that all nature was commanded and controlled by invisible spirits upon whose capricious whims all events relied. Life in those ancient times was a constant struggle with the elements over which men had no control. The unpredictable behavior of the sea, periods of drought or storm, the appearance of volcanoes and the titanic upheaval of earthquakes were all viewed with awe and fear. All these phenomena, benevolent or destructive in turn, were gradually seen to be under the control of spirits that had different areas of responsibility — one looked after the sea, another the wind, another the rain, and so on. In this way man began to identify and visualize the various spirits. These spirits were equally capable of good or evil. The wind could be smooth and kind, or could appear as a raging hurricane. Rain fertilized crops and made them grow, but its controlling spirit could produce a ruinous deluge, or by withholding its fall produce an even more disastrous drought. The individual spirits had, therefore, to be placated and put into an agreeable frame of mind. Even today the fishermen of the Mediterranean will sometimes pour a glass of wine into the sea to propitiate the sea spirit and prevent a storm. From these roots a system of dualism emerged with two kinds of gods — the gods responsible for good and the gods responsible for evil — equal in power and divinity. The churches today have in great measure unwittingly adopted this very pagan concept of duality — two all-powerful and co-existing gods — God and the Devil!

From whence came the Devil? Did GOD create the Devil? Well, we know he did not create himself! And he did not "just happen"! The reason some have held the view that Satan was originally an angel is because it seems to relieve God of the responsibility for evil and sin in the world. When they are asked whether a good God created a bad Devil, they can reply: "No, He did not create the Devil; He created a beautiful and powerful angel who later became the Devil!" This sounds good on the surface, but when the

searchlight of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God shines in our hearts, this line of reasoning is seen to be but shallow inductions of the natural mind.

How COULD an all-wise and holy God create an evil Devil? Our reply to that is another question: If God, all-wise and all-knowing, created a being and designed within this being the inherent ability and potential to become evil — a will capable of rebelling against Him — and if in His omniscience He knew beforehand that this creature would become evil, is God then any LESS responsible for the Devil? If, on the other hand, we say that God created a holy being and did not know he would become evil, then God is not omniscient and the Devil got a step ahead of God! If the Devil could do something back there that was outside of God's plan, which God did not know he would do, then HOW CAN WE BE SURE HE MIGHT NOT PULL A FAST ONE ON GOD AGAIN! Ah, beloved, such carnal reasoning is an affront to the majesty of the Most High God! Is it any less thinkable that God would create an evil one than to suppose that He would create a holy one with the God-given ability to become evil? In either case, there is absolutely no way to absolve GOD from the responsibility for the existence of the Devil!

That "all things are of God" is declared again and again in the Bible. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that man of rebellion against all that was of God, "Even for this same purpose have I RAISED THEE UP, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. 9: 17). The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be searched out by these puny little heads of ours. We must discard our childish theology and bring our minds into harmony with the mind of Christ. We must begin to peer through the mighty telescope of God's wisdom as it looks through the vast universe of good and evil until heavenly light bursts with blazing brilliance upon our inquiring spirits and we see with crystal clear vision that God is in all things, and is responsible for all things, including the so-called evil things as well as the good things. Is it not a fearful thing to say that evil is of God? There is nothing fearful about this view unless the TRUTH be fearful! I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of the prophet Amos may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?" (Amos 3: 6). There are untold millions of Christians who do not like to believe that A-L-L- T-H-I-N-G-S A-R-E O-F G-O-D — including evil. They much prefer to believe, as the harlot system has taught them, that in the beginning God made everything "perfect," then one of the "perfect" angels made himself into the Devil, and proceeded to wreck the works of God's hands, so degrading God's beautiful and perfect creation until the Lord Almighty Himself was hard put to the test to discover some way to restore the creation from the clutches of the Devil. And after six long and tortuous millenniums of conflict and struggle, contest and effort, the battle still rages on year after year and generation after generation, the Devil out-foxing God at times, and God getting the upper hand eventually. Childish prattle! Vain imaginations! Carnal-minded stupidity!

Why, oh why can men not believe the simple, unvarnished Word of God. Ah — we have God's own Word for it — His positive statement that HE CREATES EVIL. "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I THE LORD DO ALL OF THESE THINGS" (Isa. 45: 7). God creates evil! It cannot be! But here it is in the Word. What will you do with it, beloved? "We must explain it somehow," the fundamentalist says, "surely it doesn't mean that God creates evil, sin, sinners, devils, or wrongdoing — it must mean that He creates physical evil —

famines, pestilences, hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, floods, calamities, judgments, etc. which God sends upon mankind as punishment for their wickedness." Not so! The word here for evil is the Hebrew word RA which is used throughout the Old Testament to denote wickedness, sin and wrongdoing. In some five hundred passages it is so used!

As soon as this significant truth dawns upon your enlightened consciousness, the knowledge of WHENCE CAME THE SERPENT will speedily follow. The Word of God is certain and unmistakable. The record is clear and unequivocal. The Holy Spirit emphatically declares, "Now the Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which THE LORD GOD HAD MADE" (Gen. 3: 1). Two things are here revealed: the nature of the Serpent is a beastly nature — and GOD MADE HIM! Suppose that instead of trying to explain this passage in harmony with some cut-and-dried creed, we let all creeds go and wait upon the Spirit of the Lord to give understanding of what the passage really means. Then, if the creed does not harmonize with the light the Spirit brings, throw the creed away. At any rate, here is the statement in the Word and we will be brave enough to receive it as truth and trust the same One who spoke it to explain it. "The Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which THE LORD GOD HAD MADE." These words deserve volumes of explanation, but can you not see that they are filled with the spirit of revelation? God made the Serpent, God made him with a beastly nature, God made him subtle, God made him the Devil and Satan. God made him a murderer and a liar from the beginning! It is completely impossible for any man to truly know and love God until his spirit has been taught that before all things, through all things, in all things, and after all things is God, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, purposeful, and filled with righteousness, love, kindness, forgiveness and truth. He was before all things and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST. There is no angel, principality, or power anywhere in all the endless vastnesses of infinity that does not hold his authority by direct appointment of God. In Him all men and angels and creatures live and move and have their being, for He fills all things. By Him and for Him and to Him are all things. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends, bringing glory to God forever and forever, Amen.

The imagination that a thing can have its beginning in God, and then become something other than what God foresaw, purposed, intended, or planned for it is an absurd assertion that comes from the distorted mind and wild imagination of man and not a truth that comes from the omniscient mind of our heavenly Father, for OF HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM, are all things; to HIM be glory forever and ever (Rom. 11:36). I was as one shocked by a lightning bolt out of the sky when these words of wisdom and understanding burst upon my quickened spirit, because for all the years of my life my teachers had instilled the very opposite into my mind. "God," they told me, "made a beautiful, glorious angel, but the Devil made himself!" But when I heard the voice of the all-wise Lord, speaking from the throne of His all-powerful majesty, taking upon HIMSELF all the responsibility for the entire creation, my heart was amazed in His presence and for the first time in my life the "purpose of Him who worketh all thing after the counsel of His own will" began to unfold in my deepest heart. With what clarity did I perceive that God is the cause of all that is. It all exists with the one purpose of showing forth His glory. Every object in nature and every creature in the universe has its only reason of existence in this — that the wondrous goodness and wisdom and power of God may shine out through it. God is the end and aim of all things, because He is their beginning and origin, as well as their destiny and consummation. All must fulfill His will because all came from Him, all exist through Him, and all end in Him.

WHY THE DEVIL?

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

We flounder a bit in our understanding of these things, but as time passes by and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that in all the universe a thing is a thing ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS AN OPPOSITE. Few will teach you this principle, but I declare it to you today. Good without the knowledge of evil can scarcely be called good at all. Who could possibly speak of the day if night had never been known? There was no first light if there was no darkness. What could we know of life if there were no death? What would we know of health if there were no sickness? What would we know of wealth if poverty had not spread its spectre upon the earth? No man can be trusted until he has been EXPOSED TO THE OPPOSITES, until he has been tempted. No man can be declared strong until he has been tested for weakness. No man can be proven honest until he has been presented with the opportunity to steal or cheat. No man can be declared virtuous until faced with opportunities with women other than his wife. No man can be an overcomer until he has faced the dreadful foe. Those who are worthy to slay their Goliaths must First have slain their lion and their bear. No man can be an overcoming son of God until he has encountered THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS and come forth victorious! Everything has its right and wrong, its truth and error, its good and bad, its proper use and its misuse, and the one must overcome the other. Sweet must overcome and swallow up bitter, smooth rough, soft hard. Life swallows up death, said Paul in II Cor. 5: 4; and it gets its strength from HAVING AN OPPOSITE WHICH IT HAS SWALLOWED UP. You cannot say a certain yes in a decision, until you have first canvassed the alternatives and said an equally certain no to each of them. The strength of the yes is swallowing up the nos! Not in having no nos, not in ignoring their existence, but in facing them and replacing them by the final yes. And here we have God's perfect wisdom in the formation of the human race and in bringing forth a convenient opposite, the wrong one, the evil one, THROUGH WHOM HE WOULD BRING HIS VAST FAMILY OF SONS TO MATURITY. "Though He were a Son, yet

learned He OBEDIENCE by the things which He suffered"(Heb. 5: 8). "For it became Him. ..in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation PERFECT through sufferings" (Heb. 2: 10).

The Hebrew word for "satan" is used two ways, with the definite article, the satan, and without the article, The word "satan" simply means "adversary." There is no thought of monstrosity or evilness, but simply opposition. Thus the scriptures speak of "adversary," "an adversary," and "the adversary." It is that which is ADVERSE to ones well being, desires, plans, hopes, goals or causes, whether good or bad, real or imagined. Jesus told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Peter immediately rebuked Him and opposed His going to Jerusalem, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." Jesus then turned and said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan.-thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mat. 16: 21-23). Jesus knew from the law and the prophets what He must suffer. Peter unwittingly was trying to get Him to fail in fulfilling the prophecies and plan of God. Peter was opposing Him in His determination to carry out the mission the Father had given Him, and hence Peter was a satan (adversary, opposition) to the Lord. From the beginning there has been that which has stood in opposition to the life of the spirit in man, and has fully earned its reputation as the most adroit of adversaries. Paul describes it as the flesh warring against the spirit, the carnal mind that is enmity against God. It is the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience (offspring of old Adam). As a man once said, "We have met the enemy, and he IS US." Elwin Roach penned the following helpful explanation: "When the definite article 'the' is used with the word satan, this is not stating the devil's name but is saying this adversary is the chief adversary to whomever it is an adversary to. This is no doubt why the government of Iran calls the United States of America "THE GREAT SATAN"; for indeed, we are THE GREATEST ADVERSARY they have. We stand in the way of their desires, their goals and aspirations of tyranny. The United States of America is like the angel of the Lord, with a flaming sword in hand, who is adversely hindering their evil progress. Therefore, they can rightly say we are their Great Satan, but we are not the Satan that is fixed in the average Christian's mind" — end quote.

If there are those who feel that in these messages on The Serpent the picture I have painted exhibits the prevalence of the darker hues, I am so glad now to literally splash the canvas with flaming colors. And then in the light that the Spirit brings we will discern the true meaning of the momentary process, and the glory that follows. As one has written, "God is constructing a temple, made of living stones, through which to manifest Himself throughout the ages to come, and Satan was created as a chisel and hammer to be used in the construction of this building. The living stones that are even now being placed in this temple have been chosen, says the Lord, in the 'furnace of affliction' (Isa. 48: 10). God, however, is mercy; God is love; God is compassion. He is a healer, not a destroyer. It was, nonetheless, necessary that an oven be heated in which to purify the gold — a furnace in which the wood, hay, and stubble were to be burned — but God, in His nature of love, could not perform the necessary affliction. It was for this reason that He created an instrument that was capable of performing this essential action in the lives of men, for in Satan God literally created a chastening rod. If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes' (Ps. 119: 7). Praise God! When we begin to see the good that comes from the assaults of Satan on our lives, we

are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind. He is truly a God of might and power, and all things are in His hand — even this adversary whom we call the Devil" — Connie Asbill.

Ah, my beloved, there is purpose in affliction. There is purpose in trial. There is purpose in temptation. There is purpose in suffering. There is purpose in sorrow. There is purpose in pain. There is purpose in trouble. There is purpose in infirmity. There is purpose in light and darkness. There is purpose in good, and there is purpose in evil. There is purpose in adversity and in the adversary who brings it. Yes, my brother, my sister, there is purpose in the existence and work of Satan! Without this understanding all the work of God in all ages becomes a hit and miss, trial and error affair unworthy of our mighty God of whom it is written, "The Most High... liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His Kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and HE doeth ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and NONE CAN STAY HIS HAND, or say, What doest Thou?"

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an OPPOSING FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. God's NEW CREATION must be strong and powerful, and anything that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. A man who wants to be a great wrestler, doesn't just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. If he didn't do this he would be weak and powerless in the ring. A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. Those opposing forces are indispensable to develop strength and technique. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed.

So it is with us as human beings. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, with everything provided on a silver platter, grows up a weak, helpless, spineless individual. ADVERSITY builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulation, we would grow up weak indeed! The more we are exposed to ADVERSE circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are CHALLENGED by the world around us, the stronger we become. Saints, IF WE WOULD BE THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH we must be STRONG in the Lord and in the power of HIS might! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us wrestling partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong. These are opposing forces – THANK GOD FOR THEM! Is innocence synonymous with virtue? The Father of spirits did not look forward to a distant day, at the time of His begetting, expecting that some day a multitude of innocent ninnies and dummies would stand before Him. How many of those who read these lines want their children to grow up 100% innocent? Never having experienced the slightest temptation or adversity in any form? This is precisely why God placed the Serpent in Eden with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – that man through the experience of the opposites might in the experience be led to OVERCOME all things and to stand before the Son of man in the strength of character,

perception of mind, and quality of life of God Himself. It is all part of our Father's wise and magnificent plan!

"Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above," Jesus told Pilate. What Satan wrought against Job was ordained by the Lord who carefully marked the bounds of the adversary's activity. Job was no baby saint, for no one less than God Himself had given testimony that Job was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil. God had blessed this man with great wealth and a large family. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses. His household was very great with many hired servants so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. The thing we want to note is that although Job was wealthy in temporal things, rich in spiritual things, and proclaimed perfect by the Lord Himself, he had not been "tried by fire" as sons of God must be — he was as yet UNTRIED, UNTESTED, and UNPROVEN. In the midst of Job's ordeal of affliction and suffering the spirit of prophecy came upon him and he opened his mouth and spake concerning the purpose of God in it all, declaring, "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23: 10). Never do I cease to be amazed at how the preachers and teachers, apparently without exception, join their voices in unison with those of Job's contemptible comforters, indicting and blaming poor old Job, charging that God brought all these calamities upon him because he had sin in his life, or because he was self-righteous, or because of some other appalling fault in Job. The only reliable testimony we have of Job's true state of being is that spoken by the Lord Himself, and HE declared that Job was A PERFECT MAN! Perfect, yes; but untried! His perfection remained to be tested, proven and demonstrated. Now, what does God do but deliberately hand over this perfect and upright man into the hands of Satan to do his worst upon him, only that he should not touch his life. It was because that God desired to test Job that He brought forth "the smith to blow upon the fire." Please note that it was not Satan's idea to persecute poor old Job! Oh, no! It was God Himself who brought up the subject! There Satan was, presenting himself before the Lord, appearing for duty, and God asked, "Where have you been?" Satan replied, "Walking up and down in the earth" (no mention of Job at all). "Well, Satan," the Lord asked, "have you considered My servant Job? Have you noticed that he eschews evil and fears God? Have you noticed that, Satan?" You can be assured, dear ones, that Satan had noticed Job, but he wasn't doing anything to him.

One of the most glorious testimonies of the preservation of the saints of God is given here in this passage by Satan himself. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge around him and about his house and about all that he hath on every side?" Praise the Lord! Yes, there truly is a hedge around the people of God, and that hedge is Jesus Christ Himself. The Psalmist recognized and rejoiced in this fact when he said, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, HE IS MY REFUGE and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust" (Ps. 91: 1-2). "You've put a hedge around him," Satan said, "and I can't get to him!" Then he went on to say, "You must put forth THINE HAND and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." But the Lord, who searcheth the reins and the heart, who knoweth them that are His, knows who can be trusted with affliction, and will not allow any to be tested beyond what they are able to bear. He therefore said to Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power — in thy hand — only upon himself put not forth thine hand." One can only know God by vital relationship to Him. Job KNEW God! Job knew in his deepest heart that God is good, loving, true, righteous, omnipotent,

omniscient, immutable and faithful in all His way. At one point in his trial he exclaimed, "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth. ...and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," and again, " I KNOW that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee" (Job 19: 25-26; 42: 2). Being a perfect man Job understood the nature of God, he knew what God is like — how He is. Armed with this knowledge he was unshakable and unmovable as the hand of Satan moved against him. With lightning swiftness the misfortunes fell as tribulation and affliction smote this man of God. All hell broke loose upon him. His possessions were gone. His servants were gone. His cattle, his family, and his dwelling place were as though they had never been. And now he was desperately ill, tormented with pain, and without even a bed to sleep on he lies down in the ashes of what was once his beautiful home to listen to the relentless arguments of his friends, monotonously attempting by lengthy speeches to make a fool of him and prove that his present despair was the result of his own sin and disfavor with God. I do not know how many days their debate continued, but such miserable comforters as these are always at hand, ready to attest that those who have entered the furnace of affliction have been bad examples as Christians, unbelieving, unfaithful, or that they harbor secret sins and so are deserving of punishment. Unless the Lord Himself has convicted them of sin, or lack of faith, or of lack of understanding and applying the Laws of Life, sufferers should pay no attention whatever to them. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God" (1 Jn. 3: 21).

In one tragic day all Job's earthly wealth and glory had vanished as a mist before the rising sun. But did Job curse God for all this calamity? Did he even curse the Devil? Was he a fair weather saint without spiritual understanding? No, indeed! He rent his mantle, shaved his head, and falling upon the ground, he **WORSHIPPED GOD** with the unmistakable words of reverence, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: **THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!**" (Job 1: 22). You see, beloved, all external evidence shouted aloud that God did not love Job, that God had forsaken him, that God did not see him, that God wasn't concerned about what happened to him, and that God wasn't just. It seemed that God had now revealed Himself to be the opposite of all Job had experienced and known of Him. But, praise God! Job knew God! He therefore knew that in spite of all the external evidence, in spite of how terrible and hopeless things appeared, God had not forsaken him, God did love him, God did see him, God was concerned about what happened to him, God was in control of everything, and God was just. Ah, this is faith — trusting God's goodness, wisdom and faithfulness in the knowledge that HE has everything in control, that ALL is according to HIS purpose, **IN SPITE OF ALL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY!** Faith declares with Job, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust Him," — and then after being slain — **TRUSTS HIM!** Job, stripped of all, tried by fire, tested in the furnace of affliction, found that the key to life is not some creed or doctrinal statement of what we believe about God, but that which we **KNOW OF HIM** by virtue of intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him. "The trial of your faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth" (1 Pet. 1: 7).

It all fits into the Divine economy, not in the sense that God wills evil, but in the sense that He appoints it for a purpose and unto a greater end and overrules it in the great disciplinary and instructive processes of redemption. He "turns the tables" on the Devil — the wrath of men, as the Psalmist puts it, is made to praise God. The flesh, the world, and the Devil for the final vindication of God's government have to be permitted to run their course. Most diseases do. Meanwhile the suffering caused and the immeasurable tragedies are designed to serve God's purposes. We see this, too, in the trials of Joseph

carried into Egypt, yea in the passion and death of our Lord Himself. The buffetings of the adversary forge a soul into one, to use the words of a French soldier to his mother. The adversary has put me through some things which a thousand deaths could not approximate. But strange as it may seem, in a large measure the things which I most prize, the value of which can only be measured in terms of eternity, all go back to the grueling of the adversary. It is Satan who does the hammering. Paul made no mistake when he advised the Corinthians to turn a certain man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh life.

A story is told about a new immigrant who got a job as a gardener. Next door was another gardener, a local man who did not like immigrants. He did all he could to provoke the new man. The family employing the new immigrant asked their gardener what he thought of the troublesome gardener next door. "He is my very good friend," he replied. Surprised, they asked, "How can he be your friend when he does such unkind things to you?" "He is my very good friend," was the answer, "because he shows me what not to do." There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work out Father has for us to do in the ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that ALL OPPOSING FORCES WE NOW ENCOUNTER are working together for our good – to develop the strength, character, wisdom and power we must acquire? Why the Devil? After every battle I may say, "Thank you, Mr. Devil! for helping to make me a son of God." Surely this is the lesson learned by Job, and this is the lesson being learned by us as we see our earthly dependencies withering as grass before our eyes and passing away. The emphasis of many today in the "Sonship Message" is on life— gaining immortality for the body. That is indeed a glorious aspect of our inheritance as sons of God. But I do not hesitate to tell you that it is not enough! In fact, that message by itself is truth out of balance. It is not mere length of life we seek, but a quality of life— the nature of God! Should I today bypass the grave and carry with me into immortality the inherent weaknesses, faults, idiosyncrasies, passions, lusts, and flaws of character which have dogged my steps throughout my earthly sojourn I would still not be fit to reign as an overcomer over the nations and all things. Not only must we have life, we must have the nature of that life fully developed in us producing the image of God. And we will never reign until we have been thoroughly tested, tried and proven!

The New Testament abounds with this same truth. Did you notice how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? "And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. " What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the Son to be PROVEN, to be STRONG, to demonstrate His ability to OVERCOME in these realms before entering into His glorious ministry and the death of the cross. Truly God creates evil and uses it, too, for His glory! The apostle fully understood this great truth and practiced it himself. He instructed the Corinthian believers to "deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (i.e., the flesh life), that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," and he declares in his letter to Timothy that he himself has delivered certain brethren unto Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme." But the apostle had experienced something of this kind of discipline also, for he says, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, THE MESSENGER OF SATAN TO BUFFET ME, lest I should be exalted above measure." All this dearly shows that Satan is

a force created by God for a specific work, and even that work shall result in blessing for God's children and redound to the glory of God!

Since Jesus is the Pattern Son, all that happened to Him is the example for our lives. Jesus was being prepared to launch His ministry which was to declare that the Kingdom of God is at hand. But true Kingdom ministry requires that all His sons be proven before the authority and power of the Kingdom is trusted into their hands. We must know Who the Source of our life is, and Who is the King of the Kingdom of God. That with which Jesus was tempted in the first temptation in the wilderness was to turn the stones into bread. To turn stones into bread might have been a good idea. Jesus had fasted for forty days and was hungry. Bread was His immediate need. That in itself was not an evil desire — for He had no sooner come up out of the wilderness when He performed a miracle, his first miracle, of the very same nature. Instead of stones, it was water — and instead of bread it was wine — but, pray tell, what is the difference between turning stones into bread and turning water into wine? ABSOLUTELY NOTHING! The difference did not lie in the act: it lay in the motivation! The Father had not instructed Jesus to turn stones into bread. If Jesus had, therefore, yielded to the desire to do so, He would have set a dangerous precedent — He would have acted with a power entrusted Him by God to be used for God — but it would have been apart from the word of God because it would have come "by the will of man" rather than by the motivation of the Spirit of God. It was not a wrong desire — it was the wrong VOICE! The Father gave instruction for the miracle at Cana of Galilee, for Jesus said at another time that He never did anything unless His Father gave it to Him to do. Sons of God do nothing based on needs. If the directive comes from the wrong source, the whole act of meeting a need is wrong and will prove a futile effort at best. Man's religion is saturated with such good work!. Many ministries have been launched, attempting to turn stones into bread, but the vast majority of them have heard from the wrong voice. Good works coming from the wrong source bring forth a carnal thing without life. However, good works that originate from the mind of Christ will indeed be good, and will redound to the glory of God. Thus Jesus demonstrated a vital truth we all need to learn: THE SPIRIT MUST BE THE ONLY SOURCE OF OUR ACTIONS; HIS WILL MUST BECOME OUR WILL!

"For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil" (Heb. 2: 14). The word "destroy" does not mean to kill or annihilate, for we know God did not kill the Devil or annihilate him! Destroy, in the original, means "to bring to naught; render powerless; make of no effect" So — through death — the Lord Jesus BROUGHT SATAN TO NAUGHT, RENDERED HIM POWERLESS AND MADE HIM OF NO EFFECT. The Lord came and put upon Himself "the flesh," the "body of sin," the "body of death," the "dust realm," the "man of earth," and BROUGHT IT TO THE CROSS that "through death (of the man of dust) He might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." When the flesh is crucified, when the dust of the carnal mind, the man of the earth is put to death on the cross SATAN'S GROUND IS DESTROYED BENEATH HIM, his sphere of activity is removed, his base of operation is closed, he is rendered completely powerless and ineffective. Thus, it is by this death on the cross that Christ destroyed the Devil! When the Son of God came into the world, when He had been tested on every point and had overcome the adversary in all things, He uttered these significant words: "I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me — he has nothing in common with Me, THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM, he has no power over Me" (Jn. 14: 30, Amplified). Ah, this is the glory of sonship — nothing in

common with Satan! There was nothing in Jesus that corresponded to him and nothing that responded to him! None of the nature of Adam that pertains to Satan. So mighty was the indwelling life of the Father within Jesus that Satan had no power over Him, no place within Him. And, precious friend of mine, when you have died completely to that Adamic life, when there is none of the dust of Adam in you, SATAN WILL HAVE NO POWER OVER YOU, NO PLACE IN YOU. Satan's base of operation will have been destroyed, his sphere of activity removed. God destroys Satan by destroying (rendering inactive) YOUR FLESH.

Dear saints of God, don't believe for one moment that anything in all God's great universe is out of control! God IS GOD. There is NO OTHER GOD. Satan is NO GOD in his own right. Our God IS in full control of every sphere of activity, and the Serpent himself operates directly under the province of God. May the Holy Spirit illumine our minds to perceive the truth that Satan has no power at all except that which God delegates to him. Do you really believe that Satan could cause all the trouble in the world UNLESS GOD HAD ORDAINED IT? My friend, if you believe Satan is a problem to Almighty God, then your God is entirely too small! Satan is no thorn in God's side who made him in the first place, who binds his hands daily, who sets his boundaries and limits his power and marks his path. Oh, yes, those who would be sons of God must OVERCOME HIM. Beloved, when that purpose is accomplished, Satan will have completed his course as an instrument in the hand of God who has everything under control! Hallelujah!

There is only ONE GOD — not two. Yes, Satan is indeed "the god of this world," but those born from above are not of this world even as our Lord is not of this world. Satan enthroned in the temple of the carnal man is "a" god — not THE GOD. There is no power apart from God. Omnipotence has ALL POWER, and our Lord Jesus Christ has ALL POWER in heaven and in earth, and to acknowledge any other power is to dishonor God. Here me now and believe me now or later — G-0-D HAS N-0 ADVERSARY! Satan is not the adversary of God! That is a preposterous misconception of popular religion. God created the adversary for our perfection and testing — he is man's adversary, not GOD'S! The truth is so simple, so plain, a child of ten can understand a principle so apparent, while the learned doctors of theology step right over it and never see it. In relation to God there are no antagonistic powers nor laws, spiritual or material. Either there is no omnipotence, or omnipotence is the only power. Jesus Christ is OMNIPOTENT! He said so Himself. He that is in you IS GREATER than he that is in the world. He IS! Then if Jesus our Lord is Sovereign, and He is, He can do anything He pleases. He doesn't have a Devil that opposes His every move and hinders everything He does. He doesn't have a Devil that is trying to take over His whole world that He has created as most people imagine. HE IS SOVEREIGN! HE IS OMNIPOTENT. "ALL POWER is given unto Me," He said All power is OMNIPOTENCE! He creates His own evil when evil is needed to form and fashion a subject or people or nation He is working on. God does have a NEGATIVE FORCE at work in His creation, a negative dimension of SPIRIT, the adversary of those being conformed into his image, the fiery furnace of refining, the rod of chastening, the sparring partner, the violent storm bending the tree to make it strong. Glory to God! The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth! This is the glorious message of the Sign of Scorpio!

Chapter 20

Scorpio-The Scorpion

(continued)

For several months we have plumbed the depths and scaled the heights of revelation in the grand drama portrayed by the Sign of Scorpio in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY. We have seen that the testimony of the heavens and the revelation of scripture are one in every respect in showing to us the great significance of the conflict between the powerful Orphiuchus and the Serpent, that is to say, between Christ and Satan. In this writing we draw to a conclusion these meditations on this scene of conflict and triumph, to pass on to the next celestial Sign and the scintillating treasures of truth it contains for the elect of God in this Day of the Lord.

THE ACCUSER

The various names for the Serpent are most instructive. In the word "serpent" there is the idea of cunning, of slyness, "the wiles of the devil." It is not the thought of monstrosity showing itself in a public way, but diplomacy working under cover and carrying its point underhandedly. In the word "satan" we have the thought of the adversary merely. There is no thought of evilness, but simply opposition. From the beginning there has been that which has stood in opposition to the life of the Spirit in man, and has fully earned its reputation as the most adroit of adversaries. Paul describes it as the flesh warring against the Spirit, and the carnal mind that is enmity against God. The flesh and the carnal mind are neither inanimate objects, but living, energizing realities, truly the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience (offspring of old Adam). The word "devil" means an adversary who slanders, or an "accuser." This title is used throughout scripture, where he is revealed as the slanderer of God and the accuser of man. In that long-ago Eden he slandered God - "Yea, hath God said! God doth know..." - and accused man - "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked...and the Lord God said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" (Gen. 3:1,7,11). The Serpent's chatter on down through the centuries has followed exactly the same line - he has not deviated one iota from his first method of approach. More Christians are defeated by accusation and condemnation than anything else. We will be the victim of a double deception if we cannot recognize either the liar or his lies!

The scriptures draw a wonderful contrast between the intercession of Christ, on the one hand, and the accusation of the Devil, on the other hand. As I have studied the Word of God and been taught by the precious spirit of Truth many things have become evident, one of which is that while intercession may be Godward, the scriptures reveal that the primary thrust of the intercession of the Christ is not Godward at all, but manward, an intercession that is to us-ward, to bring us to God, to draw us to the Father, to work mightily in us, that we might yield ourselves unto Him, to live out the revelation of the Spirit in our lives. The real truth about the intercession of the Christ has been clouded by the corrupted theology of man. I am sure that you, as I, have heard preachers try to

describe His ministry of intercession. It goes something like this. Satan, our enemy and the accuser of the brethren, stands before the Father up in heaven accusing us day and night. Satan tells God about all our failings; he enumerates to God every sin we commit in thought, word, or deed. He is constantly, unceasingly, relentlessly and unmercifully accusing us of every shortcoming and weakness. The Father, on the other hand, is portrayed as greatly offended and incensed by our sins, and exceedingly wrath with sinners; a vindictive punisher, somehow obligated by His superior sense of justice to be the avenger of every little thing we do wrong. Many parents have unwittingly darkened the hearts of their little children with threats of the certain vengeance of this God who is a constant terror over the life. "Now don't you do that because GOD will punish you!" And even much stronger things are told to little children. God becomes a mean, harsh, vindictive old man up in the sky with beady little piercing eyes possessing wonderful X-ray vision which can penetrate into the deepest recesses of mind and heart, and the thickest darkness of night, scrutinizing every thought and action. This God, moreover, is waiting, lurking about everywhere, with a punishing whip of large dimensions!

Enter the Son. You know as well as I do that the church system has always taught that this God of exacting justice and undiminished wrath must be appeased, soothed, turned aside from His furious vengeance, and that this feat can only be accomplished by the bold and insistent intercession of the compassionate SON, our wonderful Lord and elder brother, standing opposite Satan, before the judgment-throne of the Father, as our Advocate, our Lawyer, pleading our cause, beseeching God to be kind to us for His sake, to commute our sentence, and begging for our lives on the ground that He paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins. According to this hypothesis the anger of God can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son, as He stands there interceding for us. I do not hesitate to tell you that such a teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense. It springs from the Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the One who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and placated. And if it weren't for our Advocate, Jesus, God would listen to the Devil's accusations and really lay it on to us. We could even lose our salvation because of Satan's accusations, if it weren't that the merciful Jesus is there to prevent God from casting us into hell, by presenting His blood on our behalf. Such is a gross caricature of the truth. More than that, it is a stupid absurdity and a horrible blasphemy. Praise God, the Spirit is unfolding Truth in ever-increasing dimensions of glory which magnifies God's glorious nature of love and mercy, His wisdom and power, His goodness and the prudence of all His plans and purposes.

It is my conviction that not even Satan is senseless enough to believe that he could approach OUR FATHER and convince Him to condemn us because of our failures. Nowhere does the scripture state that Satan accuses the saints to God. What it does say is that "the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which ACCUSED T-H-E-M B-E- F-O-R-E OUR GOD day and night"(Rev. 12:10). It is one thing to be accused before, that is, in the presence of, or in front of another person, and another thing altogether for the accuser to accuse you TO the other one. It should be abundantly evident that Satan does not accuse us to God, he merely accuses us before God. It is not the almighty and omniscient God, my brother, my sister, whom Satan wishes to convince of your unworthiness - it is YOU! Satan has no misconceptions about his ability to persuade God of your weakness and worthlessness, but if he can influence YOU to believe that you are unworthy, that you are a failure, that you are hopeless, that it is impossible for you to attain to the High Calling of God in Christ, that it is beyond the realm of possibility for you

to lay hold upon life and immortality; or that God does not love you, leaving you condemned and helpless - he is thereby able to rob you of all your hope, faith, confidence, joy, peace and victory!

Don't think for one moment, my beloved, that this scene is set in some far-off heaven somewhere! Satan is not standing in a red devil suit before the great white throne somewhere beyond the milky way - ah, he lurks, rather, in the corruption and unbelief of our own carnal minds, in the unrelenting voice of our own distorted conscience, in the perverted reasoning and logic of our silly superstitions about God, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness. The reason why so many saints fail when it comes to the temptations and condemnations of the Devil is that they don't really want to resist Satan. We have been taught in the past to flee from the Serpent, that old dragon that appears as a roaring lion, and this we have been doing all along; but on this Day, this glorious Day of illumination and truth, all of us who walk in the light of this Day will discover that it has been the very Serpent that has been BRUISING YOUR HEELS all these years in your house, causing you to err, to sin and stumble day and night! And it is the very Dragon that has been ACCUSING YOU DAY AND NIGHT BEFORE GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD WHICH YOU ARE! You see, Satan never comes as some hideous monster with horns, a forked tail and a pitchfork. He doesn't blare at you through a loudspeaker. HE COMES IN YOUR OWN DESIRES! HE SPEAKS IN YOUR OWN THOUGHTS! HE TORTURES THROUGH YOUR OWN FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS! The battle rages in the MIND, whisperings out of the dust realm, accusations that shout at you from within. And God is there, too! The indwelling Spirit of God likewise speaks from within, out of the spiritual mind, the voice of inspiration, the spirit of revelation, words of grace and wisdom drop from His tongue, the still small Voice of the Father from within His temple of clay, graciously assuring, "I love you, My beloved son; you are My very own son, and I will be a Father to you; I will strengthen you, I will uphold you, for I am the Faithful One and will complete the good work I have begun in you and present you faultless before My throne." And there, before God in His temple - within - rises the other voice, the voice of the carnal mind, the voice of the flesh - the Accuser! It is there in the imaginations of the mind, in the heavens of that universe which you are, that Satan the Accuser must be cast down, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God within.

The Devil may accuse us, but God will never condemn. Is God for us, or against us? Is He on our side, or isn't He? "What shall we say to all this? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who can be our foe, if God is on our side? He who did not withhold or spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect when it is God who justifies? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen? Will God, who acquits us? Who is there to condemn us?" (Rom. 8:31-34, Amplified). That wonderful Father! That gracious Redeemer! The most loving and faithful of all beings! He turned my heart back again and restored me into His life. God, the Father, sent Jesus - the very fullness of His own heart - sent Him into the world to die on Calvary's cross. God so loved the world that He gave! We did not choose Him, He chose us and ordained us! We love Him, because He first loved us! Who is he that condemns? Not God! What can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? The answer is sure - there is not one created thing in all the vast universe that can separate us from God's love - certainly not the accusation of the Devil!

What does it mean, that Jesus makes intercession for us? Jesus is our mediator, our intercessor and our advocate; He stands between God and us, but just what is He doing when He does this? Is He pleading with the Father to be merciful to us and forgive us? No, a thousand times no! The Greek word is ENTUCHANO meaning "to meet with, to converse with, to entreat." The question is just this: With whom does the Christ meet, with whom does He converse, and whom does He entreat? God, or man? God so loved the world that He gave His Son for us. God so loved! God gave the Son! Does the Father of love have to be entreated to be kind and merciful and gracious unto us? Listen! "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM...now then we are ambassadors FOR CHRIST, as though GOD DID B-E-S-E-E-C-H Y-O-U by us: we pray (Greek: beg, petition, beseech, intercede) you in Christ's stead, BE YE reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:19-20). Therefore, we find that HIS INTERCESSION IS TO US-WARD, to meet with us, to converse with us, to entreat us, to petition us, to intercede with us, to reveal the Father's heart to us, to bring us back to Father, that we might be reconciled to God; working in us that we might know Him in all His glorious and eternal reality. All this attention of Christ is directed toward us. God does not have to be interceded with for us, it was the invisible and unknowable God who sent the Christ to us, to meet with us, to woo us, to draw us that we and the Father might be one again.

THE DRAGON IN THE SEA

"And the great DRAGON was cast out, that OLD SERPENT, called the DEVIL, and SATAN, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth... and I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the DRAGON, that OLD SERPENT, which is the DEVIL and SATAN, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 12:9; 20:1-2).

Large sections of scripture, in fact a preponderance of the prophetic books, are couched in symbolic terms, hiding much of the "mysteries" of God in figurative language. This is done quite purposely by the Lord that the unspiritual while "seeing" actually see not and "hearing" actually hear not (Mat. 13:10-17). The careful study of the key Semitic symbols, in which so much of the Word of God is given, is vitally important to the one who would "rightly divide the word of truth." Since the book of Revelation is a "sign-ified" or "sign-language" book (Rev. 1:1), we should not be surprised to find that it abounds in Semitic symbols which convey the truth in figurative language.

Just as the title "serpent" in Genesis describes the Devil as wily, seductive, poisonous, and deadly, so the term "dragon" is descriptive of his great power, magnitude, and terrifying monster qualities. Hear what the scriptures say about the Serpent and the Dragon, and it will be very clear that these are one and the same. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven: and behold a great RED DRAGON, having seven heads and ten horns...and the great DRAGON was cast out, that ANCIENT SERPENT, called the DEVIL, and SATAN, which deceiveth the whole world...and they worshipped the DRAGON which gave power unto the beast...and an angel came down and laid hold on the DRAGON, that ancient SERPENT, WHICH IS THE DEVIL AND SATAN, and bound him..." (Rev. 12:9 13:4; 20:1-2). The Dragon is a fabulous mythical creature that never really existed except in the imaginations of men. They were supposed to be enormous in size, up to forty feet long. They had wings like a bird's, scales like a reptile's, claws like an eagle's, and long tails like an alligator's. They breathed fire. The Dragon always stood

as a symbol of wrath and destruction. In Africa and Asia people still worship images of monsters and dragons.

As the subtle Serpent came with stealth into the Garden of Eden defiling with selfhood the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam's first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion and fleshly corruption. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little Serpent, but in Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching Dragon in the earth and in the sea. In Genesis Satan is an enchanting Serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in Revelation he is a "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns," a composite of peoples, nations, and governmental authorities. So now the network that he runs is huge and powerful and intimidating and dominates the world and the so-called church as well. He is no longer the inconspicuous little reptile of Eden. He is the horn of worldly strength that Jesus claims makes him "the prince of this world." How is it that Satan began as a little Serpent in Eden and ends as a great Dragon in the book of Revelation? Because he dwells in the minds of men and men have so built him up in their minds and attributed to him such power and authority that the little Serpent has been transformed into a great red Dragon! He is not some sinister creature from outer space, nor a powerful, omnipresent spirit. No. He exists in the mind of man - he's in your mind if you allow him to be! That's why the scripture admonishes: "...neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). How do you give place to the Devil? With your own thoughts!

When Adam and Eve departed from Eden the Serpent was in their hearts, their minds, and in their bodies. It should not be difficult for any man to see that all the unrestrained evils that are running rampant in the world today are but the out-croppings, the fruitage, the increase, yea, the manifestation of the Dragon that is now full-grown from the little Serpent in Eden. This monster dwells within each one of us. It could be explained as the accumulated genetic legacy and cosmic consciousness from hundreds of our ancestors who have lived out of and cultivated the beastly nature. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden it was but a short space until the Serpent in Cain slew one righteous man, whereas the Dragon that stalks the earth today in a vast multitude of billions of Adam's posterity has slain millions on the blood-stained battlefields of every continent and nation on the face of the earth, not to mention the untold millions more who have been the victims of crime and violence of every kind, and the saints of all ages who have been viciously persecuted to death. Ah, yes, the little Serpent has become a giant Dragon, stalking and stomping about in the dust of Adam's race!

We need not be surprised at the increase of this satanic power at the end of the age. Can we not see that in every age the degree of wickedness in the earth is proportionate to the INCREASE OF MANKIND? Of a dim and distant age it is written, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth...God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:1,6). And of our own age it is declared, "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, devils, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:1-4). Two millenniums ago the apostle Paul accurately prophesied, "But the evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). May the Spirit of the Lord open wide the eyes of our understanding to see the

simple and evident truth that as MEN increase in the earth - THE DEVIL INCREASES! In making this statement, I am fully aware that such a thought runs contrary to long-established views of theology, but we are not in the least concerned with the views of Babylon's theology, for so-called theology is not really the truth of God but the ideas of men. I am concerned only with the truth of God as it is revealed in His Word in the light of inspiration and revelation.

Now we come to an amazing promise which may be hard for the natural mind to interpret, but when men seek the face of the Lord He sends His Holy Spirit to dispel the darkness of the carnal mind that He may reveal to our broken and contrite hearts the things that pertain to the eternal purposes of God. The promise is stated: "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and HE SHALL SLAY THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA" (Isa. 27:1). The word "leviathan" means literally "a beast dwelling in the sea." In the Hebrew the chief word for dragon is TANNIN and in meaning is synonymous with LEVIATHAN. The translators of the Greek Septuagint used the word DRAKON to render both words. DRAKON is derived from another Greek word, DERKOMAI, which means "sea serpent, serpent of the abyss." Leviathan, the sea-serpent, and the Dragon are thus different aspects of the same being, for note, "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish LEVIATHAN the piercing SERPENT, even LEVIATHAN that crooked SERPENT; and He shall slay the DRAGON that is in the sea." The prophetic type for the victory described in this passage is found in one of the Psalms of David. Speaking of the mighty deliverance of Israel from the troops of Pharaoh, when the Lord divided the waters to provide a passageway for His people, David sings: "Thou didst divide the sea by Thy strength! Thou didst break the heads of the serpents in the waters! Thou didst break the heads of leviathan in pieces" (Ps. 74:13-14). Here the "serpents" plural and the "heads" of leviathan plural speak symbolically of the Egyptians who were energized by the spirit of their carnal minds to persecute and pursue the people of God. Truly, this is the SAME SERPENT THAT DWELLS WITHIN US, the DEVIL and SATAN, the BESTIAL NATURE WITHIN THE OUTER NATURE OF ADAM, that inner force which opposes the Spirit and tries always to bind us to earthly things, keeping us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. My soul rejoices with joy unspeakable in the blessed knowledge that God has promised deliverance for all mankind as this SEA DWELLING BEAST is slain with the mighty, strong sword of the Lord - the WORD (TRUTH) OF GOD!

Before we speak further of this, I would like to point out that throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the raging, restless, surging masses of unregenerate humanity, tossed to and fro by the inner storms of the turbulent nature of fallen man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described the carnal man when he said, "These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 13). The beloved John, banished on the Isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are PEOPLES, and MULTITUDES, and NATIONS, and TONGUES" (Rev. 17:5). John also saw a vision of a beast rising out of the sea, a beast coming up out of the midst of the multitudes of raging, restless, seething humanity, the sea of man. The natural sea is a great deep, an abyss (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Deut 8:7; 33:13). The Psalmist wrote of this abyss of fleshly men, "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is DEEP (an abyss)" (Ps.

64:6). To the enlightened mind of David the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. The heart of man is an UNFATHOMABLE DEPTH, or, as Jeremiah observed, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9). While John the Revelator saw the beast (outward manifestation) rising out of the sea (abyss, depth) of humanity (the carnal mind), Jesus expressed the same truth thus, "For from WITHIN, O-U-T O-F THE HEART OF MEN, proceed all these evil things!"

But God, blessed be His wonderful name! has a remedy for this sea-dwelling beast, Leviathan the crooked Serpent, the Dragon in the sea, for His plan of redemption is directed toward removing this beast with His strong and mighty sword - the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word (truth) of God! The Word of the Lord declares, "thou rulest the RAGING OF THE SEA: when the waves thereof arise, THOU STILLEST THEM" (Ps. 89:9). Many centuries ago the Spirit of God inspired these beautiful words of promise, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NOISE OF MANY WATERS, yea, than the MIGHTY WAVES OF THE SEA" (Ps. 93:3-4). Praise God! HE rules the inner raging of the sea and He stills all its tempests! That unstable nature within, so quickly moved by the storms created by the carnal mind, the torrents of passion, the streams of vain imaginations, the waves of frustration and fear, the winds of doubt and unbelief, the turbulent emotions of body and soul - all are quieted by the Lord, the Spirit, who arises within in peace, confidence, truth and faith to RULE THE RAGING OF THE SEA. And then follows the calm, the state described by Paul, - "that we be no more tossed to and fro with every wind...but may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:14-15). The Spirit of God within is great peace, overflowing joy, unfailing love, unwavering righteousness and omnipotent power. It is only necessary then to gain the conscious awareness of the presence and life of God as the essence of our being, and to know that this life is the law and substance of our reality. When your consciousness is imbued with the Spirit of Truth - not merely the letter of truth, but the Spirit of Truth - all inner and outer tempests are stilled, the sea is calmed, and the Dragon out of the sea vanishes over the horizon.

When John beheld in vision the unveiling of Christ - Christ the Head and Christ the body - he also saw "a throne set in heaven" with Christ upon the throne. "And before the throne there was a SEA OF GLASS like unto crystal..." (Rev. 4:16). As surely as the raging sea represents multitudes of restless, clamoring, surging, sinning humanity, so does the exquisite sea of glass before the throne of God represent an assembled throng of quickened and transformed saints IN WHOSE HEARTS THE PEACE OF GOD RULES. This great SEA OF REDEEMED MEN is calm and serene, tranquil and quiet, transformed "even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The sea-dwelling beast has been dealt with. The inner nature of man has been transformed, Satan has been bound, and the sea is now calm.

The "Sword of the Lord" is the Word of God, the living and energetic Word, the almighty Word by means of which He slays the DRAGON IN THE SEA. When the bestial nature which once brought forth raging waves of the sea is conquered the sea of man is peaceful and serene, expressing the peace of the Kingdom of God. In the earth today there are two companies of "sea people" - those of the TROUBLED SEA and the SEA OF GLASS PEOPLE. Thank God, amidst all the trouble, distress, sorrow, problems and pressures of this world system there is a SEA OF GLASS, a people abiding in the peace of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! These are "before the throne" - willing subjects of the

Lordship of the indwelling Spirit. The apostle Paul greeted the Ephesian believers with this fervent prayer: "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:2). Peace! One of the beautiful titles of our Lord Jesus Christ is "Prince of Peace." The first mark of the Kingdom of God is: Christ as King. If Christ is the Prince or King of Peace, then peace is a dimension of the Kingdom of God. There are many wonderful truths to embrace, endless revelations to inspire and thrill and transform the hearts of God's sons, but none more meaningful or sublime than that transmitted by Paul to the Romans, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17). The Kingdom of God is...PEACE!

The mark of what a kingdom is, is to be seen in the King. Christ now reigns on the throne of the Father, and that throne is individualized as the power of His presence in the heart of every saint. There is an embodiment, a manifestation of the Kingdom; its power is seen in the lives of those in whom it rules. The Christ lives and dwells and rules in our hearts! The blessed firstborn Son proclaimed to those called to be His many brethren: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" Jn. 14:27. As you acquire peace in your heart from God by the spirit of sonship, I have good news for you! You have received a dispensation of the Kingdom of God, for that is what the Kingdom is. As the peace of God reigns in your heart, in the midst of all the problems and pressures, in a world of turmoil and fear, the Prince of Peace has ascended His throne and reigns. Peace is spirit. The Kingdom of God is spiritual because God is spirit, and, never forget, my beloved - spirit is REAL! Peace is REAL! The Kingdom of God is a spiritual dimension available to men upon this earth. It is within you as the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Spirit-rule in and through you. Even now God is bringing "many sons" to walk in the conscious awareness of the Kingdom and minister its glorious and eternal reality to all mankind now and in the age and ages to come.

How the world needs this peace! Men's hearts are failing them today for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. The land is filled with violence, moral breakdown, broken homes, corruption and evil men in government, gang warfare, rebellion, sorrow and death. The world continually sinks deeper and deeper into sin and ever-increasing degradation, reveling in drunkenness, promiscuity, sodomy, blowing its minds with drugs, deafened and demented in body and soul by the raucous racket called "music", cheating, lying, stealing, raping, murdering, until it has become a seething mass of godlessness and immorality. Ah - the TROUBLED SEA! How often the raging waves of that sea beat with fury within our own breasts in the form of doubts, fears, frustrations, anxieties, sorrows and confusion. Thank God, there is another sea, the sea of glass, the power of the Lord's Spirit to minister the peace of God in the midst of tempest - a strong and mighty Word of the Lord with which to slay the Dragon in the sea. This is the message Jesus intended to convey when in the midst of the storm on the sea of Galilee He commanded, "Peace! Be still!" He had the peace within Himself or He never could have imparted it to the winds and the waves. The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy, is within you, precious friend of mine, and is becoming individualized and personified within a people for such a time as this.

As we consider these thoughts, may God almighty grant that His Spirit may instruct us in the way of truth and understanding. When John beheld the Lord coming upon a white horse, followed by the armies from heaven, he saw a sharp sword going out of His mouth "that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15). In the midst of all the confusion and darkness of this hour the Spirit of God is calling out a people for His name. He is training them in the school of obedience and

refining them in the furnace of affliction. He is stripping them of self-interest, draining them of self-will, plucking from their hearts all the deceptive ways of Babylon, causing them to abhor the vain efforts of the flesh. These are putting on the whole armor of God, these are dwelling in heavenly places, seated with Christ; these are the army from heaven that follows the Word of God into battle. From within, out of the innermost being, is arising a strong and mighty Word, the absolute truth about God and all things, by which every enemy shall be silenced. "He cast out the spirits WITH HIS WORD" (Mat. 8:16). This sin-weary world shall yet be governed by a glorious company of sons of God, every one in the image of Christ, every one a brother of Jesus Christ, every one infused with His life and invested with His authority, every one a son given "power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Lk. 10:19). The whole earth, as Eden was, shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These sons shall be able to raise their voices in mighty declarations of authority. This authority is rooted in their own experience. By the understanding of the Almighty they shall have conquered the Dragon of sin and limitation and death in their own lives. Then shall be fulfilled on the grandest scale ever the word spoken by the Lord, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk. 16:17-18). Some people have thought this meant to be able to handle poisonous snakes without being bitten. Others have supposed it meant that IF you accidentally took up a serpent, as Paul did on the island of Melita, there would be no harm. But beyond all this, let me point out to you one of the meanings of the term "take up" in this passage. Not only does the Greek word AIRO mean to "take up", it also means to "take away." It may just as well be translated, "They shall TAKE AWAY serpents," not take up and handle them. The ENTIRE SERPENT KINGDOM SHALL BE REMOVED, TAKEN AWAY by these mighty believers; yea, they shall slay the Dragon that is in the sea! And it begins now, on the personal level, in our own consciousness.

Thank God, this wonderful victory is even now being established in the experience of a people apprehended of God. How we long for such a day as this for all people and nations! Today we hear much of "deliverance ministries" and many go about "casting out devils" in lengthy sessions of exorcism attended by manifestations such as coughing, vomiting, etc. Some are told they have legions of devils and they are given names like "lazy devil," "false doctrine devil," "lust devil," "gossip devil," etc., etc. We praise God for all who are delivered in any measure from bondages of any kind, but often it is like a man at the mouth of the mighty Mississippi trying to bail out the river with a bucket - there seems to be no end to the masses of spirits, bondages, problems, and works of the flesh with which people contend. We find, however, that the redemptive work of Jesus Christ is not merely that which deals with the branches of the tree, but is that which essentially must "lay the axe to the root of the tree." That is, it is that which must take action against the Adamic mind, against the Adamic nature that exists in the very root of men's lives. That is why Paul said, "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). It is interesting to note that the word "principalities" is from the Greek ARCHE meaning commencement, beginning, origin. This bespeaks not of the branches of the tree, but the root - the commencement, beginning, origin or SOURCE of the problem - not flesh and blood, but the SPIRIT which

now worketh in the sons of disobedience! This is the Serpent, Satan, the Devil enthroned in the human nature!

The ultimate warfare lies in that deep inner realm where the source of all things is found. As long as we content ourselves to deal with individual "demons," or to treat "social ills," or to wage war "against sin," or to struggle with the "lusts of the flesh," all of which exist in the external realm of the tentacles, we shall find ourselves ever defeated in even these things. Do not try to reform the outer world of appearances. When you meet with thievery, drunkenness, adultery, pride, cursing, false religion, worldliness, or any form of degradation, do not look at it, but through it. Do not look with the eyes, with the natural understanding or perception - look with the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Look through the individual, beholding by the spirit the root and source of the issue - and there will flow grace to help. We do not deal with people in their outer form or with manifest problems - we deal with spirit. We are not called upon to heal a person; we are not called upon to reform a person; we are not called upon to heal some terrible disease; we are not called upon to change the outer activity of a human body. We are called upon to minister the living Presence, to impart mercy, love, grace and power. Then the hearts of men will respond! "The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men." That is what we are called to do. Redemption lays the axe to the root of the tree, deals with the strongman who sits enthroned in the nature, pierces the head of the octopus, automatically destroying the power of the tentacles! Speaking of the hour when the sons of God would rise to that place of authority in Jesus Christ, John the Revelator wrote, "And there was war in heaven and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not" (Rev. 12:7-8). Men must rise to that place of understanding, consciousness, and authority in the Spirit wherein the axe is laid to the root - not to some individual manifestation, some outer expression, some external action, some pesky little "demon" - but to the ROOT ITSELF: the ADAMIC NATURE WHERE SATAN'S SEAT IS! In dealing with the root, the tentacles will take care of themselves. This goes far beyond merely "casting out" the negative, it involves such a complete TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEING until the negative HAS NO GROUND TO STAND UPON, NO PLACE TO DWELL.

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the BOTTOMLESS PIT and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and satan, and cast him into the BOTTOMLESS PIT, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him..." (Rev. 20:1-3).

The "bottomless pit" is certainly not a hole in the ground; it is, rather, a Semitic symbol which signifies a state or condition wherein there is no bottom, thus NO GROUND TO STAND UPON. Satan was given "ground" in man's life when the Almighty declared to him, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat..." (Gen. 3:14). Praise God, when our adversary, the Devil, is cast into the bottomless pit, it means that he is circumvented to a realm where he has no ground to stand upon, no base for his activity, and no foundation upon which he can build his work. God is "pulling the rug out from under the Devil" as He renews our minds and transforms our nature, that there be no basis upon which the forces of evil can operate. This indicates such a transformation of being that not only are the works of the Devil destroyed in us, but also it is impossible for him to corrupt us again. Thus conformed to the image of the Son we can say with Jesus, "The prince of this world cometh, and HATH NOTHING (no place) IN ME!"

In those blessed sons of God, joined in Christ as one body, God is raising up a house in which He can dwell and manifest His glory without interference or conflict. When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, he revealed a truth which lies in contrast to the picture of Satan in the bottomless pit. "...that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). There are three aspects of the church mentioned in this wonderful passage: the "house of God," the "church of the living God," and the "pillar and ground of the truth." What does this term "the house of God" mean? When you refer to "your house," you mean the place where you dwell, where you live, where you work out your life, where you are comfortable and at home; and that is just the meaning of the house of God. It is not an empty cliché, it is not a light or loose term. The "house of God" is the place where God dwells, where He lives, where He works out His life, where He is comfortable and at home without any strain or struggle. This house is none other than the church of the living God. Notice that the term here is not merely God, but the living God. He is living! He now dwells in the church, lives in the church, moves in the church, and works out His life, not in some superstitious religious way, but naturally and comfortably in the church. When we say that the church is the house of God, we must have a very deep realization that God DWELLS, LIVES, AND WALKS OUT HIS LIFE in this house!

The true church is not only the house of God, but it is also THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH. The question follows - What is truth? Do not think that truth means doctrine! Truth is not what you believe about a thing, the truth is the very fact of the thing itself. The word truth means REALITY. Nothing is real in the whole universe, nothing is truth; everything is but a shadow. Nothing is what it appears to be. All of us could look at the same object, and every one of us might see it differently. Many who read these lines have traveled and seen in the distance a mountain having a certain form, perhaps a likeness to some other object. But as you got closer and drove around the mountain it took on altogether different shapes and the original appearance was not found there at all. Each of us interprets all things according to the finite sense of human mind, in the light of the education, environment, and background of our individual experience and knowledge. To understand that what we see represents only our concept of that which is actually there is important. Everything that can be seen, everything that can be touched, everything that can be possessed and enjoyed is not real - for creation is but the shadow of God. Only the Son is His image, His out-lying, His manifestation - all else is but His shadow. The correct understanding of the book of Hebrews makes this very clear. Whatever exists in this universe is but a shadow, not the real thing! What is the real thing? It is CHRIST - HE is the reality of everything! The food you eat is not the real food, but only the shadow of the real food. The real food is Christ! The physical life you live is not real life, but only a shadow of the real life. The real life is Christ! "I AM THE LIFE," saith the Lord. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 Jn. 5:12). If a friend has a photograph of himself, you will say, "This is so and so." But in truth that is not so and so. It is only a picture, an image, and a false image at that. In fact, all images that are not the projection of life itself are false, for living realities are not found in images. Most of what we call images are but shadows, for a shadow is an image. All the types, all the figures, in the Old Testament, as well as creation itself are but shadows of the REALITY WHICH IS CHRIST HIMSELF. Christ is the truth, Christ is the reality of the whole universe. If you just have a doctrine about Christ, you do not have the reality of Christ. And if your spirit has not been quickened by His Spirit, you still do not have either life or reality, for the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, howbeit an unlit candle which gives no light! Christ Himself is the reality, and His Spirit is the SPIRIT OF REALITY.

The people in whom this living God dwells, lives, and moves, is the PILLAR AND GROUND upon which the reality stands. It bears the reality. Within this people the living God dwells, and upon this people the truth, the reality stands. Ah, as the nature of God's people is changed by the Spirit of God Satan finds himself shut out, excluded from their lives, no ground to stand upon, no base for his activity, indeed, HE IS IN A BOTTOMLESS PIT! As new creation people our lives BECOME THE PILLAR AND GROUND of this universal reality, which is the Lord Jesus Christ! In the church God dwells, because the church is the house of God. And upon this people is BUILT THE REALITY OF CHRIST. Redeemed by His precious blood, justified by His grace, quickened by His Spirit, transformed by His Word, we become the base, the sure foundation upon which all the glory of God can be displayed. And on this holy ground is where the saint of God discovers that Satan is bound, securely chained, and a great seal set upon him. This is not a future event - it is an eternal reality to those who walk in the Spirit. In the story of the Pilgrim's Progress, you will remember that "Christian" was approaching a narrow passage as he traveled toward Porter's Lodge for the night. In the narrow passage he saw two lions but did not know that the lions were chained. Then he was afraid and considered going back, for he thought that nothing but death was before him. But the Porter at the lodge, whose name was "Watchful," perceiving that "Christian" was about to turn back, cried with a loud voice not to fear the lions for they were chained and could do him no harm. So "Christian" warily walked into the narrow passage, trembling for fear of the lions. He heard the lions roar. He felt their hot breath on his flesh, but they did him no harm for they were, indeed, on a chain. "Christian" then clapped his hands for joy and boldly went on through the narrow passage and arrived safely at the other side. Satan, the roaring lion, is chained, my friend! Not going to be - he IS. Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the messenger of the everlasting covenant, has chained him and set the seal upon him. And this Jesus lives and dwells and moves in you and me! Sometimes it seems as if the world is full of lions crouched for a spring - as if there are lots of terrifying things about to happen from formidable adversaries all about. But when we discover the power of the indwelling Christ, we find out that, as terrifying as those things seem to be, they are already chained by God. Springing doesn't get them anywhere.

Hear it! All the reality of the universe is established upon the lives of God's saints! If anyone wants to know what life is, he will see and touch it in God's people. If someone would like to know what love is, what joy is, what peace is, what truth, faithfulness, righteousness, power, glory, wisdom or knowledge is, he will see it and touch it upon and within this people. "And the government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. 9:6). "Upon the shoulder" means that THE WHOLE BODY BEARS THE WEIGHT OF IT. Jesus Christ is the Head, the mind, the leader, but the power and glory of the Kingdom rests upon His body, the PILLAR and GROUND of the TRUTH. What a day, when all nations become a bottomless pit for Satan, and he has no more ground in the nature of the human family! I can tell you, dear ones, that already Satan is finding very little "ground" to creep upon in those elect sons apprehended as the firstfruits of God's redemption. Victory upon victory they are gaining as they are changed from men of the dust to men of the Spirit, from the image of the earthy to the image of the heavenly. The reality of His divine life is being built up in their inner man, and even now THEY ARE THE GROUND, THE BASE, THE FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH, even Mount Zion of which it is written, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth (this) shall not make haste (be anxious)" (Isa. 28:16). Zion is composed of those sons in whom the Christ has been established as a sure foundation; no matter what comes, how hard the winds of adversity blow. How fierce the storm. How

overwhelming the waves, how severe the pressures, these REMAIN UNSHAKABLE, FIRM, STEADY, RESOLUTE, UNDISTURBED, CONSTANT, AND IMMOVABLE, rooted in and living out of the Spirit. Upon such a people the government, the authority of God's Kingdom rests! Through the ministry of such a people, praise God, the day shall come when throughout all the earth, in every nation and people and kindred and tribe and tongue THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA SHALL BE SLAIN BY THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, and God shall in the consciousness of every man be A-L-L I-N A-L-L. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them (the sons of God); and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: IN THE HABITATION OF DRAGONS, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. The BEAST OF THE FIELD SHALL HONOR ME, the DRAGONS AND THE OWLS... because I give drink to My people, My chosen" (Isa. 35:1,7; 43:20).

THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE!

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). "But even unto this day...the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (II Cor. 3:15-16).

Can we not see by reading these instructive statements that if we can effectively express outwardly the reality of the indwelling Christ, the world will see God. The Christ is unveiled in and through the members of the Christ body. The good news we are proclaiming is in each one veiled, waiting to be manifested and displayed. If the good news of the reconciliation of God, if the good news of the glory of God, if the good news of immortality and life in Christ Jesus, if the good news of the Kingdom of God is veiled today, my beloved, it is veiled IN YOU! If you will turn your heart to the Lord, the Spirit, you will see Him. As you turn to the life of the Spirit within the veil begins to be rent, the mind begins to open, the mind-set that has been locked in spiritual ignorance and unbelief at once begins to be unlocked. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, IN WHOM the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them." The word "lost" is from the Greek APOLLUMI meaning to die or perish. The good news is hid or veiled to those who are still dying or perishing. Are you perishing? Is it not because the good news is yet veiled to you - is not living and energetic in your experience? A few verses further on the apostle explains, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16).

It is now time that the prince of this world be cast out, the spirit of blindness in men's minds, which veils the glory of the Christ within. It is time for the Son of man to be glorified. Turn, O man, and behold the Lord! See the Lord as He is in His temple! The god of this age doesn't want this for any man. The god of this age is old Adam, the outer man, the man of your first birth, the man of flesh, who minds earthly things. It is your manhood, your humanity that does not want to fully see Christ, because for you to really see Christ is to give up all the reasonings, preconceptions, understanding, knowledge, decisions and the pursuits of the flesh to find that life-source which is the antithesis of SELF. The Adamic mind of selfhood will seek to keep you looking away from the tree of life by every means at its disposal. Contrary to what some teach, Self is not the Spirit, for except a man deny Himself and take up his cross he cannot be the disciple of the Christ. Self will blind you so that you will not turn to the Lord. Why must the prince of this world be cast

out? So that the light of the glory of God, who is the very IMAGE (GK: CHARACTER) of God, may shine to men! The character is in you, it is in the Christ, in your spirit. When you behold this Christ within the glory of Christ begins to shine and the veil is done away; the character of God is seen by all about.

The one thing that terrifies the forces of darkness is the fear that some day those who believe in Christ will wake up to the dynamic potential in the life of the Spirit within them and begin to live fully out of that realm. When this happens, the great problems that plague mankind will disappear. Ignorance will go; sin will go; disease will go; limitation will go; Satan will go; death will go; bondage of every sort will fade away and the Kingdom of God will be demonstrated in men. What a hope! What a day! And the wonder of it all is that this day is even now breaking in the hearts and lives of God's elect! I proclaim to you that the crisis hour in the history of the world has come, and God's people must now arise and shine and courageously take hold of life and bring deliverance to the whole world. Truly, we have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this!

Most of the Lord's people have an image of Jesus. They think they know just what the Lord looks like. But the image invariably corresponds to the idea of what He was when He was here in the flesh. But there isn't a single person in all the world today who can know just what Jesus might look like. Until they get rid of that image, they are going to have a very limited conception of the Christ. When the image goes and people begin to see Him as He really is, then our conception of Him will be enlarged beyond anything we can imagine. Now, just as most of God's people entertain an image of Jesus, SO THEY HAVE ONE OF SATAN. This image, too, must go before any of us can see things correctly. When all of the seventy came back to Jesus with the report that even the demons were subject unto them in the name of Jesus, He counseled them not to rejoice in that fact, but to rejoice in the fact that their names were written in heaven. Then the Lord announced, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Lk. 10:18). The preachers tell us that this refers to the time, away back before the foundation of the world, when Lucifer was cast out of heaven. Orthodoxy has long taught that Satan was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. The theologians and preachers recite over and over how Satan was originally "the anointed cherub that covereth...the most beautiful and wise of all God's creations!" This being was, so they say, the ruler and leader of the angelic beings and apparently led them in their praise of God and shouts of joy...the greatest creature God ever created, one who had unequalled strength, wisdom, beauty, privilege, and authority, and was next to God Himself. This blameless, perfect one, named Lucifer, was created without any form of evil and with the greatest intelligence of any created being. Then, we are told (Oh, the wonder of it!), this Lucifer, suddenly realizing how beautiful and intelligent he was, became inflated with pride and power and his heart was lifted up in rebellion against God. According to the story, Lucifer gathered one-third of the heavenly angels to his cause, mustering an army with which he planned to knock God off His throne and supplant himself as god and king of the universe - and there was war in heaven! Luckily, God won, cast Lucifer out of heaven and he became, instead of an holy angel, the Devil that he is.

It is nothing short of amazing that such a doctrine could have enjoyed such widespread acceptance in the light of the plain teachings of the scriptures on this subject. Any man who fails to discern between facts and fables, and who opposes and rebels against facts, is a fool. Fools manifest their true state by resisting and ignoring facts. Please remember, there is a world of difference between facts, beliefs, and fantasies. I believe the core of our natural earth is hot, perhaps molten. But no man knows anything about the true

conditions down there. There is no possible way of ascertaining or demonstrating the truth or falsity of my belief. So it remains merely a belief: it may be true, or it may be false. On the other hand, if I thought our sun were a disk painted red, that would be a fantasy, just a highly improbable or irrational idea of my own. But facts are altogether different. They are actualities, realities, whether they can be demonstrated as such or not. Ice is cold. That is a fact which can be demonstrated. The earth is round. That fact has through recent centuries been conclusively demonstrated. It is neither a belief nor a fantasy. Fire burns; one must have air to breathe; these are facts, and, only fools will oppose or resist them. Now we are going to state some facts. Let us contrast what men say and believe with what GOD says!

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is not this the MAN that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isa. 14:12-17). It should be clear to every enlightened student of God's Word that all truth has applications on different levels. It is my conviction that the inspired statements in the afore quoted passage may be applied on the historical level, the prophetic level, the spiritual level, and the personal level. In its first and historical application the one called "Lucifer" refers to the literal king of the Kingdom of Babylon in the days of Isaiah who - although mighty in political and military power and the most exalted ruler among nations - would fall just like other rulers of the past. The prophetic application points to the king of Mystery Babylon, the chief antichrist of the world's apostate church system, who is not recognized for what he is, but is lauded as the greatest religious leader in the world, by whom untold millions of those who name the name of Christ are deceived, as it is written, "And the whole world wondered after the beast." The spiritual application is found in the fall of man from his original position of glory, eminence and dominion. The message is clear - the subject of Isaiah's prophecy is a MAN - not an angelic spirit-being! "They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this THE M-A-N that made the earth to tremble...that made the earth as a wilderness: that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isa. 14:16-17).

"Lucifer," instead of being the name of an angel who became the Devil, was THE NAME THE ANCIENT'S GAVE TO THE MORNING STAR. Pliny, a noted historian of antiquity, says, "Before the sun revolves, a very large star...when in advance and rising before dawn receives the name Lucifer, being another sun and bringing the dawn..." Lucifer, the light-bringer, is the Latin equivalent of the Greek word PHOSPHOROS, which is used as a title for Christ in II Pet.1:19. Peter had been discussing the glorious experience that he, along with James and John, had had with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Speaking of the voice that spoke to them there, he said, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well to take heed...until the day dawn and the DAY STAR (Greek: phosphoros; Latin: lucifer) arise in your hearts." I do not have the ability to make this truth any plainer than Jesus Himself made it when He called Himself the PHOSPHOROS or the LUCIFER in Rev. 22:16, saying, "I AM...the BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR." In the messages of Christ to the seven churches in the book of Revelation a special promise was always given to him that overcometh, but to the church at Thyatira He gave a promise that is worthy to fill every page of this article. May our Lord

give us the spirit of revelation to understand what He said: "And he that overcometh... I will give him THE MORNING STAR" (Rev. 2:26, 28). Just think of that! My beloved, ponder if you will - whether we call it "Day Star", "Morning Star", or "Lucifer"- it is all the same. This "rising of the Day Star" in our hearts is the out-raying of the Christ within, for, you see, HE IS the Day Star! It should be obvious to every spiritual mind that what is recovered through the redemption of Jesus Christ is WHAT ADAM HAD IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. Adam in the image and likeness of God was so indwelt by light, so a partaker of the Christ Life, that he was himself a DAY STAR - the shining one of creation!

Truly, Adam is the man who made the earth to tremble, who shook kingdoms, and made the earth a wilderness, for it was to him and him alone that these terrible words were spoken, "Cursed is the ground (earth realm) for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). As we meditate upon these sobering words of judgment, we cannot imagine words that more exactly describe the tragic picture of the fall of man from his exalted position in God. Driven from the garden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; the whole earth realm (cursed) with sorrow, sin and death for his sake; no more could Adam hear the voice of God walking in the cool of the day - he no longer possessed spiritual ears. No more could Adam eat of the blessed fruit of the tree of life - he no longer possessed a spiritual mind. No more could Adam behold the glories of that heavenly realm - he no longer possessed spiritual eyes. He who had never known anything but the rest of God was to labor and toil in the earth. The heavens were closed, the communion with the spirit was broken, and Adam found himself stripped of the life and light and dominion that had been his - he no longer possessed a spiritual nature. What a loss! What unspeakable loss!

In its personal application the king of Babylon - Lucifer - is you and me and everyman by our first birth - the identity of old Adam. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! When Adam fell, the loss was both his and upon every descendant of his - all were cast into a wilderness of spiritual desolation and shut up in the prison house of sin, suffering, limitation and death. As one has written, "Now poor, sin-laden mankind darkened in mind and impoverished in spirit, is forever spending money for that which is not bread and laboring that which satisfieth not. Vainly they imagine that their thirst can be slaked by partaking of the stagnant waters of earth's fleshly cisterns. Like lost sheep they wander through the wilderness of life seeking satisfaction and finding none. Place after place they roam in their pitiful search for the fountain that satisfies, but find it they never can until at last they come to Christ. They fill the bars and nightclubs to buy wine and strong drink that can do no more than dull their senses, unleashing their passions and rage. They throng the places of pleasure in their unending longing to satisfy the thirst that is within them. They fill their lives with the vanity of things and more things, only to find that all they have attained rises to mock them in the end." Ahh - how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!

When the Lord Jesus told his disciples that He beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven, He was saying that he had seen Satan FALL OUT OF HIS (JESUS) HEAVEN, or actually Jesus had seen Satan FALL BEFORE HIM, and become subservient to Him in the realm of the Spirit. So far as Jesus was concerned Satan was no longer in possession of any authority whatsoever. Jesus spake not of an historical event, but a living reality that He had seen occur within His own consciousness, life and ministry. THIS WE ALL MUST SEE AND KNOW if we are to have any sense of victory in our lives, if we are to truly walk as the sons of God. We must realize that if Satan has fallen he is not the almost-almighty head of a kingdom, but he has been stripped and his kingdom has been broken. This

must be embraced as a wonderful reality within ourselves. When we realize that Satan has fallen before THE CHRIST WITHIN US, then we really will be set free! When this truly happens we are on our way - not to a rapture - but to that high and holy position that God has created for us and determined to bring us to.

To those who have Satan yet in their consciousness elevated to a position of power and who carry in their thinking an image of him, HE HAS NOT AS YET FALLEN. Such people have made a god of him, but in your life, precious one, He is to be cast down, and you are to know once and for all that THERE IS ONLY GOD WHO RULES ALL. If God is controlling a part of this world and Satan is running another part, may God indeed help us ! We would be under two governments and our lives would be a hell. But to some of us, at least, SATAN HAS FALLEN and has ceased to be a king in our domain. When this truth is revealed in power and glory within your deepest heart, for you, at last, THERE WILL BE NO DEVIL ANYMORE!

In closing this message I would share a beautiful and significant vision received by a sister in Argentina to whom the Lord has given abundance of revelations. I do not feel to comment, but leave it for the Holy Spirit to interpret this to your own heart. She relates...

"Wrapping me in His love, He carried me away in spirit into the world of harmonic life and light. There, after His usual welcome of love and taking away my fears, He took me to look. When I did so, I saw what seemed to be dark, evil-looking teeth which were sharp, pointed, long and ugly. Coming out from these teeth was something very repugnant which He named "poison". Then God took something that was a part of His very own being and gave it to those ugly, hollow teeth that looked like great serpent fangs which were pouring out poison. This poison from the fangs flowed into that part of Himself which God had given to them, and in this way were fully satisfied. Flowing into the part which God had given, the poison was fully satiated. This part - which had come forth from Him and was a part of His own being - completely absorbed all the poison that these great Fangs poured forth" - end quote. What a Word!

Chapter 21

Sagittarius - The Archer

We come now in our study to the fourth in the Signs of the Zodiac - SAGITTARIUS. The word Sagittarius means THE ARCHER. He is a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares – the very heart of the Scorpion. The apostle Paul in the book of Acts (Acts 17:28) quotes from "Diosemeia," a great poem by the Greek poet Aratus, which sets forth the whole picture of the Zodiac into verse. Not many are aware that Paul quoted from a famous poem about the Zodiac - and appealed to the words of that poem as confirmation of the fact that man is the offspring of God! When Aratus comes to the section on Sagittarius he says,

"Midst golden stars he stands refulgent now, and thrusts the Scorpion with his bended bow."

This is the picture of One who in refulgent glory rides forth upon a white horse with a bow, going forth as the conquering King to conquer and to conquer. It is the war between Christ and Satan. We hear much talk about "Star Wars." My beloved, the real star wars are written in the starry heavens by the fingers of the omnipotent and omniscient God of the universe. The constellations of the heavens depict the spiritual battle behind all earthly battles. The one who is conquered is the Scorpion - the Prince of darkness, the Lord of sin, sorrow and death. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion!

Sagittarius has been discovered by the American astronomer, Harlow Shapley, to be the center of the Milky Way galaxy. I was not previously aware of that fact. But I think it is particularly interesting to note that here is the first great picture of Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy Satan. It turns out that Sagittarius (the archer, the conqueror) is the center of our galaxy, as well as Christ the great Redeemer. To my mind that is indeed a fascinating observation. You see, not only is our galaxy the launching pad for God's redemptive and reconstructive program on behalf of the whole creation, but the fact that Sagittarius is located at the center of our galaxy bespeaks of a truth wondrously set forth in type and symbol not only in the celestial heavens, but also in the Garden of Eden, and indeed throughout the revelation of the scriptures. We have discussed this in a previous message, but let me reiterate for a moment. Against the background of the picture of the Garden of Eden it is related how man was put into this Garden in order to live in it and how two trees stood in the middle of the Garden: one the tree of life, the other the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And upon these two trees IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN the destiny of man was to be decided. Two trees in the middle. First of all there is the tree of life: LIFE, abundant, immortal, incorruptible, eternal! It was IN THE MIDDLE - that is all that is said about it! It was right there in man's consciousness, in man's nature. The life that comes forth from God is in the middle. This means that God, the source of life, is in the middle. Adam's life was to come from the middle which was not Adam in his self-consciousness, but in his God-consciousness. This means that with God as his center man would have life. Christ was the center. It means that man was created and formed with the wonderful capacity to LIVE IN THE SPIRIT and WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT. "For...to be SPIRITUALLY MINDED is life" (Rom. 8:6).

But, like the tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil also stands in the middle of the Garden! To this tree is attached the command not to eat of it upon penalty of death. Death in the middle. Within. In man's very nature. Thus it is declared with unquestionable certainty that man was formed with the capacity to LIVE IN THE FLESH and WALK AFTER THE FLESH. "For to be CARNALLY MINDED is death" (Rom. 8:6). One of man's inherent potentials was to know Self as the source and center of his life. But alas! Self would not bring life, it would mean death. Man could make the world of appearances, the physical realm, mortal consciousness, the bodily senses and appetites his center but death would be found to dwell in that center. Life and death were in the middle. Two trees, two realities IN THE MIDST of the Garden of man's being and experience. Both are in the middle - within man. One or the other is every man's center, the plane of his consciousness, the sphere of his existence. But mark it well - both cannot be the center of any man's life! He who eats of the tree of life will find that the death realm will come to have no more dominion over him. And he who eats of the tree of death will discover that he becomes alienated from the life of God. Thus, both trees are in the center of man's life but both cannot be the center of his life! "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). And I have good news for you, my friend. CHRIST IS VICTOR! The tree of life shall win the battle! Life shall triumph over death! Sagittarius, the Archer, riding forth conquering and to conquer, wins the victory! Sagittarius is the center of our galaxy - the all-conquering Redeemer! As it is written, "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). This wonderful victory is wrought out right here within our earth - in the deepest recesses of mind, will, emotion and desire. Christ comes in making war with every false image, smiting every lie and misrepresentation of His character, and conquering every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

Long centuries ago the sweet singer of Israel penned these inspiring and prophetic words: "My heart is indicting a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrow's are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of Thy Kingdom is a right scepter. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad. King's daughters were among Thy honorable women: upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir" (Ps. 45:1-9).

Commenting on this beautiful passage Joseph A. Seiss wrote: "These words are from one of the most glowing of the Psalms, in the writing of which David's heart boiled with goodly words. It is marked: 'To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah - Maschil. A song of loves.' The lily-instrument, the master-performer, and the whole body of singers were called into requisition for its rendering. As a sublime ode it was to be given with the sublimest skill, for it relates to the loveliest of heroes in the loveliest of His aspects, offices, and relations to His people. This hero is none other than the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His royal majesty and glory subsequent to His resurrection, and as to be hereafter revealed. When on earth He was despised and rejected of men, but here He is celebrated as 'beautiful, beautiful, above the sons of

man,' endowed with every grace and invested with all authority and power. When on earth He was meek and non-resistant, not breaking so much as a bruised reed; but here He is contemplated and addressed as a mounted warrior, riding as a king, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. John, in his visions of the future, beheld 'a white horse; and He that sat on him had a bow; and He went forth conquering and to conquer.' It is the same divine Hero, in the same character, offices, and work, in both instances. He has a crown, a throne, and a cause - which cause He enforces with invincible majesty. His former sufferings are now turned to aromatic perfumes upon Him. Out of the ivory palaces He is gladdened with the sound of a harp. And in glory and triumph He rides forth unto victory, hailed by the daughters of kings and worshipped by the queen at His right hand arrayed in the gold of Ophir. The picture is particularly magnificent. We cannot contemplate it without sharing the enthusiasm with which the inspired Psalmist sketched it. But the surprising thing is, that it is also in the Zodiac, and appears at full length in THE SIGN OF SAGITTARIUS! In this sign we have again the double-natured Seed of the virgin, the Son of God as the Son of man. The figure is that of a mighty warrior with bow and arrows, riding prosperously" - end quote.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Let us now consider the more excellent glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords, whom God has ordained to subdue all things, to bring blessedness to all the earth, and reconciliation and transformation to every man who has lived, or ever will live. The fifth and sixth chapters of Revelation concern themselves with the almost incredible processes of God in Christ effecting this wondrous victory in the hearts and lives of men. Many years before this vision on Patmos John, the beloved, treading the dusty trails of Palestine, beheld in the life of his beloved Master the blazing glory of God in such spiritual warfare in an infinitely greater way than ever any man had experienced, overcoming the compounded powers of the world, the flesh, and the devil, triumphing over sin, death, and the grave. Satan dogged His path and the flesh shouted its claims, but He overcame both the devil and the flesh. At last He lay within the lonely precincts of the tomb, facing the last enemy, the greatest enemy - death itself. There He met and mastered that enemy, demonstrating within the narrow tomb the awesome power of the Spirit of life over mortality and corruption. There were rock-ribbed walls in the way, and a great stone must be rolled away from the entrance to the tomb; but Jesus vanquished every obstacle and stepped forth from His gloomy resting-place, crowned with the glory of a sublime victory, an eternal triumph, opening up the way to life and immortality to all who are willing to follow Him into the power and glory of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord is a SPIRITUAL CONQUEROR!

Now on desolate Patmos wonderful visions pass before the rapt gaze of the lonely prophet. John, describing the unspeakable wonders he beheld, said, "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof! And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the

midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and He that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 5:1-7; 6:1-2).

The book of Revelation is first and foremost a SPIRITUAL BOOK. It is a book of spiritual realities communicated by means of signs and symbols. You will not read the fulfillment of its prophecies on the pages of Newsweek magazine, but you will see them manifest in the lives of men and women and in the great accomplishments of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the Kingdom of God? "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds..." (II Cor. 10:4). The battles beheld in spirit by the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos signify spiritual combats, combats between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between the carnal mind and the precious mind of Christ, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death. A man must experience this combat within himself to become a spiritual conqueror and gain the crown of life. To many Christians the book of Revelation is a hopeless puzzle, so they ignore it. Others consider it the agenda, in a code which they alone have solved, setting forth the dreadful events that will take place at the end of the world. There is a striking thing told us at the very outset of the book - it is a REVELATION. And one of the reasons that the book of Revelation has been so misrepresented, mistaught and misunderstood is because men have thought that it was the unveiling of world events in the future. It is not the unveiling of events but the unveiling of a Person who has not yet been seen in all of His glory, beauty and majesty. He is like a statue that has a veil put over it, awaiting the day when the veil shall be removed and he shall be seen in all His fullness.

The very first statement in the book of Revelation is - "The REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST." It is T-H-E REVELATION, not "revelations" plural, or a series of revelations. Everything in the book bespeaks of the unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is not "The Revelation of Saint John the Divine," as the Bible translators have erroneously titled it. It is the only book in the Bible of which we are told that it is a revelation. It is not that the other books do not contain the same revelatory characteristic; but our attention is specifically called to the fact that this is THE REVELATION of Jesus Christ. This is significant. Many Bible teachers believe that the book must be one of future earthly events that were to be unfolded, but it is my deepest conviction that this is not the case. The Revelation cannot be intended as a series of historical happenings because it is the revelation of a Person, God and man (the Centaur) - Jesus Christ. After the Lord Jesus ascended into the heavens, He remained hidden behind the cloud that had received Him on the Mount of Olives. Now comes THE REVELATION to unveil Him. In this revelation the Christ is seen in the glory into which He has entered. Jesus Christ is the central figure of the whole vision that is unfolded. HE, not the future of Israel, or the destiny of empires, or the march of history, or the end of the world, dominates the book. The Revelation sets before us a glorious Person, with the veil removed from our eyes so that we may look upon Him. "Revelation" is the Greek word APOKALUPSIS. This word APOKALUPSIS is a derivative of APOKALUPTO. APOKALUPTO is a compound word composed of APO, meaning "off" or "away," and KALUPTO, meaning "to cover up." Thus, APOKALUPSIS means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, reveal or disclose. It implies the drawing away or

removal of everything that veils or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy, as in the following passage: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed (uncovered)" (Mat. 10:26). From this we understand that all that pertains to this writing of John is to reveal, unveil, and uncover Jesus Christ - all that has been hidden or obscured to our thinking, consciousness, understanding or experience is to be plainly grasped and made a glorious and eternal reality. As the scenes depicted in the book are experienced truly and spiritually within our lives, Jesus Christ will emerge within our consciousness and experience demonstrating in and through us the fullness of His love, character, wisdom, power and abilities. Paul wrote to the saints at Colosse that the mystery which had been hidden from generations and ages past was now to be made manifest to the saints, which is, CHRIST I-N Y-O-U THE HOPE OF GLORY. Understood as the revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body, immediately the book is changed from a prophecy of cataclysmic and apocalyptic end-time events, to a progressive unfolding of the very life, victory and triumph of the Christ in His people and unto creation. Every scene within the book, of the woes, thunders, earthquakes, conflicts, vials, beasts, etc., in all of their sundry and various manifestations, are all to serve but one purpose, and contribute to but one end, namely, TO BRING FORTH THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. And as this revelation comes to its magnificent conclusion, He shall stand revealed, uncovered and manifested to the utmost of the unbounded heavens in and through His own. "We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that, if reality were to break through, we should reflect His likeness, for we should see Him as He really is" (I Jn. 3:2, Phillips). Reality shall break through! And we shall be like Him! "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13). Paul writes of "waiting for the coming (revelation) of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall confirm you unto the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:7-9). There is a grace that is brought to us by the revelation of our Lord, it is a grace which will climax all the processings and travail, and bring us into the ultimate realm of His glory - the fullness of His abundant life. God is faithful! He will confirm us unto the end - the full redemption of the purchased possession - complete salvation in spirit, soul and body - the revelation of HIS LIFE!

The great Italian sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini, told of receiving a block of marble with one flaw. Because of this flaw, no artist would submit a design - except one. In the public square of Florence a fence was built around that piece of marble, and a little shack was erected for the artist. For two years the sculptor labored. Then on a certain day a vast multitude of the citizens of Florence assembled in the public square; the fence was torn down, and the shack was taken away. At this unveiling all of Florence beheld the result and marveled. Since then, Italy and all the world has marveled at Michelangelo's "David". In that block of marble was a statue; others did not see it, but Michelangelo did. And, precious friend of mine, in the lump of clay which is you, the almighty Father sees an image too - the image of Jesus Christ! And God is working unceasingly and tirelessly to form the image of His Son in you. No truth has come with more soul-gripping force and power to the elect of the Lord than the beautiful hope of sonship to God. Well indeed may we yield ourselves into the hands of heaven's skilled sculptor that HE may form His Son in us, for the mind of omniscience has ordained that that sonship should be the hope of all creation. It is for sonship that the whole creation groans in a sort of universal travail while it eagerly waits to see the glorious sight of God's sons coming into their own (Rom. 8:22-23). It is the Son in the sons - the revelation of Jesus Christ! There is coming a day when all the glories of the Son of God will be revealed and manifested in the sons of God. With a heart of understanding and a spirit bright with the hope of God's eternal

purpose the apostle penned these meaningful words, "...it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL (apokalupta; unveil) HIS SON I-N M-E" (Gal. 1:15-16).

One can never understand correctly the book of Revelation if his eyes are engaged with some side issue. The unveiling of "the beast" and his "image" and his "mark" are side issues. That is, they are merely revealed as the result of the flooding light issuing forth from God's blessed Lamb. When Jesus Christ is revealed, in that true light of God, the brightness of His glory, the negative realm appears AS IT IS, for what it is, that it may be duly brought to judgment, dealt with and eradicated from our lives. The fiercest beast I have ever known in my life was the beast of old Adam's nature, the carnal mind, the seed of the serpent lurking within my own bosom. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? How I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the penetrating light of heaven's Lamb which uncovers the subtleness and deceitfulness of this wild beast raging within MY EARTH! Years ago we lived in Cuba; how well I remember the huge cockroaches that used to invade our home there. At night they marched right in from the outside like an invincible army. They came by the hundreds. In the night hours you had only to turn on the light and their presence was revealed. And as soon as the light shone upon them, revealing their intrusion, they would run for cover, fleeing like a discomfited troop. In like manner, it is not the uncovering of these dark and sinister forces in the book of Revelation that constitutes the revelation of Jesus Christ. Rather, it is the revelation, the unveiling of the blessed Lamb which penetrates our darkness and exposes all that is not of God, that it might be once and for all dethroned from mind, heart and action. As the daylight chases away the darkness - in the very nature of things - so the unveiling of Jesus Christ is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God destroying, removing, swallowing up the power of the negative realm in us. The daylight fills the world just as truly as the night darkness ever did. Even so, the light of God shall fill the world, even our world, and the world outside of us as truly as the darkness of sin, sorrow and death has done. Before it is all over, every creature in heaven, earth and hell shall have had a revelation of the Son of God.

Not only is this the Revelation of Jesus Christ, but of this Revelation the Seer of Patmos declares, "...and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (Rev. 1:1). The word "signified" could be read SIGN-I-FIED, for the Greek verb translated "signified" is the word from which the Greek noun "sign" comes. Signified means literally, "to give a sign, told in signs, to communicate by means of signs or symbols," indicating that the living message of this closing book of the Bible is set forth in sign language, or symbols. Signs have a very large place in the scriptures, as any concordance will show. And signs were divinely given to illuminate, reveal, disclose - not to mystify or conceal. They were given to be studied, interpreted, and understood. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is set forth by many signs, and it has puzzled or baffled many; yet, as has been pointed out, the very title of the book shows that it is not a book of concealment but of revealing. The eye is quicker than the ear. And there is therefore no language so expressive as the language of symbols. The crowd will better catch your meaning by one apt symbol than by a thousand words. With few exceptions the symbolisms employed in the book of Revelation appear in the other books of the Bible; so it should not be too difficult to understand that the living realities this book is designed to convey sum up and bring to a climax in God's elect the many themes already traced throughout the Old and New Testaments.

You will understand a great truth when you understand that a sign is never the reality - it merely points to the reality. The fact that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was

communicated to John in the form of signs and symbols shows clearly that there is no "literalness" in the book. When you read of a candlestick it is not a literal lamp stand of beaten gold, it stands for a reality, in this case the living church of Jesus Christ. When you read of a lamb it is not a four-legged lamb that is meant - it is the Christ in His meek, redemptive, life-giving character. There are many symbols in this book; a dragon fights with rivers flooding from its mouth, and a seven-headed beast climbs out of a sea. When you read of mountains, an earthquake, a beast, horns, rivers, oceans, stars, sun, moon, heads, marks, horses, wars, floods, angels, books, etc., NONE OF THESE WILL EVER BE SEEN LITERALLY OR PHYSICALLY UPON THE EARTH OR IN HEAVEN ABOVE. These, with all the other signs in the book, are communications of SPIRITUAL REALITIES expressed in the form of symbols. Years ago a stranger in town was looking about as he walked down Main Street. Soon a gentleman accosted him and asked what he was looking for. "A Barber's Pole," came the reply. "Do you need support" he was asked. "No. I want the Barber Shop. I was looking merely for the sign." It was not the Barber's Pole he sought - the Pole was but the symbol pointing to the reality - the Barber Shop! Never forget as you read the book of Revelation - the sign is never the reality! When it says an angel flew through heaven, you will never see the angel for he never flew and never will. He is a sign. The literalization of the book of Revelation has given rise to a number of popular myths. Some people believe that heaven literally has streets of gold and pearly gates; understanding not that the city is a people, the gates are an entrance to the Glory of God and the street of gold is a walking in the divine nature of God. Thank God for the REALITY! As the heavens are higher than the earth, so far does the reality transcend the symbol! Others view Armageddon as the final world war, perhaps a nuclear holocaust, to be fought by a conglomerate of nations in a small and insignificant area of the land of Israel called "the valley of Megiddo," a place where a lot of historical battles took place. "End of the world" stories have been circulating ever since there have been human beings on earth. "Tribulation," "Antichrist," and "mark of the beast" theories have been spawned in practically every generation for the last two thousand years. None have ever come to pass. People like to be scared, and some like to scare others. Fear is one of the most powerful tools known to humanity, and has often been misused by religious leaders as by politicians. Notwithstanding its mysterious nature, the book was not written to frighten or bewilder its readers, for, not scared, but "Blessed (happy) is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy...for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ will never be plumbed by human intellect. One has asked, "Was there not a key sent with the book, and has this been lost: Was it thrown into the sea of Patmos or the Mediterranean?" "No" answers the Spirit of Truth. The key was sent along the book, and it has been allowed to lie rusty and unused, while all kinds of false keys and pick locks have been tried, and tried in vain, until men have come to look upon the book as an unintelligible enigma, only meant to puzzle and confuse. But the true key has all along been visible enough! And the attention of men has been loudly called to it. It is Christ who is giving the revelation. These things man can never know unless they are revealed. No human wisdom could foreknow these mysteries; no human mind could understand them. Furthermore, John was "in the Spirit" in the day of the Lord when he received the revelation. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:10-11). So many are looking today in the natural for the events of scripture to come to pass, but John was in the Spirit when he wrote the book - he wasn't in the natural! He was in a realm beyond the natural, and beholding events in a realm beyond

the natural. These things are written in a language that only the spiritual mind can understand. A natural mind produces a natural concept. It should be obvious that only a person who knows French is able to read a book from France written in French. A Frenchman is the most likely person in the world to understand the most difficult treatise in the French language. In like manner, the book of Revelation was written IN THE SPIRIT, in the language of the Spirit, and it requires a spiritual unfoldment to understand it. Only the man who lives and walks in the Spirit can receive from it. You must be a citizen of the land - the heavenlies - where the language of the book is known. You must read and understand it in the language in which it is written. You must know the language of Spirit. We must be quickened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God for the message to be comprehended. A spiritual book must be spiritually discerned.

No word given to a prophet from the Lord by the Holy Spirit can be truthfully understood or interpreted unless the same spiritual understanding is given to the reader by the Holy Spirit that gave it originally to the prophet. You must have the ability to "hear what the Spirit saith," and it must be in the same anointing wherein it was spoken and written. The book of Revelation, like any other part of the scriptures and prophecies of the Holy Spirit, must be "spiritually" understood. The term "in the Spirit" is much more profound than it appears in our English translation. The Greek word means "to become, or became." What John relates here is that he became in Spirit. He received an entrance into a realm that was much deeper and more intense than his world of outer consciousness - beyond the material realm. He came into the realm of heaven, and heaven is the omnipresent realm of Spirit. Heaven is the home of all celestial beings - not a geographical or astral location, but a dimension of life, being, reality and consciousness. The purpose of the Revelation is to reveal to us what takes place when one enters into the realm of the Spirit, to live and move and have his being in the Spirit. When we enter into this new realm we experience new things happening to us.

Many years ago Albert Hughes penned the following words of keen spiritual insight: "The vision will be understood only by the spiritual man. The natural man will meet with many difficulties as he seeks to know the book. No human intellect or natural ability will be sufficient. Only the spiritually discerning will ever discern. The book has a language all its own, a language fully foreign except to those whose conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior. Only those in whose mind is the light of glory will ever understand these sublime symbols, this precious phraseology. Only in the Spirit is such triumph possible. Physically, John was in Patmos; spiritually, he was in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. That which John experienced at Patmos was something beyond his conversion. It was a new consciousness, a complete communion. He was in tune and in touch with the infinite so that it was with the most perfect ease that God revealed His plans. Just because you have never had such an experience as this you have not the right to criticize some one who has had it. How can a Judas judge a woman who breaks an alabaster box? Let us not criticize Isaiah and Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Paul and John unless we have had something better than they have had. If you have never yet realized the highest passion of the Spirit, have common sense enough not to judge those who have. When Isaiah catches that vision of the Lord high and lifted up, when he sees the posts of the door move and the whole house of God filled with the cloud of His glory, who am I to say I do not believe it? When Paul's friend is lifted up into the third heaven and sees things that his tongue cannot describe, who am I to say he is in a trance? When John the beloved tells me that he saw this vision of the exalted Savior because he was in the Spirit, who am I to deny it? But to receive such, you must be in the Spirit.

"John was a translated man, a transformed man. Only the Spirit can do this. When this takes place in any life, we hear and see things not possible at any other time. John was told to write what he heard and saw, a most difficult task indeed. And to get others to believe you when you do write, is even more difficult. For nearly two thousand years, men have been disputing concerning what John wrote. How can men who have never seen and heard, judge the writings or the discourses of those who by the Spirit have both seen and heard? It is a mystery certainly, but not a mystery which cannot be understood. It is a revealed mystery, revealed to those who have been enlightened. This mystery can never be known by the natural man, with all his natural powers, but it is a mystery which is blessed to those whose minds and hearts have been touched by the Divine Spirit. May that Spirit who makes all revelation understood, come to us (in consciousness) and make plain this Word, this Voice, this Vision, this Personality. May we meet with him who was dead, but is alive again, until He makes us glad with the joy of His countenance, until our faces are lighted with the light of His eternal glory, until our hearts burn within us with the fullness of His reality, leading us ever onward and upward until we see Him face to face, and become like Him by seeing Him even as He is" - end quote.

THE SEALED BOOK

The fifth chapter of the book of Revelation represents a scene in heaven - the realm of Spirit. A book is held in the right hand of the Majesty on high, in the hand of Him who sits upon the throne of Omnipotence. The scene is purely spiritual. God is omnipresent Spirit. God never sat on a throne. He never held a book in His right hand. His throne is the dimension of His omnipotent power. The book is the symbol of the revelation of Himself in and through a people. The book was not a book as we know books, but a scroll of papyrus or parchment, written on both sides, rolled up and sealed with seven seals. No one has been able to open the book or even look upon it, signifying that none were able to DISCERN that which was written therein. John, who has been watching the transcendent scene, has been moved to tears because no one has been able to take the book or break the seals; but presently the Lamb comes to the great throne-sitter and takes the book out of His hand. Immediately all heaven breaks forth into song, and the voices cry: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). It is a song of triumph, proclaiming that the rule, the reign and glory of redemption and the Kingdom of God is come; that a people has been redeemed to manifest His power and His life on the earth. This book has to do with redemption and the manifestation of the power of the Kingdom of God.

The scene is rooted in the old Hebrew custom regarding the purchase of property. When property was purchased the deed to the new owner was made out in duplicate, an open copy and a sealed copy. The open copy was clearly for public information, open to all; the sealed copy as clearly belonged only to the owner of the property as his evidence of ownership. If a new heir came to take possession of an estate, or in case of a dispute over ownership, the claimant who was adjudged the rightful heir or owner would be given the possession of the sealed roll, or deed. And, as so attested by the judge, he only would be properly qualified to "take" the sealed roll, break the seal, read its contents, and formally take possession of the property. Now it is under the symbolism of this old bit of Hebrew custom that our Lord Jesus is here represented as stepping forward to take possession of the purchased possession and begin His reign over it. A Hebrew, immersed in the old primitive customs prevailing among his people in the land of Israel,

would understand this allusion at once. The language used by the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in the song of praise when Jesus takes the scroll reveals the nature of the scroll. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed (purchased) us by Thy blood..." Jesus purchased these kings and priests unto God and is now taking possession of His purchased possession! It speaks of the internal processes of redemption, and the substance and value of our redemption.

Such a book was written, subscribed, sealed and rolled when Jeremiah purchased a plot of ground in Anathoth of Hanameel, the son of Shallum, his uncle. He says, "And I bought the field that was in Anathoth of Hanameel my uncle's son, and weighed him the money, seventeen shekels of silver. And I signed the deed and sealed it, and called witnesses, and weighed him the money on scales. So I took the deed of the purchase, both that which was sealed, containing the terms and conditions, and the copy which was unsealed, and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, in the sight of Hanameel my uncle's son and the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, in the presence of all the Jews who sat in the court of the guard. And I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware vessel, that they may last a long time (this was just prior to the Babylonian exile). For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall be purchased yet again in this land" Jer. 32:9-15). This deed was a book similar to the seven-sealed book taken by the hand of the Lamb from the hand of the throne-sitter. It is the "evidence of purchase." It is the "book of purchase." It is the title deed of HIS inheritance in the saints! It is the value of our redemption! It is the substance of our inheritance! Truly, O Lord Jesus, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou hast redeemed us..." "Redeemed!" That signifies an ownership by "purchase." He could take the book because He was the purchaser. The book was the evidence of His purchase, the book of His purchase. As the celestial choir announces that He has purchased them by His blood; that He has made them a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and that they will reign on the earth as the result of His taking and opening the book, then, evidently, the book being the evidence of His purchase, is THE TITLE DEED TO HIS KINGDOM.

It is the book which unfolds for us and in us and through us everything that pertains to our inheritance in Christ. It is the revelation of the spirit- the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. It is the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus. The breaking of the seals is the solemn and judicial way in which the Lamb nature establishes His rule and reign in those who have been purchased. It is the processing of God whereby the life of the Lamb is uncovered and unfolded within us. This is a book within a book. Literally, in the book of Revelation the seven-sealed book is a book within the book John wrote of his visions. However, spiritually this means that John was brought to the place where he could see the intention of God written in the nature of a people. There are seven seals upon this book. The number seven denotes that contained in this book (Spirit) is the totality of God's character and the complete revelation of His will and purpose. As these seals are loosed in God's people they begin to experience the fullness of all that God is. There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. But now there is a people, His body, the completion of Him, that has been sealed unto the day of redemption and when God has loosed in them all the seals there will be brought forth in the earth a many membered expression of God at the same level

of God's fullness. You will know Him no longer by measure, you will see Him no more through a glass darkly, or as a reality beyond and outside of yourself. He will no longer be a mental image, a good feeling, an ideal, a philosophy or doctrine. You will know Him even as you are known by Him and will see Him face to face.

A remarkable prophecy was given by a saint of God in the year 1619. A portion of this prophecy confirms the truth I now share. It says, "There shall be a full redemption of Christ. This is a hidden mystery not to be revealed or understood without the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at hand to reveal the same unto all holy seekers and loving enquirers. The completion of such redemption is withheld and abstracted by the seals of Revelation. Wherefore; as the Spirit of God shall open seal after seal, so shall this redemption come to be revealed, both particularly and universally. In the gradual opening of the mystery of redemption in Christ, does consist the unsearchable wisdom of God, which will continually reveal new and fresh things to the worthy seeker. The unsealing of the living testimony (perfected remnant of Believers, the manchild, the literal sons of God's people), along with the ark of God (Jesus Christ), must begin the promulgation of the everlasting Gospel of the Kingdom" - end quote.

WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:2-5). John said no man was found WORTHY to open the book. He knew he was not worthy himself, and he looked for someone to come up who was worthy. Would not Joseph, Moses, Samuel, or Elijah come? Nay, neither patriarch, priest, nor prophet was worthy; not Peter, nor Paul, nor himself. John says, "I wept much."

"Worthy" is from the Greek word AXIOS. In his inspired and inimitable way Ray Prinzing has shared on this thought: "We pause to note the word 'worthy,' being the Greek word AXIOS. While the word means: to be deserving, to merit, there is a depth contained in this expression, and some Bible Scholars give it to mean: worthy by rank, by character, by ability, by action. Certainly Christ's merits were equal to the honor, and His abilities to the task. His character was without blemish and without spot. His rank was as the very Son of God. And all that He did now causes us to bow before Him, and sing, 'Thou art worthy!' John beheld the book in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne - full well he knew what that document was - evidence of an inheritance lost, and yet with a promise of redemption. Perhaps he waited with bated breath for one to come and open the book - fulfill its requirements, and bring forth the promised redemption. And NO MAN was found - not even among the saints who 'by faith' were among 'the spirits of just men made perfect' (Heb. 12:23). None found in heaven, and certainly none found on earth. From the time when Adam and Eve had sewed their fig leaves together for a covering, man has consistently tried to work out his own redemption, and utterly failed. Through all his self-righteous efforts he has proven over and over again the utter futility of man to regain his lost inheritance. There are no 'do-it-yourself' works which will avail. Once any man has lost his first estate of innocence and purity, he cannot redeem himself back into that estate again. But when none was found worthy to open the book, his emotions could be held in restraint no longer, and he wept much. If none was found worthy, then the

promise of the prophets, the hope of all the saints, yea, of all creation was dashed to despair. Failure at this point, and people would remain in corruption, forever subject to the tyranny of change and decay. This was a crucial moment! As goes the words of the beautiful Christmas Carol: 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee...' Faith that held mankind through his trials would be meaningless. The Word which had sustained them through deep processings would become as a fable. Redemption was the only answer, and if there be none to redeem, what then? So John went on weeping" - end quote.

Who is worthy? In the natural there is none worthy. But when you begin to look into the Spirit you see that there is One that is worthy. The One who has prevailed to open the book is the Lion of the tribe of Judah - that signifies Jesus Christ in strength and victory. This Lion is a slain Lamb - for He conquers not by brute force but by the power of His poured out life. The wonder of it is that THIS LION-LAMB IS WITHIN US! The worthy One is within! When you begin laying hold upon the One within you, the One within you begins unsealing the book within. Out of that unsealing comes the triumph of the Christ in every dimension of our lives. He makes war against every false and fleshly thing that there might be the revelation of Jesus Christ in us. There will be the expression of what is true in us (the Christ within) coming forth into manifestation in our outer realm. It is not a nature that ignores the corruption of our outer man - it is a nature capable of dealing with the corruption of that outer man that the Spirit be revealed. Oh that our eyes might be opened to behold HIM! HE is worthy to open the book, to fulfill in Himself all the requirements, and now to fulfill IN US all the reality of our redemption. It is the Christ within who opens the seals, and it is the Christ within who is the book revealed. In absolute power He shall reign until the Christ is fully and forever formed in us, formed from the inner to the outer - the image of God.

All through the Old Testament we find that God was looking for a man to carry out His purposes. But when we read Revelation chapter five we find that no man on earth was able to open the book sealed with seven seals. I can understand that no man on earth was found able. Those of us who are living way beneath our privileges in the realm of the earthlies are not worthy, nor capable. I can also understand that no man under the earth, those living in the underworld in the sensual, carnal, devilish realm, was found able. But then it goes on to say: No man in heaven. No man living even in the heavenlies, that place of exaltation, triumph and power, seated with Christ in the heavenly places, was found able, not only to open the book, but even to look thereon. In these days of transition from the church to the Kingdom the full expression of His redemption must be made manifest in a people and it begins with the opening of the seven sealed book, written within and on the backside - and HE ALONE CAN OPEN IT! Beware, my beloved, of any man or ministry who tries to lead you to believe that he alone has the message of the hour, that he alone possesses insight into the sacred secrets of God, that he alone has the keys to life and immortality, and if you grab on to his coat-tail he will usher you into the Kingdom. God's people are always looking for a man, perhaps we have felt that if God could find a man who would be totally committed to Him and to Truth, His purposes in the earth could be fulfilled. But no matter how dedicated, committed, filled with truth and revelation, capable and heavenly minded a man may be, no matter what spiritual progress or position or growth a man may have, when it comes to the unveiling of Jesus Christ in the breaking of the seals which releases the forces that will eventually bring about the full expression of life and glory and power - NO MAN WAS FOUND WORTHY, NAY, NOT EVEN ANY MAN I-N H-E-A-V-E-N! This is a word that needs to be heard by many who are pressing into the Kingdom in this hour.

As we move into these significant days of the transition of ages and nothing much seems to happen, we start blaming ourselves, or our teachers, or the prophets, and we ask, "Where is this greater manifestation of the Spirit, this coming expression of the Kingdom?" We are not speaking here about healing some sick and casting out some devils which in times past we have called revival. These things take place all the time, but by and large the world does not even know they are happening. That is not what the Day of the Lord is to bring forth: a little moving over here and a little stirring over there, but THE RELEASE OF THE FULLNESS OF THE LIFE AND NATURE AND WISDOM AND POWER AND GLORY OF GOD OVER ALL THE EARTH. This is the unveiling of the triumphant One, who by His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father has prevailed. He is the only one worthy and able and willing in these last days to open the seals and to bring about the purposes of God, the release and sending forth into all the earth of the seven eyes of the Lord that run to and fro in all the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him, or the seven horns of the power of the Lord that go forth to triumph and prevail over all the powers of darkness, or the seven lamps of fire that are to go and bring the glory of God to fill the whole earth even as the waters cover the sea. Let us forget about preachers, the people, our abilities, the gifts, and let us look UNTO JESUS. I believe it is God's purpose that the whole church of Jesus Christ will fasten its eyes on HIM and see HIM as the only One who is able in this day in which we are living. There was a day when a man could arise and be used of God, but in the book of Revelation it is the Lamb who is used. He must be the central One, releasing the fullness of the Spirit of God in all His majesty and power from within. Throughout the book of Revelation the work of the Holy Spirit is to show us our total dependence upon the person of Jesus Christ.

Oh! may Jesus Christ find a new centrality In us. Many have Him in some corner of their life, but not central in their devotion, in their prayer life, in their business, their appetites, their finances. We may be able to get away with it for some time, but when we go to seek Him, He will not be there. He is pushed away into other areas of our life, off-center, and when we start looking for Him we cannot find Him, for He is buried beneath all the clutter of our outer life and mortal consciousness. The only place to find Jesus Christ is in the center of our life, our desires, our hopes. If He is not in the center, we will have a problem. He must be in the midst of the golden candlesticks. "Cry out and shout thou inhabitants of Zion, for great is the Holy One in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12:6). Truly He is in the midst of the elders (the priesthood), and in the midst of the four living creatures (the kings), and in the midst of the throne (authority and power). We may have our eyes on the elders and their bright shining and their ministry, or on the living creatures and their power and glory, and fail to see that in the midst of all Jesus Christ is the CENTER. It is at His initiative that the seven seals are broken. It is at His initiative that the seven spirits of God are sent forth into all the earth. It is at His initiative that the events of these days take place. It does not rest with us. It is not our action upon Him, but His action in and through us that brings His unveiling and the glory that is to follow!

Even though we are kings and priests and have an authority to reign on the earth, we are not worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon. Recently I felt a deep cry in my spirit and I said to God, "There is nothing more that can be done. I know of no prayer that can be prayed, no faith that can be exercised, no knowledge that can be revealed, no action that can be taken to bring forth this sonship, this is as far as we can go." There comes a time when our pressing into the Kingdom does no good. There is no one in heaven, nor on the earth, nor in the underworld that has the ability to even look upon the book, much

less to open it. Here is a realm that is shut up to God Himself. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The fullness, the life, the immortality, the manifestation of power and wisdom and glory will never come until we first see the One who possesses it, until Jesus Christ is revealed by the Spirit as the One who is triumphant, even as the slain Lamb, the One who is central in the purposes of God and the One who has the seven horns, the seven eyes, and the seven spirits. Some "sonship" preachers and teachers apply every scripture and revelation to the many-membered body, ignoring completely the Head. But our Lord Jesus Christ is the rightful One to look upon, the One who is worthy to look upon, to open the book, to loose the seals, and to receive all the honor and glory and praise. "Thou art worthy!"

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

The legendary Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are, to most minds, one of the Bible's greatest riddles. Nearly two thousand years ago the apostle John first recorded the details of their grim ride, and ever since scholars and ordinary believers alike have wondered what they represent. Much has been written concerning the Four Horsemen, much of it misapplied to struggles between nations and would-be world conquerors, or to the horrors of tribulation under the antichrist. Actually, however, the book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Daniel, written under the Old Covenant, addressed to a natural people living in a natural land, ruled by natural laws, with a natural worship by rituals and ceremonies, is therefore a natural book dealing with natural events - the rise and fall of empires, rulers, wars, etc. The book of Daniel was not a revelation or revealing. It was a SEALED BOOK. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even unto the time of the end" (Dan. 2:4). The book of Revelation, contrary to common thought, is not the sequel to the book of Daniel, nor is it a parallel revelation. In fact, it has almost nothing in common with the book of Daniel. The book of Revelation was written under the New Covenant, the Covenant of the Spirit, and is therefore a spiritual book, addressed to spiritual people, born of the heavenly Jerusalem, who live and walk "in the Spirit." The book of Revelation is not, nor has it ever been a SEALED BOOK. "And He saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10). The book of Revelation is, therefore, a SPIRITUAL REVELATION, even the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Four Horsemen and the Four Horses represent, like the figures in the rest of the book, aspects of the on-going revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body. These are spiritual realities, touched and known only "in the Spirit."

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the Word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When you have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, you will have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. The Bible is not written in the style of an ordinary book. It has a method all its own of conveying spiritual realities through picturesque symbols, which is the language of SPIRIT communicated to the mind of man, wisdom expressed in terms comprehensible by people in all ages in different parts of the world and of different degrees of spiritual developments.

The symbol of horsemen is a strange one to the Western mind. We associate horses with useful labor and sport, but the Eastern mind associated the horse and his rider with war. The horse is without equal for beauty in the animal kingdom. His body is alive with

rippling muscles. His mane and tail are items of extreme beauty. The horse is among the most intelligent of animals and few creatures can equal his strength and swiftness. No animal is of greater service to mankind. For pleasure, for work, and for war the horse exceeds them all. In Bible days the strength of armies was often reckoned by the number and greatness of their horses and chariots. In his prophetic account of the army of the Lord, Joel declares, "the appearance of them is as the appearance of HORSES; AND AS HORSEMEN, so shall they run" (Joel 2:4). "The horse is prepared against the day of battle" (Prov. 21:31). It is significant that in the scriptures you do not find horses mentioned in connection with agricultural purposes, but for riding or drawing chariots, and for use in battle.

It is significant to note that the term "redemption" means in the Greek "loosing." We are now entering the day of loosing (redemption) and our spirit joined to the Lord's Spirit is beginning to express more of His life than ever before. The only hindrance is the dominion of the soul - our own will, mind, emotion and desire. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us, these negative attributes of the carnal nature must be effectively dealt with. Before the One who has purchased us for the base of His operation can take full possession of His inheritance in us there must be the dispossession of all that hinders the expression of the Spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan - those occupying the land belonging to another - so must the giants that possess our land be conquered and driven out. This, dear ones, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these four horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. The Four Horses are war horses - and are sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurper - the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the emotions of the flesh and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. There is an application to the outer world, and universally but all that transpires out there must first take place WITHIN US, His firstfruits. This is the opening event in heaven.

The Four Horses and their Riders present a picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited on our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. As the seals of the revelation of Himself are opened, we note that what comes forth represents that which is within us - the power of life symbolized as horses. These are symbols of great strength, power and overcoming (Zech. 10:3; Joel 2:1-6; Rev. 19:11-14). "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." These things begin to happen when we discover the book within, when we lay hold upon the Spirit realm; then there will follow an unsealing of those seals that have been closed so long, and as the seals are broken there is an unfoldment of the triumphant nature of the Christ within. As the outer dimension of our life is stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! This is God's intention - not to rapture us away to some far off heaven somewhere, but to unseal the book of life within us, for we have this treasure in an earthen vessel and this earthen vessel has veiled the reality of what lies within - the fullness of God in the Christ within!

As the Father opens His Book of Life - which Book we are- He is actually sending forth the Spirit of His Word in a triumphant outflowing which will not cease till every valley has been filled and every hill has been made level, till our heavens and our earth have been purged from every stain of pollution and every heart beats in union with the heart of God. This is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow,

SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR! I believe it, and may God hasten it to us all in Jesus' name...Amen!

Chapter 22

Sagittarius - The Archer

(continued)

In the grand prophetic drama of GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY the fourth scene is called SAGITTARIUS - THE ARCHER. He is a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares - the very heart of the Scorpion. I think it is particularly interesting to note that here is the first picture of Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy the adversary. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. He rides as a King, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. The one who is conquered is the Scorpion - the Prince of darkness, the Lord of sin, sorrow and death. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion! This is the picture of One who in refulgent glory rides forth upon a white horse with a bow, going forth as the Conquering King to conquer, and to conquer. The apostle John in his visions of Patmos beheld "a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). It is the same divine Hero in both instances. In this celestial picture of the Centaur (body of a horse, torso of a man) in the heavens with a bow and arrows, and in John's vision of the Rider on the white horse carrying a bow, we have the dual-natured Seed of the virgin - the Son of God as the Son of man, riding prosperously.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

John the Revelator, as he entered upon the marvelous visions recorded in the book of Revelation, saw a door opened in heaven and heard a voice as of a trumpet speaking with him, and saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things..." The door opened in heaven bespeaks of an entrance granted into a realm beyond the flesh, beyond the physical and psychical senses, into the realm of the Spirit. That is where John entered and that is the character of the things John saw. He beheld heavenly things - spiritual realities. He saw a throne set in heaven - he perceived the authority, power and dominion of the Spirit. He saw living creatures in the throne, the principle of life in the Spirit. He saw the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, the King-Priest ministry of the Melchizedekian Order after the power of an endless life - the ministration of the divine life unto creation. He saw that the nature of this realm is that of a Lamb. He saw in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne a book written within and without - the New Covenant, the living epistles written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God upon the fleshy tables of the heart; the Book of Life, a people having the law (nature) of God placed within their minds and inscribed within their hearts - the performance of the Covenant of God.

In Revelation chapter six there is a description of the opening of the seven seals by the Lamb which draws upon many Old Testament symbols. John saw four horses. The first horse was white and the Rider had a bow, and a victor's crown was given unto him and

he came forth conquering, and to conquer. The second horse was flaming red and the Rider had the power given to him to take peace from the earth and he was given a great sword. The third Rider had a balance in his hand and sat upon a black horse. The fourth horse was ashen or sickly pale and the name of the Rider was Death, and Hades followed with him. He was given authority over a fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.

These legendary Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are, to most minds, one of the Bible's greatest riddles. Nearly two thousand years ago the apostle John first recorded the details of their grim ride, and ever since scholars and ordinary believers alike have wondered what they represent. Much has been written concerning the Four Horsemen, much of it applied to struggles between nations and would-be world conquerors, or to the horrors of tribulation under the Antichrist. Actually, however, the book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Revelation is a spiritual book addressed to spiritual people, born of the Spirit, who live and walk "in the Spirit." The book of Revelation is not, nor has it ever been, a SEALED BOOK. "And He saith unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10). The book of Revelation is, therefore, a SPIRITUAL REVELATION, and a PRESENT REVELATION (for the time is "at hand"), even the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Four Horsemen and the Four Horses represent, like the figures in the rest of the book, aspects of the on-going unveiling of Jesus Christ in and through His body. These are spiritual realities, touched and known only "in the Spirit." The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the Word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When you have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, you will have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. The Bible is not written in the style of an ordinary book. It has a method all its own of conveying spiritual realities through picturesque symbols, which is the language of SPIRIT communicated to the conscious mind of man, wisdom expressed in terms comprehensible by people in all ages in different parts of the world and of different degrees of spiritual development.

The horse is an animal that men ride. It's like a car - it's a vehicle. The horse in scripture is a symbol for THE BRINGING OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN WARFARE. It signifies STRENGTH AND SWIFTNES IN BATTLE (Isa. 2:7; 30:16; Jer. 12:5; 51:27; Eze. 38:4; Hos. 14:3; Joel 2:4; Heb. 1:8). "...I have taken away your horses (Strength)" (Amos 4:10). On the negative side, whenever the word horse is used in relationship with fleshly humanity it signifies Human Strength. Isaiah 31:1-3 informs us: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots (this is human strength and human ability), because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong...they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!" Again, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are fleshly (strength), and not spirit." "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses (human strength and ability)..." (Isa. 30:15-16). However, the Lord warns, "I will overthrow your horses (human strength and ability) and confound the riders on the horses (those who trust in human strength and ability)" Hag. 2:22; Zech. 10:5). On the positive side, wherever the word horse is used with righteousness, or divinity, or the Lord, or things heavenly, it means heavenly, divine, or spiritual strength. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make

war...and the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses..." Rev. 19:11,14). That is, they followed Him in heavenly, divine, spiritual strength. In Hab. 3:14-15 the prophet, reminiscing about Israel's deliverance from Egypt, extols the triumph of Yahweh, exclaiming, "You pierced with his own arrows the head of the enemy's hordes...You have trodden the sea with Your horses, beside the heap of great and surging waters." The meaning is dear - You have trodden the sea IN YOUR DIVINE STRENGTH!

There was a prophet in Israel in the days of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, who lived and walked continually in the spiritual realm. His eyes were open to the reality of the Kingdom of the Spirit, and because heaven was open to him none of the things of either heaven or earth were hidden to him. There was constant war between Israel and Syria through all the years of Elisha, the prophet. And the king of Israel found Elisha a greater help than his horses and chariots. For Elisha was able to frustrate all the plans of Ben-hadad, because he knew by the Spirit even the words the king spoke in his bed chamber (II Kings 6:12). Whenever Ben-hadad told his officers to make an attack upon any place in the land of Israel, Elisha would send word to the king of Israel, saying, "Watch carefully that place, and send men to guard it, for the Syrians are coming to attack it." And then, when the Syrian army came to the place they were sure to find it strongly guarded so that their soldiers could do nothing. This happened so many times that the king of Syria at last said to his nobles, "Someone among you is secretly helping the king of Israel and sending him word of all our plans. Will no one tell me who the traitor is?" And they replied, "No one of us, my lord, O king, has made known your plans; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your own room." Then the king of Syria commanded, "Go and find where that man is, so that I may send an army to capture him." After a time the king of Syria learned that Elisha was staying in Dothan. Then he sent to that place a great army, with horses and chariots. They came by night and stood in a great ring all around the city, ready to seize the prophet. In the morning the prophet's servant rose up early, and he found the city surrounded on every side by a host of armed men with horses and chariots. And the servant cried unto Elisha, "Alas master. What shall we do?" And Elisha answered, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And Elisha prayed and said, "Lord, I pray Thee open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when the Syrian army came down to Elisha, he prayed unto the Lord and said, "Smite this people, I pray Thee, with blindness." And the Lord smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. What were these horses and chariots of fire! One thing is certain - they represented the STRENGTH AND MIGHT OF GOD IN BATTLE! They signify the almighty POWER OF THE SPIRIT. "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." With what simple words does the Holy Spirit teach us that the strength of the Spirit always exceeds and excels over the strength of the flesh! Thus, horses are symbols given to us that denote the nature and work of the anointing. Horses are figures of overcoming, strength and power, signifying that wherever these horses go, WHATEVER IS IN THEIR WAY IS OVERCOME BY THEM!

THE WHITE HORSE

Nothing can be more vivid and dramatic than the scenes which are successively exhibited as the Lamb opens the seals in the book of Revelation. The four living creatures in the midst of the throne, one after another announce the breaking of the first four seals, with a loud cry of "Come, and see!" These words bespeak of an invitation to

revelation. In that blessed moment spiritual entities and spiritual realities were wide open to John as he walked in the presence and glory of heavenly realms. He saw with his eyes and heard with his ears and touched with his hands the things that were beyond the realm of natural men. He entered into a new relationship with God that day. He passed with boldness into the realm of God's spiritual mysteries even while his feet left their imprint on Patmos' sandy shore. It is my deep conviction, dear ones, that the cry of the Spirit to John, "Come, and see!" is the very same invitation to revelation resounding in the spiritual ears of God's elect in this wonderful hour at the end of the age. Only those who have caught a glimpse of the eternal realm where Christ sits at God's right hand can ever rise above earth's turmoil and the shallow vision of fleshly understanding and carnal reasoning to walk with Him in newness of life. I have prayed most earnestly that the spirit of divine revelation will possess those who now read these truths, and I am certain that if we will confess our darkness to Him, He will give us light. It is when men are satisfied with their childish creeds and blinding theologies that God abandons them to spiritual retardation, pronouncing woe upon them who enter not in themselves and forbid them who are entering. The more we are quickened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him the more trivial become the static doctrines of men and the peevish tenacity with which they argue their childish theories.

As each seal is opened the Seer beholds a visionary figure pass across the field of view, emblematic of that portion of the scroll which is unrolled. It will be observed that there is a manifest progression in the character of these symbolic representations, which rise in intensity from the first to the last. When the Lamb opened the first seal, John records, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). Many brethren and teachers are of the opinion that the Rider of this horse is a Counterfeit Christ - the Antichrist. The contrast is drawn between the Rider of this white horse and the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen. The argument is made that the horse in chapter six rides under the first of the seven seals, while on the contrary the horse of chapter nineteen rides after the seven seals have been opened, at the time of the marriage of the Lamb and the glory of the New Jerusalem. The figure in chapter nineteen has "many" crowns whereas the one in chapter six wears but one crown. The Rider in chapter nineteen has a sharp sword coming out of his mouth, that with it he should smite the nations, whereas the Rider in chapter six is armed with a bow. The Rider in chapter nineteen proceeds out of heaven and is followed by the armies of heaven, all riding upon white horses, while the Rider in chapter six is a solitary Rider invading the earth realm. So, they say, the Rider in chapter nineteen is obviously the Christ of God and the Rider of chapter six is an impostor, one posing as the Christ - Antichrist! With all deference to honored brethren, however, I cannot conceive of the Antichrist riding upon a white horse, even under the figure of a counterfeit! White denotes PURITY - a purity wrought by the cleansing fire! It is the symbol of the Christ's purity and divine holiness. Every other place throughout the visions of John it stands for righteousness and purity. And in Zech. 14:20 this purity is connected to horses. "In that day shall the bells of all horses (that is the strength of all) ring out, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD. "White also bespeaks of light - illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn Son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the seven churches the overcomers are challenged, "I counsel thee to buy of Me...WHITE RAIMENT, that thou mayest be clothed" (Rev. 3:18). This is naught but the transfiguring glory of Christ, as it is written, "And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His RAIMENT WAS WHITE AS THE LIGHT" (Mat. 17:2). The light is the robe of divine majesty, the effulgence of the Spirit, the incorruptible life of God emanating from the

nature of absolute holiness that illuminates and quickens spirit, soul and body. This is the Spirit by which Jesus was raised from the dead, even the spirit of holiness.

Furthermore, this One goes forth "conquering, and to conquer." Special attention must be paid to the peculiar statement of the elder in Rev. 5:5 that the Lamb has "prevailed" to open the book and to loose the seals. The use of the Greek verb "to conquer" occurs more frequently in John's writings than in any other of the books of the New Testament. This is the word here rendered "prevailed." It is the same word used in chapter six, "conquering, and to conquer." It is the same word used repeatedly in chapters two and three of the OVERCOMER where at the termination of each of the messages to the seven churches the Spirit proclaims, "to Him that overcometh... (conquers). "We should note its use in Jn. 16:33, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Again, "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world" (I Jn. 5:4). Paul uses the same root word in Rom. 8:37, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Translated in keeping with its other applications in the Word of God the Rider of the white horse is shown to be going forth "overcoming, and to overcome; prevailing, and to prevail; conquering, and to conquer!" Another sign that this Rider is the Christ - the evidence lies in the nature of His conquests. Indeed, if this Rider is the Antichrist, then we are in a lot of trouble! The expression "conquering, and to conquer" denotes grammatically AN UNENDING SERIES OF CONQUESTS, UNINTERRUPTED BY ANY DEFEATS. Our Futurist and Literalist friends must confess that their Antichrist at the last meets his Waterloo. But the going forth "conquering in order to conquer" can only point to one interpretation. The "conquering" might be said of any victorious earthly power whose victories should endure for the time then present, and afterwards pass away: but "to conquer" can only be said of a power whose victories should last forever. Final and permanent victory is indicated by the Greek phraseology. Victory we may say on the part of that Kingdom against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail: which Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Oh, the wonder of it! How certain, how sure, how complete, how final is His triumph!

In addition, we must not overlook the fact that the crown mentioned in this passage is not the kingly crown which the Lord wears in Rev. 19:12. There are two words in the Greek signifying "crown." One means the wreath or garland of victory, which was placed upon the head of a victorious General after the conclusion of warfare. The other means "the diadem," or royal crown worn by kings upon the throne. The crown given to the Rider on the white horse is the former - the crown of the victor "going forth conquering, and to conquer." Although the conquering is in process, the absolute, complete and eternal victory is assured. And so Jesus Christ, astride of the snow-white charger, is put in a position where He is perpetually celebrating a victory. His march is a victorious march. His movements always meet with success. His plans are fulfilled, and His campaigns unfurl to the breezes the banners of triumph. Jesus Christ is going forth as a conqueror, and He does so with great power. It is no easy campaign upon which He has entered. The action in which He is engaged requires the greatest power; and His movements are energized with tremendous force. The Bible represents Him at times in conditions and possessed of moods where He sits and reclines in repose, already having accomplished His purposes. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). But here in the saddle He is roused, every faculty excited, every source of strength summoned, and He is bearing forward for the purpose of accomplishing something not yet attained. He is going forth as the victorious conqueror over the hearts of His apprehended ones. And He shall ride until every foe is vanquished; until sin, limitation and death has been conquered in every member of His glorious body,

and every son of God has joined Him in His triumph, mounted upon their own white horses, riding forth in the Fullness of divine power and might, to subdue all things in all realms, until God shall be All-in-all.

My heart's desire is that all who read these truths may be filled with the conviction that God our Father is preparing a people to share the image of Christ and reign with Him in His Kingdom. Herein is to be found the real meaning, yea, the vital difference between the ministry of the Rider of the white horse in Revelation six and the Rider of the white horse in Revelation nineteen. The Rider of the white horse in chapter six is a solitary Rider, crowned with a single victor's crown whereas the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen is crowned with many crowns and is accompanied by an immense and powerful army astride a host of horses from the heavenlies. It should not be difficult for any to understand that the solitary Rider wearing the single crown is none other than the forerunner, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His singular victory over sin, death and hell - riding forth as the glorious Captain of our salvation to extend that victory into the consciousness and experience of His elect body, the sons of God. He must complete His conquest within our mind, heart and life before we in Him can press the battle onward to creation. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in chapter nineteen He does not come alone. Even before the flood, Enoch prophesied of this appearing of the promised One, and said, "Behold the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS (or, holy myriads of Himself) to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 1:14,15). John saw, and writes, "The armies, the ones in the heaven, were following Him" (Rev. 19:14). Christ Jesus is the Head and the Leader as He goes before; His holy ones follow in His train, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are represented as armies. They come forth as a body of fighters. He has many under His command. The armies of the heavenlies are His, and He does battle with them, by them, through them, and as them, even "the called, and chosen and faithful." There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all of the horses are white, and every one who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignitaries. Moreover, they have no weapons, except the sharp two edged sword that proceeds out of HIS MOUTH, which is the Living Word of God. They are dressed in white, for they are all righteous, cleansed by the crimson tide in which His cloak was dipped.

At this point I would share from the anointed pen of George Hawtin as he describes this glorious army. "This is the army of the Saints of God, thousands upon thousands of blood-washed sons, all members in particular of the mystical body of Christ, and though they be so many, yet are they but one Christ. He who rides at the head of this heavenly host, which for six thousand years has been preparing, is the first begotten son of God, the firstborn from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth. He is the firstborn of many brethren. He is the eldest in a vast family of God's sons. This, I declare, is the manifestation of the true body of Christ, the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD. These are they who during their life on earth went unto Him without the camp of the world's denominations and systems, bearing His reproach, that they might be received and taught as sons by their heavenly Father. Long ago amid the shadows of earth they heard and obeyed God's call, 'Come out of her, My people, and be separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' In their obedience God became their Father. As a Father He instructed them, broke them free from the blinding traditions and doctrines of men. He rebuked them as any loving father rebukes his children. He chastised them as a father chastises his son, for what son is he whom the father

chasteneth not? For if we receive not chastening, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. As a Father He fed them, and He fed them on His Living Word of Life, they became partakers of the divine mind, the divine nature, and the divine will. The mind that was in Christ Jesus dwelt in them and as it increased they were thoroughly transformed by the renewing of their minds" - end quote. But now the days of their rebuke and chastisement are over. The great Captain is mounted, and they are mounted too. He comes as Warrior, Judge and King, and they share with Him in the same character. They are warrior judges and kings with Him. They are clothed in fine linen, pure and white, which is the righteousness of the saints. They wear no armour. They are immortal and incorruptible and cannot be hurt nor stopped.

You, precious saint of God, are being prepared to rule and reign with Christ. We need to grasp the full implication and reality of what we are called to. Long centuries ago amidst blazing fire and quaking mountains God revealed His purpose for His elect. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS" (Ex. 19:5-6). Since kingship was virtually the only type of government or state known in the ancient world, "kingdom" could well be translated today as a "government" or "state." A GOVERNMENT OF PRIESTS! A PRIESTLY STATE! A HOLY NATION OF PRIESTS! A VAST COMPANY OF KING-PRIESTS! God offered to Israel this glory of being a "kingdom of priests." ALL the tribes were to be priests. Because of their failure to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea and because they made and worshipped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving God's law, only one tribe was chosen to be a priestly tribe - and that not on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of the unbelieving, rebellious people of Israel! God's purpose remains, however, to have an entire nation of priests in the fullness of what priesthood means. Israel collectively was to be a royal and priestly race, a dynasty of kings and priests, each member uniting in himself the attributes of king and priest. Every man a king! Every man a priest! A kingdom of priests!

The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) states that they were to be "a priesthood of kings." It was intended to be the way of life, the office, the nature, the ministry of all Israel, not just a selected few. Israel's would be a priestly way of life, with priestly dignity, priestly power and authority, priestly holiness and priestly character. God's kingdom people were to be a priesthood set at the crossroads of the world to minister to all tribes and nations the things of God. They would become the holy people, the mediating nation for all the other nations. Ah, beloved, there is a realm of living and ministry that goes beyond just being a Christian, or attending church, or going through the motions of so many religious activities. God has always wanted a Kingdom of Priests. Priests and Kings - just like Jesus! One of the chief reasons for the weakness and immaturity of the popular church is the mistaken idea that the saint's happiness and blessing is the main object of God's grace. A fatal error! God's aim is far holier and far higher. He chooses out of the nations a people, inworks into them all the triumph of HIS REDEMPTION, all the victory of HIS LIFE, that they in turn shall carry out His redemptive purposes on behalf of the whole creation. A Royal Priesthood! Ah, that is God's aim, His purpose.

The purpose of your quickening by Christ was to make you a part of Himself, to give you a calling to glory, to a place where God by His Spirit can express Himself through you, so you can bring righteous judgment to the earth. That's what this white horse is all about. Your life and everything that happens to you is given to train and equip you for a royal position in God. The only reason the heavenly Father sent you here from the realm of spirit, lowered into the bondage of corruption, was to process you, to groom you for a

position in God, to be one in the Saviour and become a Saviour. This is the day when everything we have hoped and dreamed of in God will be realized in our experience. We have so limited God in the way we have thought about Him. I'm telling you that we stand on the threshold of an outworking of God that is so powerful that it will bring an absolute end to the downward spiral of sin and death in humanity. It will put a blockade in the road to the flesh. That manifestation of God through His sons which is immediately before us will turn creation around. We shall manifest unto mankind a life and victory and power that will shake the very foundations of the earth, an action that will alter the course of the world, bringing correction and righteousness. Jesus Christ shall be revealed in and through His people as LORD. A people in this hour are being raised, not out of the cemetery, but out of the grave of their mind, out of the grave of carnal, mortal consciousness, raised up to the place where they can become the manifestation of the totality of the personality of God. We are being raised to become the expression of the substance of His Person. This company is Christ the Head riding forth upon a white horse followed by Christ the body, all the sons of God riding with Him upon white horses bringing the rule of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

But when the Rider of Revelation six comes there are none with Him - He rides alone. Ah - is it not within the corridors of your own soul, precious friend of mine, that you must hear the hoof beats of this great white steed thundering! He must ride right into YOUR EARTH, conquering all the territory of YOUR LAND. Don't you hear the clatter of the hoofs of that gallant charger as he bounds through that world which you are, carrying its Rider to grand battlefields and glorious victories within? Christ the Conqueror goes forth to conquer. He hath a bow, and His bow is bent still and He is riding the white horse, and the arrows of Divine Conviction are piercing our hearts, and every enemy within spirit, soul and body falls down before Him; all opposition is shattered to pieces; the strongholds and defenses are torn away as paper walls; the radiant brilliance of His glory flashes its dazzling light upon the eyes of the understanding, piercing effectively every cherished tradition, human interpretation, and carnal concept. I see Christ conquering! Though all men are His by right of creation and redemption, yet He must do battle to make conquest of the human heart. He must fight His way inch by inch into the human soul until He possesses that which He purchased, until the citadels of mind, will, emotion and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. His victories are victories of peace over conflict, of joy over sorrow, of faith over fear, of righteousness over unrighteousness, of love over hate, of truth over error, of holiness over sin, of health over sickness, of power over weakness, of the image of God over the subterfuge of self, of life and immortality over corruption and death. Of the triumph of His life within the overcomers the Lord says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from My eyes" (Hos. 13:14). God is the enemy of death. And He is the enemy of the grave. God right now is waging a war against the death and the grave that is in your mind, dear one. "For to be carnally minded IS DEATH" (Rom. 8:6). The Spirit of the Christ within witnesses, "Grave and death - you're not going to have any victory!" "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25-26). The last enemy that shall be destroyed in you and in me is death. When the Lord prophesies this victory over death in Hos. 13:14 He closes His statement with these words: "Repentance shall be hid from My eyes." God says, "There is no way that I am going to change My mind about My purpose - when I come forth out of the realm of Spirit and commence making war with death and hell I will not stop until every foe is vanquished." In Himself the victory is already attained, fully and forever. "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore,

Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." God is not turning back, the hour for the manifestation of sonship is at hand, and He that hath begun a good work in us shall complete it. The day of death is over. Its time to live! Hallelujah!

It is significant to note that the term "redemption" means in the Greek "loosing." We are now entering the day of loosing (redemption) and our spirit joined to the Lord's Spirit is beginning to express more of His life than ever before. The only hindrance is the dominion of the soul - our own will, mind, emotion and desire. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us, these negative attributes of the carnal nature must be effectively dealt with. Before the One who has purchased us for the base of His operation can take full possession of His inheritance in us there must be the dispossession of all that hinders the expression of the Spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, so must the giants that usurp our land be conquered. This, my friend, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these Four Horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. The Four Horses are war horses - and are representations of the activities of the Christ sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurpers - the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the emotions of the flesh and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. It is the gathering of the firstfruits of His redemption. The Four Horses and their Riders present a picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. As the seals of the revelation of Himself are opened, we note that what comes forth represents that which is within us - the power of life symbolized as horses. These are symbols of great strength, power and overcoming (Zech. 10:3; Joel 2:1-6; Rev. 19:11-14). "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." These horses are sent, not to overcome the world outside, but to overcome the world within. These things begin to happen when we discover the book within, when we lay hold upon the Spirit realm; then there will follow an unsealing of those seals that have been closed so long, and as the seals are broken there is an unfoldment of the triumphant nature of the Christ within. As the outer dimension of our life is stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! This is God's intention - not to rapture us away to some far-off heaven somewhere, but to unseal the book of life within us, for we have this treasure in earthen vessels and the earthen vessel has veiled the reality of what lies within - the fullness of God in Christ in us! He is actually sending forth the Spirit of His Word in a triumphant over flowing which will not cease until our heavens and our earth have been purged from all that stands in opposition to the image of God in man. This is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR!

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. May the Holy Spirit deeply impress upon you this important truth: YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED! You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those that were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of God. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ - a triumph which is even now proceeding into the heavenly city. We don't have to wait until "some

glad day after while" because the battle is going on right now. GOD ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST (II Cor. 2:14). I want to tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these lines have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, our General has won the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of evil! And now He brings that triumph to us! And we can receive the spoils of His warfare! How can we be winners and partakers of that victory? First of all we need to know that we can never be part of those that conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Christ. It was not until Saul had been knocked to his knees in the dust and all his own struggles and battle had been lost, that he entered into the victorious army of Jesus Christ. In that conquest Saul of Tarsus was slain and Paul the apostle rose up to take his place. Perhaps you are struggling in your spiritual life, trying to overcome, but the problem is you have never completely surrendered to Jesus Christ. That surrender cannot be simply by word. It must be in reality. There are those who offer Christ their praise and speak great swelling words of revelation in the gatherings of the saints, but go out and know that their life is not conquered by Christ the Lord.

When Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington he came up to Washington and his aides, each dressed in their finest military garb. Cornwallis began to extol Washington's virtues as a commander and military strategist and told him how impressed he was with the incredible maneuvers he had used. He continued in this way until suddenly Washington interrupted him and said, "Your sword, sir!" At another time, in another place, after the Hellespont was crossed, and he was making ready to march through Thrace, the king of Sparta commissioned heralds to the authorities of the countries through which he was about to move, asking them if he should come as an enemy or as a friend. "By all means as a friend," replied nearly every one. The king of Macedon, however, answered, "I will take time to consider." Immediately the king of Sparta sent the message, "In the meantime we march; we march! So the great King of kings sends us His heralds as He approaches, and asks you, "Shall I come to you as a friend or an enemy?" Gladly He would be your friend. Most of you say with whatever will you can muster, "Let Him come as my Friend." Some may say, "We will take time to consider." Others will say, if not in words, truly by actions, "I want Him to come as my Friend - to bless me - but I reserve the rights to this or that area of my life." In the meantime the great King marches towards us. He is coming. He is coming conquering, and to conquer! He will conquer you, my friend! He will ride into your world swiftly and powerfully and will shoot His arrows into your heart until every knee bows and Christ is Lord of all! We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His Kingdom must reign supreme within. Our hearts are the seat of the throne of God, because there He reigns. The royal seat is the image of God in the heart; and where this throne is established in the heart it extends over the whole soul and body.

You who have not yet surrendered to Him as King of kings, you who know Him as Saviour, as Healer, as Baptizer, as Blessor, but have not crowned Him Lord of all within, don't you hear His trumpet pealing in your ears, sounding down through all the chambers of your soul's fortress? You who have tried to be a good Christian, faithfully performing the religious activities of the man-made church systems, but have not hitherto heard the call to come out of her and come up higher into the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus - why do you stand out longer? Why not draw in your colors this day, and invite HIM to the supreme place in your heart and life, and enroll yourself among His followers from henceforth, to follow Him to the heights of Mount Zion; and then, when He celebrates His

last victory, be among those who come with songs and everlasting joy to share the fruits of His victory and show forth His praise forevermore. Amen!

THE RED HORSE

"And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see! And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Rev. 6:3-4). As these seals are opened, as the clatter of the hoofs of the horses is heard, as you experience these wonderful unveilings of Christ charging into your land to accomplish their purpose, let it be said, these are not haphazard, unplanned, or hit-and-miss dealings, these are processes and experiences, instruments and forces that have been prepared, working progressively, steadily, and meticulously to accomplish the plan and will of God in our lives. The white horse is Christ riding forth out of the inner realm of Spirit invading the outer dimensions of soul and body, initiating His march of conquest. He enters our domain first with light and illumination, quickening our spirit by His Spirit, giving the understanding that comes from the light of His countenance. The horse is the embodiment of speed. He who is mounted can get over a greater distance, do quicker work, than on foot. Thus with Jesus Christ. He carries on His conquests with great rapidity. With great vigor and velocity He moves down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, charges upon the opposing ranks, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they have recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack. And no sooner does He attack upon His white horse of illumination and righteousness, than He appears upon His red horse, pressing the battle ever forward.

Words utterly fail me to describe the scene of the Rider upon the red horse! It is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, so terrible and awesome, that it completely defies all human description. The Christ pursues His battle upon a magnificent red horse - not the color red, as paint or dye - for the Greek word is PURRHOS meaning fire like or flame coloured. It denotes no color at all, but an appearance, a condition, a manifestation of fire and flame. PURRHOS is from the root PUR - the Greek word for fire. It is interesting to note that a derivative of this Greek word for fire (PUR) is the Latin word PYRA (pure) and the English word PYRE - the place for the burning of a corpse. PYREX also comes from the same root, PYR or PUR, meaning a fire, and REX, meaning a king - that which is king, thus ruling over the fire, hence a "heat-resistant" glassware. All our English words having to do with that which is pure are related to the Greek word PUR, indicating clearly that that which is pure is so because it has been cleansed BY FIRE! Consider: PURE, PURity, PURify, PURification, PURitan.

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, the scriptures affirm. I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden's gate, why do we always try to get out of the fire? Why do we evade the fire? Why expend such energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire! Fire, in the Word, symbolized two things: judgment and cleansing. But God is not schizophrenic in His nature - one side of His character disposed to forgive, save, heal, redeem, deliver and restore, while the other side of His nature is bent on vengeful destruction and the sadistic torture of His enemies. His action in fire, as His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, and balanced, directed towards the purging that will lead to restoration. His fire cleanses the believer that he may qualify for God's highest. His action

of fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, penitently receiving the gracious gift of life. The fire does not save him, but it removes the hindrance that separates him from the kind mercy of the Lord.

The crude idea that a wise and loving and righteous Creator from eternity designed and decreed endless torment in undying flame for His creatures who are the work of His hands does dishonor to the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; nay, it does more than dishonor, for it is a horrible blasphemy against both His wisdom and His love. It is incredible that any man who has tasted of the goodness of the Lord could ever believe that the compassionate Saviour of mankind could ever have intended us to read such a meaning into His words. The eternal fire is the truth, the Righteousness, the Love of God in a word, it is the nature of God. Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol for the presence and manifestation of God. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the scripture, and the apostle adds, "God is love." God IS! He is fire and He is love. It is no straining of metaphor to say that the love of God and the wrath of God are the same thing described from opposite points of view. Every father who has had to put the rod of correction to his son understands this! How we shall experience God's love depends upon the way we come up against it. God does not change; it is man's moral state that changes. The wrath of God is a figure of speech to denote God's unchanging opposition to sin; it is His righteous love operating to destroy evil. Nothing can live in that devouring flame that is of the nature of a lie or wars against the spirit of holiness. The consuming fire is eternal as God Himself; it is because He is; it is that which was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Oh, if there be one thing for which we ought to rejoice and praise God without ceasing it is that eternal fire which will burn up all the foulness and 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!

The Lamb nature is not a weak, trifling, spineless little nature. The nature of the Lamb is the nature of an overcomer, one who cannot be offended, one that can look upon the sin and evil in the world and not become religiously self-righteous but can love the creation to effectively and redemptively deal with it. Fire represents the divine process of cleansing, purging, purifying, corrective judgment. Divine judgment is not unto destruction, but unto redemption. Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. When of old God came down on Sinai, its upper peaks were veiled with impenetrable folds of smoke, like the smoke of a furnace. And in the heart of the smoke there was the appearance of devouring fire. There is dread here! Bounds had been set to keep the people back; but a special message must be sent to warn them against breaking through to gaze, lest the fire should break forth upon them. But there was no harm as long as they kept without the barriers; and when Moses entered into the very heart of it, it did not singe a hair of his head, and injured him no more than when it played around the fragile acacia bush, which burned with fire without being consumed – not a leaf shriveled, nor a twig scorched. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings.

Nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus Christ has already ridden, or shall yet ride into the world of each of us in FLAMING FIRE! Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the fire of God, I would draw your reverent attention to the natural process of fire. In the book of Revelation we have, in chapter six, the horse of flaming fire; but later on the Holy Spirit also describes the manifestation of God as fire under another remarkable symbol. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the liars, shall have their part in the LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE..." (Rev. 21:8). The word "burn" means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation. You can annihilate a form, but not a substance. When fire consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely changes their form. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example: a tree might be cut down, sawed into fire wood, and burned. In the first place, the tree was formed by drawing chemicals out of the earth and air and rearranging them into the form of a tree. Now, when the wood burns the what causes those same chemicals to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree can no longer be identified as a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply changed, transformed into a DIFFERENT FORM! Thus, to burn means to CHANGE. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up; it seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes (changes) "goes up in smoke," to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pan of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go up in steam. To burn means to change, and the change is always upward in motion.

FIRE is the heat and light that you feel and see when something burns. It takes heat to start a fire, but once the fire is started it produces heat that keeps the process going. Thus, fire is really heat and light. In my study of the lake that burns with fire and brimstone I was very much helped and impress by the understanding given by Charles Pridgeon and I would like to quote from his scholarly work on the subject of BRIMSTONE. He says: "The Lake of Fire and Brimstone signifies a fire burning with brimstone; the word 'brimstone' or sulphur defines the character of the fire. The Greek word THEION translated 'brimstone' is exactly the same word THEION which means 'divine.' Sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer's Iliad (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from THEION is THEIOO, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to dedicate to a god (See Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, 1897 Edition). To any Greek, or any trained in the Greek language, a 'lake of fire and brimstone' would mean a LAKE OF DIVINE PURIFICATION. The idea of judgment need not be excluded. Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek. In the ordinary explanation, this fundamental meaning of the word is entirely left out, and nothing but eternal torment is associated with it" – end quote. I realize that the above thoughts define the subject very briefly, but let us summarize the meaning thus: BURN means combustion, to change the form of. FIRE means heat and light. BRIMSTONE means divine. Putting these three together can we not see that the lake burning with fire and brimstone is, actually, DIVINE HEAT AND LIGHT PRODUCING A CHANGE!

If you think the Kingdom of God is rosewater, or eau-de-cologne, you are mistaken. You cannot war on the devil with that. You cannot war on the carnal minds of men with that. You have to make war on the world, the flesh, and the devil with weapons that are mighty through God. You have to make war on the carnal mind and the fleshly nature with fire, divine fire, that must burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and lick up the very dust around. Make no mistake! OUR GOD I-S A CONSUMING FIRE! He is man's "horse breaker" and He will break you, precious friend of mine, and bring you to the foot of the cross of Jesus no matter how hot He has to build the fire around you! Even if long ages of fiery judgment and tormenting darkness fall upon you, they will last no longer than till the Great Fire of God has melted all the arrogance into humility, and all that is self has died in the bloody sweat and all-conquering cross of the Christ, which will never give up its redeeming power till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God.

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

One of God's promises concerning the Lord who comes to His temple to sit as a refiner's fire is that He shall "purify the sons of Levi." The "sons of Levi" in these days of the spiritual temple of living stones are likewise the priests and ministers of God. Prophetically speaking, "the sons of Levi" refer to all who have received the call to the Royal Priesthood of Christ after the Order of Melchizedek, which is after the power of an endless life. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up in a spiritual house (temple), an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:5,9). Even the word "sons" is significant. Becoming a son is the result of intense discipline, as we read in Heb. 12:5-11. The Lord comes to those who long to be His Priesthood, not with visible blessings and manifestations which inflate the ego, but as a refiner's fire to purify and refine them, even as gold and silver are refined. In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely consumed. Not until he would see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with us. The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, consuming all that is alien and opposed to God's nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something greater and better. He sets us apart, like the sons of Levi, and subjects us to an intense discipline of outer and inner sanctification that we might become His Royal Priesthood.

The sons have to be cleansed and purified of the carnal mind that is contrary to God and is an enemy of His, Filled with all unrighteousness and evil and not subject to the will of God and never can be. As William Law said, "SELF is the whole root, branch and tree of sin." So for us to be His Priesthood, showing forth His virtues, His life and light and love, His righteousness and glory and power, this thing, that stands in the way of the priestly nature and ministry, must be dealt with and taken out of the way. We must be emptied of

self and every thing that pertains to the earth-consciousness so that we can put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. All carnality must go through the fire. None can escape it. There is no detour around this lake of fire if you wish to arrive finally at the safe harbor of perfection in God. The sons of Levi of this day have felt that purifying fire. Its burning has roused them from their lethargic ease as they have drifted along the stream of peace with the world, its clear flame has lit up the dark recesses of their carnal minds and the deceitfulness of the heart of man, revealing in stark reality the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, and its blasting flame has separated them from the fleshly follies of the religious systems and the so-called church. In many of them the fire is effectually doing its purifying work. They have begun to fulfill the prophecy and to offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," praise His name!

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" The great desire of Paul's heart was to qualify for the High Calling and not be a castaway, and to help others attain also. He wanted to attain and apprehend that for which Christ had apprehended him. "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1:28-29). This is the great cry and longing of my heart also, that with Paul I may be counted worthy of the Kingdom and a place in the Royal Priesthood; and to help you, my reader, to attain also. It is wonderful to hear preachers describe the glories of sonship, the priesthood, the kingdom, and immortality. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, our redeemed spirit shouts aloud and our ransomed soul sings praises when we hear, but are we going to be partakers of the glory? That is the question. Not all who imagine themselves to be sons, not all who speak passionately of their attainment in God, not all who boast of the depth of their revelation, not all who trumpet their position in the Kingdom are going to make it – only a few, methinks. There is a price to pay to follow on to know the world; a test to pass. Will I pass that test? Will you?

And yet there is glorious hope! In this wonderful process of refining the miner mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner. This is my greatest hope! Somebody says, "I sought the Lord." Well, that's how it appeared to you, my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you. What you perceived as your seeking the Lord was but your response to His seeking you. He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. HE RODE INTO YOUR WORLD, NOT YOU INTO HIS. He first rode in on a white horse, and now He rides in upon the red horse.

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but not in their pure form. They come mixed with or 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. No one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, gold and silver as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing that is by FIRE. Our lives, dear ones, are like that. There is so much that is worthwhile in us, but so much that is worthless. There is so much that is of God,

and so much that is of self. There is the image of God in man's spirit and incorruptible life and omnipotent power; but it is buried in consciousness beneath the outer veil of mortal mind, sense-knowledge, and corruption. So what does the great and eternal miner have on His hands? He has a mixture. And that is why there has to be the furnace of fire. The ore which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fill any useful purpose in His plans. Of sons in this state He says, "With them I am not well pleased." Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees us, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure metal content but it is disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use us in that condition of mixture, so He comes to us as a refiner's fire. And immediately we wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and, I might add, He is showing up in a FORM that we did not expect. Yes, 'tis the same Jesus who rode into our land on the white horse, giving illumination and quickening, bringing us out from the dominion of darkness into His glorious light of revelation. But He comes now, not to bless and coddle and wink at all our carnality and foolishness, but He comes as the Rider upon the red horse, riding swiftly and powerfully in flaming fire. The hoof-beats of the red horse will echo through your kingdom, my beloved, carrying its Rider into grand and glorious battles within until all that stands in opposition to the law of the Spirit of Life goes up in conflagration and Christ is Lord of all!

How long will this process continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. Psm. 12:6. says, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES." Seven is the number of perfection. It reveals the truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold - ah, it is HIM. The silver - ah, it is HIM. It is PURE SPIRIT, DIVINE NATURE. How marvelous is the grace that birthed us out of His own Spirit-substance, for He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Only the dross must be removed. Thank God that the Christ comes to us not only on the white horse, but also on the red horse to carry the issue onward to victory!

The question follows - Who may abide - endure - wait for - the day of HIS COMING? For He is like a refiner's fire. Ah, this is not the blessing realm, it is something beyond the gifts and benefits obtained by faith. This is the purging, cleansing and purifying realm! It is the realm of qualifying for sonship, of preparation for immortality, of readiness to rule and reign in life with Christ as a King-Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. And who shall stand - or who can withstand - who can stand against it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refiner's fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth!

Charge on, O horse of fire!

Chapter 23

Sagittarius-The Archer

(continued)

We continue our study of the Sign of SAGITTARIUS -THE ARCHER. This Sign of the heavens brings before us a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares -the very heart of the Scorpion. Here is the picture of Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy the adversary. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. He rides as a King, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. The one who is conquered is the Scorpion -the Prince of darkness, the Lord of sin, sorrow and death. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion! This is the picture of One who in refulgent glory rides forth upon a white horse with a bow, going forth as the Conquering King to conquer, and to conquer. The apostle John in his visions on Patmos beheld "a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). It is the same divine Hero in both instances.

In Revelation chapter six there is a description of the opening of the seven seals by the Lamb which draws upon many Old Testament symbols. John saw four horses. The first horse was white and the Rider had a bow, and a victor's crown was given unto him and he came forth conquering, and to conquer. The second horse was flaming red and the Rider had the power given to him to take peace from the earth and he was given a great sword. The third Rider had a balance in his hand and sat upon a black horse. The fourth horse was ashen or sickly pale and the name of the Rider was Death, and Hades followed with him. He was given authority over a fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.

Until I heard the story in which a self-educated man told of what his life was like before he learned to read, I had never thought much about how illiteracy affects one's perception of the world. He knew very little about life beyond his own neighborhood. Although he had occasionally met people from other cities, he had little idea where those cities were in relation to his own little world. Knowing only how to live by crime, he ended up in prison, where he finally learned to read. This opened up a whole new view of the world -a world he'd never known before, even though it had existed about him all his life. He discovered new options and began to make better choices about how to live. Crime was no longer his occupation, and he turned to productive pursuits. Learning to read words redefines our understanding of the world around us. But there is another kind of literacy that has an even more profound impact on our comprehension of reality. This could be called SPIRITUAL LITERACY - that is, the ability to read - to perceive and understand - the language of the Spirit, the realities of the spiritual world. When we lack this ability to make sense of the broad vistas of spiritual truth, we are left trying to interpret spiritual realities from the limited, distorted perspective of the carnal mind - natural reasoning and human

understanding. I do not hesitate to tell you that the world and the church today are literally filled and overflowing with SPIRITUAL ILLITERATES!

The book of Revelation is first and foremost a SPIRITUAL BOOK. It is a book of spiritual realities communicated by means of signs and symbols. The opening statement in the book of Revelation is -"The REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST." Everything in the book bespeaks of the unveiling of Jesus Christ. The Revelation sets before us a glorious Person, with the veil removed from our eyes so that we may look upon Him and perceive His life, His nature, His ways, His purposes and His dealings. Until one sees the Christ of God on every page, in every chapter, in every scene, and in every verse of the Revelation he remains an illiterate so far as the true meaning of this wonderful book is concerned. Understood as the Revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body, immediately the book is changed from a prophecy of cataclysmic and apocalyptic end-time events, to a progressive unfolding of the very life, victory and triumph of the Christ in His people and unto creation. Every scene within the book, of the woes, thunders, earthquakes, conflicts, vials, beasts, etc., in all of their sundry and various manifestations, are all to serve but one purpose, and contribute to but one end, namely, To BRING FORTH THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. Thus, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the Word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When you have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, you will have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. Nothing can be more vivid and dramatic than the scenes which are successively exhibited as the Lamb opens the seals in the book of Revelation. The four living creatures in the midst of the throne, one after another announce the breaking of the first four seals, with a loud cry of "Come, and see!" As each seal is opened the Seer beholds a visionary figure pass across the field of view, emblematic of that portion of the scroll which is unrolled. There is a divine progression in the vision which opens from glory to glory. When the Lamb opened the first seal, John records, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

As we have previously pointed out, the primary hindrance to the revelation of Jesus Christ in us is the dominion of the soul -our will, mind, emotions and desires. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us the attributes of the carnal mind must be effectively dealt with. The carnal mind is an earthbound, unspiritual enemy of God. It is the flesh that wars against the spirit, and it is the carnal mind that receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. The natural man is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Before the One who has purchased us can take full possession of His inheritance in us there must first be the dispossession of all that hinders the expression of the Spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, so must the giants that usurp our land be conquered. This, my friend, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these Four Horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. The Four Horses are war horses - and are representations of the activities of the Christ sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurpers - the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. The Four Horses and their Riders present a vivid picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. These horses are sent, not to overcome

the world outside, but to overcome the world within; not to judge the outward nations of the earth, but to subjugate the kings which rule in our hearts. As the outer dimensions of our life are stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! Ah -this is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR!

No one preaches the coming of the Lord more than I do. Christ is coming. He is coming conquering, and to conquer! He will conquer you, my friend! He will ride into your world swiftly and powerfully and will shoot His arrows into your heart until every knee bows and Christ is Lord of all! We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His Kingdom must reign supreme within. The white horse is Christ riding forth out of the inner realm of Spirit, invading the outer dimensions of soul and body, initiating His march of conquest. He enters our domain first with light and illumination, quickening our spirit by His Spirit, giving the understanding that comes from the light of His countenance. He carries on His conquests with great rapidity. With great vigor and velocity He moves down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, charges upon the opposing ranks, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they have recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack. And no sooner does He attack upon His white horse of illumination and righteousness, than He appears upon His red horse, pressing the battle ever forward.

THE RED HORSE

The Rider upon the red horse staggers the imagination and defies description. The scene is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, that words utterly fail to describe it. The first thing that is said about the red horse is that "power was given unto him to take peace from the earth" (Rev. 6:4). To those who are experiencing the progressive unfoldment of the Christ-life within one thing becomes increasingly clear - within them there rages a furious battle. Upon our spirit being quickened by His Spirit, our lives become the meeting place - battle ground - for two orders that are opposed to one another -the flesh and the spirit. This conflict is clearly defined by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians. "For the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit wars against the flesh; for these are antagonistic to each other - continually withstanding and in conflict with each other " (Gal. 5:17). Let us glance for a moment throughout the entire Bible. It is a book of warfare. Two thrones are at war. We discern rival sovereignties. We read of two kingdoms. We are everywhere conscious of a clash of wills. There are two men, two peoples, two natures, two realms. As a result we face throughout scripture irreconcilable opposites: life and death; light and darkness; love and hate; righteousness and evil; holiness and iniquity; liberty and license; truth and lies; law and grace; mercy and judgment; the glorious city of God and the great harlot city of Babylon.

The Bible is a book of war. "The Lord is a man of war" (Ex. 15:3). The saints are men of war. Heaven is a realm of war as well as the earth. "There was war in heaven" (Rev. 12:7). The sons of God are the Lord's army. David was a man of war. "Then answered one of the servants and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite that is cunning in playing, and a mighty man of valor, and a man war" (I Sam. 16:18). "Thou (Absalom) knowest thy father (David) and his men that they are mighty men, and thy father is a man of war" (I Sam. 17:8). David faced Goliath and took his sword. He was a man of war before he met Goliath. David is a type of Christ. His followers were men of

war. "And there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker" (II Sam. 3:1). The saints follow a man of war.

Long centuries ago Rebecca inquired of the Lord concerning the conflict that was going on within her womb. The Lord answered her, saying, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). This conflict within is not only the experience of Rebecca, but of every son in whom the character of God is being developed. And as Rebecca, so too can we take much comfort from the words of God spoken to her. For within every saint pressing on unto perfection there are two nations, two kingdoms and each kingdom is of a very different character. But the promise is sure - "the elder shall serve the younger." The spiritual meaning of this is revealed by Paul in I Cor. 15:45-49. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And so shall it be fulfilled -the natural man shall be subject to the spiritual, and then shall we see "all things in subjection under His feet" (Heb. 2:8).

In far away Babylon the Holy Spirit witnessed through the prophet Daniel, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44). Though many look for a "revived Roman Empire" to arise in Europe with antichrist at its head, the ten-toe confederacy of the end-times, yet, praise God, "IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN SET UP A KINGDOM, WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED." That there may be a fulfillment in the outer world of appearances I would not deny, although it is my opinion that historically it has already been fulfilled. But the quickening of the Spirit upon the truth so vital for today bids me look beyond the letter of the Word, beyond the outward manifestations, beyond the European Community and the Common Market, along with the religious ecumenical movement; and receiving of the spirit of the Word, turning inwardly, we find that all that pertains to the kingdoms of this world lies within the heart of man, and there have been so many kings which have RULED WITHIN US, and as His Kingdom unfurls its banner over our lives, these kings are subdued and brought to naught. There are kings of self-will, of worldly ambition, of fleshly zeal, of ruling thoughts, of religious dogmas, creeds, and traditions and commandments of men, of soulish emotions and impulses spirited by the world, of fleshly appetites dominated by the five senses, of fears, doubts, rebellions, weaknesses, and sins. The still small voice speaks a word, and immediately carnal reason tries to argue us out of it. We sense His direction and leading to "stand still", but human sympathy and sentiment tell us to get involved in things HE HAS NOT LED US to do. So we yield and obey these emotions and impulses, and wonder why we miss the joy and blessing of the Lord. But, praise God, in the days of these kings - while they flourish, control, and bear heavy in their rule - shall the God of heaven set up His Kingdom and all authority and power shall be subdued before it. Into the midst of these kings has rolled THE STONE, it is breaking in pieces, consuming all these, bringing all into submission to Him!

TAKING PEACE FROM THE EARTH

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and their eventual conquest of the promised land is without doubt one of the most awe-inspiring, marvelous and concerted revelations of God's redemptive program, His aim, intent and objective; His purpose, processes and dealings; His design, out workings and goal that has ever been revealed to mankind. It is not my intention to elaborate upon this, merely to point out in passing the significance of Egypt in scripture. Egypt represents the place of being separated from the life, rule, and blessing of God, and of being oppressed under the dominion of the flesh, the world and the devil. There is a remarkable word of profound significance which the Lord spoke to Israel regarding their relationship with Egypt. "If ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, WHERE WE SHALL SEE NO WAR, nor hear the sound of the trumpet (calling to war), nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell..." (Jer. 42:13-14). Think of it - Egypt is the place where there is no war! All is peace and tranquility in Egypt. There is security and provision in Egypt. Spiritually this is not speaking of a country in the Middle East, nor about any natural war! It is a reference to people who are experiencing no spiritual warfare in their walk. They do what comes naturally, and there is no opposition to the way they think, act or live. This is the normal state of the natural man before Christ rides into his life upon His war-steed. Those who have not been quickened by the Spirit from above do not hear the sound of the trumpet - the sound of God's voice mustering to battle across the land. Vast multitudes of these lifeless ones fill the pews of the world's churches Sunday after Sunday, but there is no thirsting after God, no hunger for spiritual things, no comprehension of His purposes, no vision of the power and glory of His Kingdom, no glint of sword to circumcise mind and heart. Ah, but when God's hour arrives for such an one to be apprehended of God, suddenly into his or her peaceful world charges Jesus Christ the conqueror - and He enters with great swiftness and power. He has a bow, and the bow is bent, and immediately the arrows of divine conviction and revelation pierce the heart, and He presses the battle to make conquest of the soul. He fights His way into the human heart until He possesses that which He has purchased, until the fortresses of mind, will, emotion and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. He first shoots the arrow of light and illumination, quickening unto God. Then quickly He shoots the arrows which "take peace from the earth" - that very earth which He has illuminated, for the battle must be pursued until man is fully conquered and all enemies concealed within have been routed, exposed, and vanquished.

It is the almighty Lord Himself who declares war and fires the first shot. HE it is that initiates the battle. "I am come," said He, "not to send peace on earth, but a sword." Or, stronger still in the original, "Think not that I come to cast peace on the earth; I come not to cast peace, but a sword" (Mat. 10:34). Who holds the sword? Who is to wield the sword? Who is to stir up the fight? Who is to "take peace from the earth"? The Lord Jesus Himself, and the sword is the sword of the Lord. Sometimes people speak about "sweet Jesus." This Jesus offers sugar, not a sword. He tastes good but hurts no one. When life tastes bad, sprinkle on a bit of His sweetness. The Rider on the red horse is not so sweet. Jesus Christ is a warrior, fierce and frightening. E B. Meyer once wrote, "When Christ is born, there is always trial. What trouble the New-born brought into this world! There was trouble for Mary! She was living a happy, peaceful life in Nazareth, when the sword began to penetrate to her soul, and she was called to endure an agony of misunderstanding from those who loved her best. There was trouble for Joseph, who is afflicted by startling fears, roused suddenly from sleep, and bidden to leave all and flee. There was trouble for Herod and the Jews. 'He was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him,' at the story of the new-born King. There was trouble also in a multitude of Jewish homes,

entered by brutal soldiery, who tore the babes from their mothers' breasts and tossed them on their sword-points. Wherever Jesus comes, trial follows. He comes to send, not peace, but a sword; and one who knew well of what he affirmed said: 'I am crucified with Christ -I die daily- I am delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.' These inward trials often spring from the unwillingness of our nature to yield to the will and way of God. A man's foes are they of his own household. Sometimes, also, when we have begun to live the new life it seems as though the box of Pandora were opened, and all the winds had escaped, each eager to out do all the rest. But out of the trouble will rise the fairest, strongest life. By and by some watcher on the battlements of heaven, beholding our approach, will cry: 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?' and this will be the reply: 'These are they which came out of great tribulation' - for tribulation is education misspelt" - end quote.

There can be no warfare as long as our will is uncontested. There is no war while our desires remain unopposed. There is no conflict when our ways are unchallenged. There is no battle as long as the Adam nature and its activities are not crossed, confronted or assailed. Our carnal life is at peace within itself until the red horse rides in and T-A-K-E-S PEACE FROM OUR EARTH! The red horse never enters our land until we have been quickened to higher and holier things, brought into living fellowship in the Spirit. The world is at peace with itself, unconvicted of its course of carnality and shame, content in the frivolous activities of the earth-life. There is a war which rages within me and, which causes far more trouble than any conflict I face without. My number one problem is neither men nor demons, but myself - my own limited, deceiving, conniving, mortal mind. My flesh nature is my greatest enemy, for it is the enemy of the Christ. For years I blamed everything on the devil and his demons. Then I discovered to my astonishment that all my spiritual battles were right within myself. I didn't have to look far to find my greatest foe. I found that I face him in the mirror every morning. But I had never experienced a spiritual battle until I met Jesus! When He came into my life He at once declared war! Immediately, the flesh rose up in hostile opposition to the divine Invader and the flesh and the spirit were at war, one with the other. If they are doing the fighting, what are they fighting over! When two people or two nations fight, they are fighting over something. They fight to possess something, to hold on to something, to have ownership of something, or have legal access. They fight for territory or control. There is an object of their affections that they are fighting for. In like manner, the spirit seeks control of your soul and body, and the flesh wants to control them - soul and body are the object of their affection! Whoever controls your soul and your body, controls you. The conflict is on and the judgment is in humanity.

The battle is between two natures, two kings, two kingdoms. The flesh nature we took upon us when we were born into this world. The spiritual nature came alive in us when we were born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (Jn. 3:6-7). Regeneration, new birth, sons of God - these are all terms with which most Christians are familiar. The beautiful ANALOGY is accepted by everyone. But all this means to the average Christian is that he conjures up the nice religious feeling of thinking of himself "as if" he were a "real" son of God, as Jesus is. The average Christian has absolutely no idea of the transcendental implications of this new birth into the family of God. Most think of being a child of God as sort of an "honorary" title conferred on them by an indulgent God who accepts them as "little adopted human children" to whom He plans to give as their reward for accepting His gift of eternal life, a beautiful park, a celestial playground called "heaven". This heaven is designed for them

to enjoy for eternity, playing, loafing, running, shouting, rejoicing, visiting, strumming harps, waving palm branches, and doing what ever other sinless thing their hearts may desire.

But let us understand what it really means to actually be BORN into the very family of GOD. I like to turn the phrase "the family of God" around, in order to better catch its significance. Instead of saying that we are born into the family of God, it is just as correct to say that we are born into the GOD FAMILY! I may say, by way of illustration, that I was born by natural birth into the family of Eby. But this also means that I was born into the EBY FAMILY. I am of the EBY KIND. I A-M E-B-Y. Not only are men born into the family of God, but they are born into the GOD FAMILY. Not only are we birthed into the Kingdom of God, we are birthed into the GOD KINGDOM - the KINGDOM WHICH IS GOD. We are of the GOD KIND. And startling as it may be, this GOD KINGDOM, or GOD FAMILY, is the ELOHIM of the scriptures! And to be born into THIS FAMILY means that we have the awesome potential to become ALL, THAT HE IS! "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15). The new birth is nothing less than the birth of a God-being, the birth of a Christ-creature, who becomes "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). There is no new birth outside of the actual birth of an actual Spirit Being, who becomes the "inner man", the new "me". It is MY SPIRIT quickened by HIS SPIRIT, God impregnating His own divine seed into me thus making me alive from the dead, a new creature on the Celestial Plane. So many Christians glibly talk about a born-again "experience", or a "change of heart", being wholly ignorant as to what must transpire to produce this change, to implement this experience. They confuse "justification by faith" with the "new birth". Abraham was justified by faith long centuries before the transforming Spirit was given, but he was not born of the Spirit, from above. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39-40). Our Lord said, "Ye must be BORN," not now of the flesh, but of the Spirit. Religionists, both then and now, are incapable of grasping this greatest of all truths and its astounding implications. And so they fail to understand that as a woman gives birth to a son, bringing an actual child into the world as a living, breathing, personality with an individual identity, nature, mind, and will, so does GOD GIVE BIRTH, delivering out of His own loins (Spirit) the offspring of Himself of His own kind, of the GOD SPECIES, to grow up into the fullness of His own divine Being. The new birth is nothing less than the birth of an actual divine, heavenly Being, a son of the heavenly Father, who is as ageless and deathless as is his immortal Parent, a brother by birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, like Him in every phase of His Being, differing only in development and rank.

For almost two thousand years there has raged a theological battle over the Godhead. Some have contended that God is one Person in three manifestations and that Jesus is that one Person of God manifested in the flesh. Others believe in the trinity - that God is eternally three distinct Persons, co-equal, co-eternal and con-substantial, united together as one God. The truth lies far beyond the limitation of either concept. Neither view has grasped the fuller truth set forth in the scriptures and now revealed by the Holy Spirit. The wonderful truth is - God is not one Person, neither is God three Persons. God is a FAMILY! God is a KINGDOM! God is reproducing, expanding, increasing HIMSELF! Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John chapter three that in order to enter the Kingdom of God -or the GOD KINGDOM - human beings have to be born again. He patiently explained to this inquiring Ruler of the Jews that it was not a physical re-birth into the human plane that He was talking about, but a newborn spirit being on the SPIRIT

PLANE. John refers to this birth in Jn. 1:12 when he says, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons (children, offspring) of God, even to them that believe on His name." The word sons in this passage is from the Greek word TEKNON which means "one born" or "a child". That a birth as the offspring of God is what John intended is made clear as he continues in the next verse: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. This is not a mere conception as some say, for the Holy Spirit testifies to every man, saying, "And I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto BABES IN CHRIST. I have fed you with MILK, and not with meat" (I Cor. 3:1-2). Again, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of MILK, and not strong meat. For everyone that useth MILK is unskillful in the word of righteousness: FOR HE IS A BABE" (Heb. 5:12-13). Yet again, "As NEWBORN BABES, desire the sincere MILK of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). Then John tells us, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth I-S BORN OF GOD, and KNOWETH GOD...for whatsoever is BORN OF GOD overcometh the world" (I Jn. 4:7; 5:1, 4). Regenerated believers are called the children of God all through the New Testament. Nowhere does God call us divine embryos or divine fetuses! Embryos and fetuses do not drink milk neither do they love or do the will of God! How beautifully does J. B. Phillips translate the meaningful words of the apostle John: "Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called children of God - and that is not just what we are called, but what we are. Our heredity on the Godward side is NO MERE FIGURE OF SPEECH - which explains why the world will no more recognize us than it recognized Christ" (I Jn. 3:1).

Paul speaks of this actual sonship to God in his wonderful teaching on the discipline that God applies to His sons. "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). God is here declared to be the Father of spirits - not of angels or demons or fairies - for the whole subject of this chapter is SONSHIP. God is not the Father of angels - the messenger realm - they are created spirits, not begotten. "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee! And again, I will be to him a Father..." (Heb. 1:5). The only spirits which are born spirits are the children of God! God is the Father of OUR SPIRITStherefore we reverence Him as sons reverence their father. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." When I was born into this world many years ago I was birthed a flesh being. My mother was a flesh being, my father was a flesh being, their union was a flesh union, and the offspring of that union was a flesh being. But, praise God! that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. We are no longer merely physical human beings; we are now immortal, incorruptible, heavenly, GOD-LIFE beings, having been born again from above, of an incorruptible seed, children of the Most High. "And you HE made alive, when you were dead, slain, by your trespasses and sins. But God! So rich is He in mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us, even when we were dead...He made us ALIVE TOGETHER in fellowship and in union with Christ. He gave us the very life of Christ Himself; the same new life with which He quickened Him. And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together - giving us joint seating with Him- in the heavenly sphere by virtue of our being in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:1-6, Amplified Bible).

The above scripture brings us to a most significant point. Some would have us believe that the dead are dead -that is, that there is no consciousness, no knowledge, no being

or existence beyond the grave; that the dead have utterly perished and have no more a portion in any dimension of life anywhere in God's great universe. The proof texts used in support of this concept are, for the most part, taken from the book of Ecclesiastes. Truly the wisdom of Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes affirms: "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun...for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:4- 6,10).

Every diligent searcher for truth must become aware as quickly as possible of his utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit for revelation and understanding of all truth. The secrets of the Lord cannot be learned without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible. The world is overloaded with dead, dry theologians in whose hearts the light of revelation never shines. Theirs is the realm of musty old volumes of head knowledge -wisdom that is foolishness with God. They have never learned the difference between the oldness of the letter and the newness of the spirit. As we breathe a simple, honest prayer for guidance that will bear great fruit in understanding, may the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God quicken the minds of all who read these lines. While the passage quoted above from the book of Ecclesiastes appears conclusive and final that the dead know not anything and have passed forever out of existence in body, soul and spirit, it is imperative that we bear in mind just what the book of Ecclesiastes is all about. A careful perusal of the book reveals that Ecclesiastes is the book of man "under the sun" reasoning about life; it is the best the carnal mind can do in arriving at the reality and purpose of all things. The key phrases throughout are "under the sun" "I perceived"; "I said in my heart." The Holy Spirit has recorded accurately what the natural man reasons, but the conclusions are man's, not God's. This is extremely important! To man without the life of the Spirit or the understanding of the Almighty "all is vanity." To the man whose consciousness, understanding and experience are limited to those things that are done "under the sun," truly all is vanity. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2).

The statements about the dead knowing nothing are no more a divine revelation concerning the state of the dead than any other conclusion of "the Preacher" is such a revelation. Reasoning from the standpoint of man "under the sun," the natural man can see no difference between a dead man and a dead lion (Eccl. 9:3-4). A living dog is better than either, so far as the natural man can discern. Let all the humanists and atheists say, Amen! Let us now acquaint ourselves with the truth as it is in Jesus, for when we learn the truth I now affirm, many things which heretofore have been an inscrutable mystery will begin to come clear to our understanding. Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact there is a realm of life BEYOND THE SUN! It may come as a shock to some who read these lines, but the Holy Spirit declares with divine certainty that YOUR LIFE, precious child of God, has nothing in common with the lives of those creatures whose existence is bound to that low realm under the sun. You belong to a special category of people to whom none of the known laws of the universe apply. The laws that govern other people do not apply to you. You are in a class all by yourself. One of the greatest truths ever kept hidden from the eyes of the natural man is this: "If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION" (I Cor. 5:17). The destiny of most people, of all natural and fallen men, is linked to the earth and the mortal; try as they will they cannot escape it. This is the case for most human beings, all human beings, in fact, who

live and have their being in the OLD CREATION MAN -ADAM. But, blessed be God! AN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE: EXISTS! The Master Architect of the universe saw fit to create a special category of people who are of an entirely NEW CREATION. The highest realm known to man is called heaven, and all who have been born again from above by the Spirit of God have had opened to them a realm higher far than the visible world of the physical and material. Paul tells us that we are to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). The man or woman who is born from that bright glory world above becomes an entirely new creation in Christ Jesus. And from that time forward, he lives for God. His chief delight is in spiritual things. Spiritual things are eternal things. His affections are set above and not on things below. His citizenship is in heaven - the realm of spirit. Before his eyes there is opened up a Kingdom which is beyond his full articulation or expression, and he knows that the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Spirit, is within him. He has only glimpsed some of the ineffable glories that God has, is, and will reveal to him. He is now part of a Kingdom so vast in scope and so enduring in quality that the things of this world seem tawdry, mean, narrow, and insignificant by comparison.

I want to draw your attention to a few scriptures that will make the truth crystal clear. And let demons rage. Let fools and unbelievers hang their heads in shame. We quote from the incomparable Word of God. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...but God...hath raised us up together, and MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS" (Eph. 2:1,4-6). Ah, we whose spirits have been quickened by His Spirit, we in whom the mighty power is working which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand far above all heavens -have been made alive and enthroned with Him in this super-eminence N-O-W. The Lord Jesus Christ is enthroned in the higher-than-all- heavens and WE HAVE BEEN QUICKENED AND RAISED UP AND GIVEN JOINT SEATING WITH HIM IN THE UNION OF HIS DIVINE LIFE! The message is clear -"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I Jn. 5:11-13). Alas! those who say that the saint of God whose body goes by way of the grave is dead like a dog without being or consciousness has failed the first simple test of sonship; HE DOES NOT KNOW THAT HE HAS ETERNAL LIFE! Again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I Jn. 3:14). We know that we H-A-V-E PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE! We also know, therefore, that a dead saint is better than a living dog. The mighty apostle Peter put it this way, "You have been regenerated -born again- not from a mortal origin (seed, sperm) but from one that is immortal by the ever living and lasting Word of God" (I Pet. 1:23, Amplified Bible). We could heap scripture upon scripture -but let me ask you, precious friend of mine, How can one who HAS ETERNAL LIFE-die? Oh, yes, his body may go to the grave, and well did "the Preacher" say, "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." The great question is just this: Is that inner man, the new creation, that man begotten of the eternal Spirit and by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, that man born from above, that man seated in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus -is that man, I ask, IN THE GRAVE? If I have the Son of God, if my spirit has been quickened by His Spirit, if I have been joined to the Lord one spirit, if I know that I have passed from death unto life, if I have been raised up (if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above), translated into the Kingdom of the Son -can I then perish, know nothing, have no reward, and be less than a living dog, without hope in the

darkness, silence and non-existence of the grave? "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live" (Gal. 2:20) is the testimony of the resurrected man. If God has not done something eternal in my spirit, then I am of all men most miserable. If my life is hid with Christ in God, but I die like a dog and that is the end of me -WHAT MORE DO I POSSESS THAN THE MAN WHO KNOWS NOT CHRIST? What advantage is there to being born again? Would it not be a monstrous lie to say that I have passed from death unto life? Indeed, what IS this life, this eternal life, this incorruptible life I have now received-if all things come alike to all and there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the clean and the unclean; if all alike die, perish, cease to exist, and know nothing! I do not hesitate to tell you that such a notion is a spiritual absurdity, a distortion of truth, and a repudiation of that regeneration wrought within! Our spiritual life, my beloved, is not measured as matter, nor by years, nor is it in any way restricted or controlled by any physical law or by those things which are done "under the sun." Hearken, O ye sons of God -divinity and eternity are born in us! We are children of our heavenly Father! "Beloved, N-O-W are we the children of God." Do you believe it? DO you! In union with Christ in one spirit I must believe that should my spirit die, the Christ would die. If my new creation life perishes, the Christ perishes. If my inner man has no consciousness apart from the outer man, then the Christ has no consciousness apart from the physical world. The Lord Jesus Christ had power to both lay down His life and take it up again. Can we not see by this that He HAD LIFE EVEN WHILE HE WAS DEAD! A child can understand that one cannot take his life up again if he has ceased to exist. If the Christ did not have LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, there would have been no resurrection of the body!

In that far away beginning the Almighty Creator proclaimed, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." God made cattle "after their kind," after the cattle kind. He made "every winged fowl after his kind," after the bird kind. But it is evident that God purposed to make man AFTER THE GOD KIND. Now, incredible as it may seem to those who do not understand the mystery of God, God is a FAMILY. This does not mean that there are many gods. There is only one God, as there is only one Adam and one Christ. Adam is a many-membered man, Christ is a many-membered son, and God is a many-membered Godhead! The Person of God is expressed through a vast variety of manifestations of Himself as He reproduces Himself after His own "KIND." And it is in man that God is reproducing His kind. Man is God's idea, God's image, God's likeness, God's expression, God's manifestation. Man, out of all the infinite creation of God, has the supreme potentiality of being born into the very divine family of God, of which divine family Jesus Christ is the firstborn Son among many brethren. Jesus Christ is the first perfect representation of the invisible God. Do you realize what this means? It means far more than having an immortal body. The transcendent essential factor is that God is PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER. It is the supreme intelligence, combined with holy and righteous character that most importantly distinguishes GOD from every other life form. Of course God, too, possesses supreme and almighty power and eternal, incorruptible existence. But without right CHARACTER, such power and perpetuity would be destructive and dangerous! Should any one of us acquire an immortal body prior to having developed a holy and incorruptible character, a devil would surely be born! Come now, and let us reason together. Character springs from nature. Webster defines nature as: "the inherent tendencies directing conduct...what a thing really is...quality...essence." On the other hand, character is defined as: "one's pattern of behavior or personality...reputation." Paul describes our old (first, fleshly) nature in Eph. 2:2-3. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

among whom also we all had our conversation (behavior) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." The apostle Peter speaks of our new (second, spiritual) nature in II Pet. 1:3-4. "According as His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life (Gr., ZOE: God life) and godlinesswhereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Yes, my beloved, we are now made partakers of GOD'S DIVINE NATURE. The new creation has only God-like attributes. Christ is the life of it. The believer, partaking of the divine nature, displays the very characteristics of Christ. It is He who gives the child of God the righteousness of God and makes him an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. This nature, as all nature, is inherited. And from this divine nature is developed God's divine character. Understand this and you will understand a great truth: NATURE is inherited; CHARACTER is developed! Character is never formed instantaneously. No one is born possessing character. Every child of Adam is born into this world with a sinful (flesh) nature. But that precious little infant does not yet have a sinful character. As the child grows the character is formed progressively out of the nature. The nature gradually manifests itself through the actions of the child as character. In like manner, we have by re-generation been made partakers of the divine nature. The divine seed (sperm) of His life has fertilized the ovum of our human spirit (which also came from God but dwells in a state of death -not nonexistence, but unresponsiveness to the spiritual realm) producing the NEW CREATION MAN. And while this new birth is the most astounding miracle of the ages, it is, nonetheless, merely the birth of a spiritual infant possessing divine nature but not divine character. Now divine character must be developed from the divine nature - God manifesting His nature outwardly through our words, actions and behavior. This character is formed in the crucible of experience, as we learn in every situation and circumstance to yield our vessel to the Holy Spirit who is the active agent in our divine nature.

In the light of the truth we are now studying, so many things take on new meaning. The Lord Jesus Christ explained the two natures when He told Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). This is the fundamental principle of the warfare that rages within us! The word flesh is a comprehensive term and includes all that a person is through his or her natural birth: intellect, emotions, will, and body. These component parts that make up a human being are corrupt, for the stream of humanity became polluted at its source when Adam and Eve submitted the human race to the outer realm of appearances. Basically, their sin was unbelief, followed by disobedience, and since all mankind was present in Adam and Eve, their sin killed man spiritually, causing him to be unresponsive to God. The flesh nature is dead to God, but very much alive to the world. The spirit nature, once fertilized by the divine Spirit, is dead to the world, but very much alive to God. This sets into action two competitive forces within the child of God: one born of the flesh, and the other born of the Spirit. Thus the child of God becomes a battlefield. Each nature wars against the other, seeking to dominate the mind, the will, the emotions and the body. It is precisely at this juncture that the red horse gallops into your land with power to TAKE PEACE FROM YOUR EARTH! Few believers understand the intensity of this warfare. The old nature, godless, unbelieving, ego-centric, selfish, and linked to the world, wants control of the individual for fleshly gratifications. The new nature, spiritual, believing, one with Christ Jesus, and eternal, wants control of the individual to produce eternal values. It is a running battle with no surrender, "For the flesh lusteth (wars) against the spirit, and the

spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Since most saints do not understand what is going on within, they encounter "mountain-top experiences", and then they are plunged into "death-valley experiences." The death-valley experiences occur when the old nature greedy for personal gratification and fed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, dominates the spiritual nature.

Here I would share some pertinent words from the pen of Paul Mueller. "Two natures within us manifest the character and manner of each: Fallen Adam within us is that mystery of iniquity that curses and brings forth the iniquities of the carnal man. Likewise, the risen Christ within us blesses the Father, declares the truth and mysteries of God, makes known the manifold wisdom of God, and lifts us up and causes us to walk in the high places in Him. And as we give the preeminence to the Christ within, fallen Adam within will be subdued and conquered so that our spirits, souls and bodies are preserved complete and found blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Faithful is He who calls you, and He will also perfect His work' (I Thes. 5:23-24, Weymouth). Out of our mouths proceed both blessing and cursing. These things ought not to be. And when THE PERFECT MAN comes forth in the image and likeness of Christ, fully adorned with the garments of His salvation, we shall no longer express the dual natures within us. Then, the perfect man, the Christ body, shall express only the Truth, Love and Life of the Father. Their mind will be the mind of Christ, a single mind in fully redeemed bodies. O the wonder of that so great salvation reserved for those who love His appearing! The Psalmist asked the question, 'What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?' The answer is given: 'Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper' (Ps. 120:3-4). The Smith-Goodspeed translation gives vs. 4 as, 'The sharpened arrows of the warrior, with live broom coals!' The only Warrior worthy and able to destroy the man of sin, the carnal, Adamic nature in us all, is none other than Christ Himself. HE is the Mighty Warrior! He shall destroy the man of sin within us who is the source of all evil, including the false tongue. O carnal man within! We have now been able to identify you as the man of sin within...the cause of war and strife. I am not so much concerned about the war among the nations as I am with the war within me. Blessed with the knowledge and wisdom of the sovereignty of God, and of His Lordship and dominion over the affairs of men and nations, I can now listen with understanding while the news reports tell of wars and rumors of wars among the nations. My greater distress is in the knowledge that fallen Adam, the source of all wars, is within me. He within me is the warring nature that brings me to distress and woe. Like the Psalmist, I am for peace, not the limited and restricted harmony and peace of the carnal man, but the abundant and all-encompassing peace of the kingdom of God, the peace that only the Prince of peace can bring. When I speak of peace, he within wants war and strife. Woe is me! my soul has long dwelt with that barbarian within who hates peace and desires only war. Nevertheless, I rejoice in the revelation that my redemption and yours is at hand" -end quote.

Of this great battle within someone has written an interesting and appropriate rhyme:

Two natures beat within my breast.
One is foul, the other blest.
The one I love; the one I hate.
The one I feed will dominate.

This thought is expanded in a poem by Norene Nicholls, titled, THE FULLNESS OF GOD, and we quote:

"But thou flesh, my foe so bitter,
was fast nailed to His cross,
Cease your cries! I will not listen,
all you've dealt is gall and loss!
Self, you, too, must cease your struggle
and come down from off the throne,
Christ, my Lord, is King and Master,
and the reins are all His own!
O my spirit, long you've waited
neath the weights I've heaped on thee,
How you've longed to fully worship;
how you've cried to be set free.
O Thou wondrous, glorious Godhead,
like an ocean vast and wide,
Launch I forth into Thy fullness
where doth flow Thy power's tide.
Who will dare to loose the moorings
and abandon all to God?
They shall know unequalled power
-they shall tread where none have trod!"

Ray Printing has beautifully expounded along this line -"Paul described it this way: 'For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin' (Rom. 7:22-23,25). Full well Paul knew that he had given himself to the Lord, made his surrender, and received the INDWELLING LIFE OF THE SPIRIT. But he also knew that there was a law in his members, in the flesh, which would war against this inner life and that there were only two ways to bring a cessation to the conflict, either to PUT OFF THIS BODY, or else to have this body SWALLOWED UP INTO HIS LIFE. He had no great desire to become a dis-embodied spirit, but rather longed to have this body changed and fashioned anew like unto His glorious body, for then he would know that GLORIOUS REST FOR THE BODY. What conflicts -the negative says, 'This body is mine by reason of the fall, and the sin that dwells therein.' The spirit of the world adds, 'This body is mine, I give it life and nourishment - I feed its senses, tickle its emotions, stir up its impulses, etc.' But the Spirit of God within, says, 'IT IS MINE BY VIRTUE OF REDEMPTION - I shall transform it, I shall lift it into higher realms beyond all sin and corruption.' Thus we have conflict between the negative and the positive. There might be momentary pauses in the battle, but there will be no thorough pause, complete cessation of warfare, until we are totally changed. It is when we are all righteous, that the 'prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me' (Jn. 14:30). Though Paul recognized this dichotomy in himself, the inward man delighting in the law of God, and the flesh yielding to the law of sin, he did not use this as an excuse, or an occasion to justify the flesh. But

knowing of this conflict, he continually sought to 'keep under my body, and bring it into subjection...' (I Cor. 9:27). 'For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit DO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, ye shall live' (Rom. 8:13). Through the spirit, by the power of the indwelling Christ, we battle the lower passions, putting them to death, that receiving the 'abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ' (Rom. 5:17).

"Many a battle has been fought, and won, though devils were not rebuked, and there was no writhing on the floor in intense travail, nor any challenge by an antagonist against the truth believed -it was all INTERNAL. Battles of the mind, battles of inner spirit conflict, a warfare against the vision, against the thing which God had personally revealed, but which the flesh was not ready to receive. And while we would 'reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,' yet only HE can complete this work in us and make it an experiential reality. So we surrender, and He works it out. 'Now why dost thou cry aloud? IS THERE NO KING IN THEE? is thy counselor perished?...' (Micah 4:9). Israel was desperate, she was in travail, in pain to bring forth, and was crying out in her distress. God answered back, 'IS THERE NO KING IN THEE?' Praise God, there is One in the midst of us who shall take the reins of the government, and He shall rule in righteousness, so that we eagerly await the emergence of His Kingdom. It is our own little INNER KINGDOM that needs The King, so it is to this realm that we ask the question, and praise God, can answer back positively, YES, THERE IS A KING WITHIN. Paul declared that 'we must through much tribulation (Greek, pressure) enter into the kingdom of God' (Acts 14:22). As much as the flesh would desire an easier way into His kingdom, there is no other way. If there was a list of special works to do, we'd struggle through, checking them off one by one, and lay claim to the glory. If a baptism would do it, we'd be baptized seven times face forward, or backwards, upside down, or however the requirement. BUT THIS IS GOD'S PROCESSING IN US, and He has purposed to do it through much pressure. If it isn't a physical pressure, it will be a mental one, and if not mental, then a spiritual one -as we travail to enter through the straight gate, and receive of His fullness. There is no cause to view this negatively, for it is this very pressure which shall literally and gloriously PRESS US INTO GOD, as His life becomes a REALITY WITHIN. One might have doctrines, visions, dreams, revelations, and be able to recite it to all who pass by your way, but they are of little value when just a mere form of head-knowledge. They have to be worked into us experimentally through the nitty-gritty processings of the day, until self is conquered, and Christ reigns supreme within us, and the vision becomes LIFE, a firm foundation upon which we can stand to face the storms of the times. It often takes pressure to cause the Word to become LIFE to the INNER MAN.

"In some occupations a man with very little authority, limited in his power to make decisions and rule over others, is referred to as a 'straw boss'. Yet betimes this individual gets carried away with his own sense of importance and tries to go beyond his rightful place, giving orders and bossing others. Seems like we have all had our share of straw bosses usurping authority, as they would assume control over that which they have no right. We'll pass very lightly over the fact that most of the so-called 'shepherding movement' falls into this classification, as they usurp the headship which rightly belongs to CHRIST in every individual. At the moment we are more concerned with these internal straw bosses -our own will, our own desires, our own impulses, etc. which would like to hold control within us. But when we have been OVERCOME BY CHRIST, He shall be King within. Praise His name! In fact there is quite a bit of truth in the statement that we shall only become overcomers in Christ in proportion to how much we have been

overcome by Christ. To partake of His victory He must first become Victor over all our inner kingdom.

'Take Thy throne, Lord, take Thy throne,
Take Thy throne, Lord, take Thy throne,
For our eyes have seen the King in all His beauty,
Cleanse our hearts so Thou canst take Thy throne!'

"As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest' (Isa. 63:14). The word 'valley' comes from the Hebrew word BIQAH meaning: a cleft, a vale. Down into the valley, down into the fellowship of His sufferings, into the Cleft of His RIVEN SIDE -to know the rending of the flesh, with death to the carnal mind, i.e. minding of the flesh, to mortify all the deeds of the body which are contrary to righteousness. As a beast, taking all the bestial nature down into the vale, with its lusts and passions, weakness and frailty, laden with the sins of this natural creation, and THERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAUSES US TO REST - bringing a thorough ceasing of all these works of the flesh, and ending the ways of the bestial, flesh nature. Ending all the self-works that cannot attain spirituality. The beast shall not rise again, for dust returns to dust, and ashes to ashes, and that which is raised up is that NEW CREATION SPECIES IN CHRIST JESUS. How we rejoice to know that what goes down into that valley shall not come up again! There is a NEW BODY that shall arise, a new life that shall spring forth. The new creation rises all righteous, having now become the righteousness of God. Certainly there are spiritual glories which surpass all of that which we can ask or think. But methinks that even to have our very BODIES now brought into a state of righteousness and incorruption, is a wonder almost too great to comprehend. It will mean a glorious rest for the body, to be as He is.

"Beloved friend, we have not offered the world a glorious rest! True, we can say there is rest in Christ, and we have experienced moments of respite, times of refreshing. But at best, we can only awaken a soul from their spirit of slumber, and bring them into a period of conflict, with 'A LAW IN MY MEMBERS WARRING...' Certainly we know that God uses all this conflict in our process of overcoming, and certainly we know that by His grace we shall come through, not somehow, but triumphantly. But how we long to bring people into GLORIOUS REST -into a realm where it is no longer in part but satisfied in full. Praise God, He is bringing forth an ensign, a root of Jesse, raised up to be His standard, and they shall GIVE REST TO THE WEARY, for they shall lead them into righteousness, ending the warfare, and bringing forth peace. 'Saviours shall come up on mount Zion...' (Obadiah 21), and sharing the ministry of The Christ, shall liberate 'them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:15). HE 'hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel' (II Tim. 1:10). We shall proclaim not only a gospel of life, but also a GOSPEL OF INCORRUPTION -the fullness of the new birth, where a man sinneth not, and thus the enemy can lay no claim upon him, for he shall have entered into the GLORIOUS REST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 'And the work of righteousness shall be peace' (Isa. 32:17). The Hebrew word for 'peace' is SHALOM and means both peace and completeness, for in a very real sense, there is no peace without completeness, for if there be any part lacking, there will still be the restlessness of desire for that need to be met. The Greek word is EIRENE meaning: peace, unity, concord. Here we see the end of division, the CEASING OF STRIFE, while harmony prevails over all. Yes, the accomplishment of righteousness shall be PEACE. And this is because HE is made unto us RIGHTEOUSNESS, and 'in Christ shall all be made alive' (I Cor. 15:22). Everyone brought into Him shall become a partaker of His

righteousness. This is a vital part of the GOSPEL OF INCORRUPTION. Strange indeed, men believe in the ability of corruption to corrupt the whole, they are sure that one rotten apple in a barrel of apples will cause them all to rot, because they have tasted of the corruption and decay to which this world has been subjected. But who is there that believes in the ability of INCORRUPTION to restore the whole? Did not Daniel make it plain to king Nebuchadnezzar, 'Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet...and brake them to pieces...and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH' (Dan. 2:34-35). Here is a promise of the reversal of the process of degeneration, and the beginning of the process of regeneration, until HIS KINGDOM, which IS RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE, AND JOY, in the Holy Spirit, shall fill the whole earth, bringing all things into His pureness, into His righteousness, into His peace" - end quote.

Yes, my beloved, there is a great warfare raging within, and Christ has pressed this war upon us, His conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds and bodies. The battle of the ages, the famed Battle of Armageddon, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. It is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer confronts the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus or Wells, or any other historian, for the events which correspond with these symbols. Nor shall we find the grim ride of the Four Horses of the Apocalypse in the headlines of the Washington Post or the Miami Herald! The scene reveals one divine and sublime truth: CHRIST SHALL CONQUER! The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world, its weapons are not carnal, He does not conquer the nations by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. Ah, it is within the corridors of our own soul that we must hear the hoof beats of the Four Horses thundering! He must ride right into YOUR EARTH, conquering all the strongholds of YOUR LAND. We don't have to wait until "some glad day after while" because the battle is going on right now. GOD ALWAYS CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST (II Cor. 2:14). I want to tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these lines have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. The Captain, the King, the General of the heavenly warfare has WON the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered sin! He has conquered self! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of evil! And now He brings that triumph to us! He conquers that He may give us all! We can receive the spoils of His warfare by becoming the subjects of His Rule. Why not draw in your colors this day and surrender all into His mighty hands? The end of the warfare brings peace and life fully and forevermore. Hallelujah!

Chapter 24

Sagittarius-The Archer

(continued)

The Sign of Sagittarius portrays Christ the Redeemer going forth to destroy the adversary. This Sign brings before us a Centaur with the body of a horse and the torso of a man. The human portion of the Centaur is a man with a bow and arrow and he is drawing the bow and aiming the arrow at Atares -the very heart of the Scorpion. His character here is that of the Mighty One, girding Himself with honor and majesty, and going forth to victory. He rides as a King, armed with bow and arrows, shooting down His enemies. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Conqueror of the Scorpion! In refulgent glory He rides forth upon a horse with a bow, going forth as the conquering King to conquer. The apostle John in His visions on Patmos saw four horses. The first horse was white and the Rider had a bow, and a victor's crown was given unto him and he came forth conquering, and to conquer. The second horse was flaming red and the Rider had the power given to him to take peace from the earth and he was given a great sword. The third Rider had a balance in his hand and sat upon a black horse. The fourth horse was ashen or sickly pale and the name of the Rider was Death, and Hades followed with him. He was given authority over a fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts. The four horses are all war horses -and are representations of the activities of the Christ sent forth into our earth, that earth which we are, to dispossess the usurpers -the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, and the works of the flesh. It is the taking possession of our earth by the Christ of God. The four horses and their Riders present a vivid picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, and processings by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of illusion, and our inner heart of deceit. These horses are sent, not to invade that earth out there, not to overcome the world outside, but to invade the man of earth, to overcome the world within; not to judge the outward nations of the earth, but to subjugate the kings which rule in our hearts. As the outer dimensions of our life are stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! Ah -this is the Centaur, the horse and his rider in the heavens armed with a bow, SAGITTARIUS sending his arrows into the heart of the Scorpion. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR! Praise God, He that is within is Mighty, the Mighty Warrior, and He charges into the battle with great swiftness and power. He fights His way into the human heart until He possesses that which He has purchased, until the citadels of mind, will, emotion and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. He first shoots the arrow of light and illumination, quickening unto God. Then quickly He unsheathes the sword which "takes peace from the earth" -that very earth which He has illuminated, for the battle must be pursued until man is fully conquered and all enemies concealed within have been routed, exposed, and vanquished.

THE BLACK HORSE

And now we come to the third horse -the black horse. "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:5-6). Horses, as we have noted previously, are symbols of overcoming strength and power -whatever lies before these horses is overcome by them. Color in scripture denotes the presence and operation of God by the Spirit. The color reveals what the horse is doing to you or producing in you. In the process there is both life and death, death to the Adam man and the apprehension of life in the Christ man. The first horse was white -the expression of life, illumination and revelation. When light comes forth you see your first beginning. In the beginning God said, "Let there be light!" Prior to this pronouncement the "earth" was "without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." This is a perfect description of the earth man before God's redemptive and reconstructive work begins upon him. Before God's Word is heard, before His light of truth and revelation shines, the natural man, who is of the earth earthy, is spiritually void and formless, an unknown deep within. Upon this deep all is darkness; yet, praise God, God's Spirit is brooding there. The natural man is alienated from the life of God, shut out from the spiritual world, blind to reality and truth -yet God is very near. In relation to spiritual life this man begins nothing, continues nothing, perfects nothing. The wondrous change wrought is by the power of the Word of God. Life and power are in the Word. "God said" -this is the means -just as God formed the first creation in that long ago, so He now fashions the new creation. In both the initiative is on God's part. When all was void and formless and shrouded in darkness and hopelessness and nothing moved, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In both creations the transformation is the work of the Word of God, the living and energetic Word of God. God speaks and light breaks forth upon the void. The first step in creation is the awakening of man to spiritual consciousness, the dawning of light in his mind and heart, his perception of Truth through the quickening of his spirit. Light is understanding; and the first day's work is the calling of light or understanding into expression. Light represents intelligence and life -a spiritual quality. Darkness represents ignorance and death. Symbolically these are "day" and "night." Understanding and illumination quicken and enlighten mind and heart and man comes face to face with God, transformed by His glory. Those in whom this work goes on, know that each succeeding step is entirely by the Word of God. As Andrew Jukes wrote, "From everlasting all the work had been hid in Christ, the Eternal Word. Then, in time, that which was in the wisdom of God is wrought actually in the creature. Whether light, or a heaven, or fruits, or heavenly lights, or the living creatures, or the man in God's image -each form of light and life, once hid in Christ, is reproduced, manifested in the creature to the Creator's praise. What was in Christ is step by step accomplished in the earth by the transforming power of the same Word of God. Without this no change is or can be wrought. No saint can grow or live without the Word. What was in the Word from everlasting, by the Word is wrought in us" -end quote.

The second horse was red -in the Greek PURRHOS meaning fire-like or flame-colored. OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE. God's action in fire, like His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, balanced, directed towards the purging that leads to transformation. The eternal fire is the Truth, the Righteousness, the Love of God; in a word, it is the nature of God. Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol for the presence and manifestation of God. "Our God is a consuming fire," says the scripture, and the apostle adds, "God is love." God IS! God is fire and He is love. Fire represents the divine process of cleansing. Divine judgment is not unto

destruction, but unto redemption. Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the carnality within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings. Nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus Christ has already ridden, or shall yet ride into the world of each of us in FLAMING FIRE! Not to destroy us, but to purge our land. Only the dross must be removed. Thank God that the Christ comes to us not only on the white horse, but also on the red horse to carry the issue onward to victory!

When the black horse invades our land, great darkness falls upon our earth, on the natural man, the carnal mind, the fleshly nature. Black is the absence of light and color. It denotes a condition of no light, no understanding, no expression, nor substance. The anointing of the black horse is a revelation of darkness -the knowledge of just what is in the carnal man, the carnal mind, the fleshly nature -the clear and perfect understanding of what they are, how they work, their utter futility and worthlessness in the light of Reality and Truth that the Spirit brings. We will never let go of the valueless things of the earth realm until once we see them for what they really are, and the true riches. We see a beautiful portrait of this great truth in the Song of Solomon. In chapter 1:1 it is called "The Song of songs, which is Solomon's." Just as the "Holy of holies" was the Holiest place of all, just as the "Heaven of heavens" is the highest Heaven of all, so the "Song of songs" is above and beyond all the songs that have ever come from the human heart and human lips. This is the Song that is above all other songs; a Song sent down from the courts of Heaven, from the throne of God; a strain from the Heavenly choir. "Song" in the symbology of scripture means a "message." So the Song of songs is the Message of messages, the Revelation of revelations!

There are two principle characters in the drama. First you have "my Beloved" who is representative of HIM, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord who is the spirit. Then you have "My love" which represents a woman -the soul realm. This is the ineffable, pre-eminent Song; ineffable because it is a celebration of true marriage, a portrait of your personal relationship with Jesus, and a picture of the love relation between Christ and the church; ultimately it is a representation of the relationship between the Corporate Man, the Manchild, the sons of God with the Bride of Christ. On the personal level she, the soul, becomes awakened to Him, the indwelling spirit. These are internal realities. The Christ to whom our soul awakens, and whom our soul seeks and loves, is not the Christ in some far off heaven somewhere, but Christ in our spirit, who dwells in our hearts by faith. When the soul awakens to the glory of the Christ within, when she once beholds HIS beauty, HIS majesty, HIS riches, and smells HIS oils, she is filled with great desire and she cries, "Draw me and we will run after Thee!" Her heart goes out that she may rise up and run after Him. She feels she is helpless in herself, but that He has power to draw her, and He alone can do this. She longs for the kisses of His mouth, those tender moments of fellowship and communion in which His love is revealed. When God pours into you a hunger for your Beloved and begins to reveal more clearly your potential in Him, rejoice with great joy and gratitude toward God. If He did not put into our hearts the longing to know Him better and to have His very best, we would be satisfied with the least we could have and be saved, and become spiritual paupers in the Kingdom of God. How wondrous are the workings and drawings of God upon a human soul! How little do we behold or know that which He is doing, as day by day He works down in the depths of our beings. The most favored place a child of God can be in, is to continually feel the drawing of God

urging and constraining him to greater hunger and to greater abandonment to Him. There is nothing we should praise Him for with such gratitude, as for every touch of hunger that He graciously gives us. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out."

In the moments of ecstasy in His presence she catches a glimpse of the Most Holy Place and cries, "I want more!" But in His presence she also receives a startling revelation - "I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar..." (S. of S. 1:5). She receives the understanding of how carnal she is. You can never become spiritual, my beloved, until the Spirit has shown you your carnality. It is not the sinner who says, "I am black;" it is not when the heart has been untouched by the grace of God, that the stain and blackness, which carnality has wrought upon the soul, can be seen by the one who is not quickened. It is when the power of the Spirit strikes the believing soul, that the soul sees her blackness; it is when she gets a vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that she sees herself as black as the black goat-hair tents of the Bedouin - the tents of Kedar. When the soul has commenced to enter into a closer walk with the Spirit, the beauty which she thought she had, she sees wither up and drop off. The natural attractions in which she had rejoiced -the wisdom of this world, the empty religious exercises, the pleasures and pursuits of the flesh -disappear under the searching light of His holy presence. With clearer vision than ever before she sees the emptiness, the vanity, the futility and frustration of all earthly things. It's a revealing -"I am black -but comely!" She is not repenting of past sins. When you come into the realm of the Spirit and taste of its glories you soon begin to see how easy it is to slip back into an old way of thinking. You begin to get a revelation of the carnal mind, not just that it exists, but how it works. You begin to see that the wisdom of men is foolishness to the Spirit. It is the mind of man that keeps the world in continual turmoil. It seethes and bubbles and boils and erupts like a vast cauldron. There is an impassable gulf between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, for the spiritual mind is concerned only with the things of God and all the things that concern the Spirit, which things lead to life and immortality. But the fleshly or carnal mind is concerned only with the things of the physical realm, which things lead only to death and corruption because there is no life in them. For this very reason the scripture says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Our vision of heavenly things has been so distorted due to our looking through physical and soulish eyes. You have sometimes seen a window made of fluted glass, and you know that if you look at the street through this window everything will be distorted. The passers-by and the automobiles will appear to be warped and distorted in absurd and ugly ways. Nevertheless, you know that these things are really quite alright in themselves, and that the distortion arises from your seeing them wrongly. The pure eyes of our regenerated spirits have had to filter through the fluted shell of our carnal minds and the marvelous things of the realm of God's Spirit have been distorted into myriads of carnal doctrines, traditions, rituals, concepts, interpretations, methods, and religious systems and exercises. This distorted vision of heavenly things is really what we know as "Christianity" and "the Church." It is a seeing, but a false seeing. It is a knowing, but a false knowing. The sons of God are arising to pass through this veil, to abide forever in the Holiest of all. Over the heart of every unquickened and untransformed man or woman there hangs an impenetrable veil of outer darkness that keeps men blinded to the glory of Truth and Reality in the Spirit. Even in the reading of the scripture the veil is over their eyes, and they sit in blindness and outer darkness until a totally new spirit and new heart is given them. Then and only then does the light shine upon them. Then and only then do

they behold the King in all His beauty and discern all spiritual things. Then and only then do they understand the incredible darkness and dreadful void of the carnal mind with all its delusions and distortions. No greater tragedy can overtake a man than that, after he has been illuminated by the light of Christ, and made a partaker of the life of the Spirit, he should then mingle his affection with the emptiness of earthly things and not set them entirely on things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The children of God are so occupied and busy with soulish zeal and carnal efforts! They are running here and there, busily initiating religious activities of all kinds, as though the Lord could not get along without their officious help. One would think that the Lord is not as interested in His own Vineyard as they are. They are organizing, and bringing together all kinds of machinery to run the Lord's business; they are inventing intricate and clever systems to get men saved, and to entertain them so that they will remain saved (?). Everybody feels that they should be "doing something for God." This sounds reasonable to the natural mind; so men mingle the thoughts, schemes, ideas, plans, purposes, ambition and zeal of the carnal mind with the new inclinations and affections of the spiritual mind; consequently Christians rush about in every direction like ants on an ant hill, doing this and doing that, going here and going there, organizing this and organizing that, promoting this and promoting that, praying, preaching, planning, toiling, giving their money, working themselves into nervous wrecks, even neglecting their families and homes, cultivating the vineyards of others and letting their own experience remain shallow and on the surface. They find no time to wait upon God in earnest, to sit at His feet in holy submission and sweet communion, to learn of Him. They spend no time in learning to KNOW the Lord of the Vineyard! Without exception, this barrenness and void in our lives is a sure proof that we are in need of God's dealing hand. Therefore, let us leave everything that we can leave, and let us get still before the Spirit that He may speak to us and work in us, and for us, and through us, to His glory. Then shall we go forth with the presence and power of God upon us, and while we shall be used of Him with those around us, we shall have learned to watch for His movings and dealings upon our souls, and to always yield to Him to work in us first. Thus shall our hearts become truly pure, unmixed with the carnal zeal and scheming of the carnal mind. The maxim for those sons led by the Spirit of God shall be: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall SEE GOD - at work!"

They who shall make up the elect of God shall not be content with a mere vision of Christ. They will take away every veil that is between them and their Lord, and with unveiled face they will behold His glory until they are transfigured into the same image, from glory to glory. God's chosen ones will not be satisfied with imaginary victory, which is really the deceptive peace of having received a revelation but not entering in. They will strengthen themselves in the Lord and put on His whole armor. They will fight the good fight of faith and finish their course -immortal and incorruptible. They will not mistake the call and revelation of God, for possession. They will not be content with visions and passing glimpses of the land of promise, but by faith they will walk up and down through the land and begin to possess their possessions. They will become more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

The black horse reveals the black - the substance of carnality. One can never be an overcomer until he deals with the subtleties of the carnal nature. The carnal mind is the reasoning, ethics, philosophy, religion and character of the natural man. But God doesn't only reveal that to us -He reveals our comeliness at the same time. What beautiful balance there is in the wisdom of the Lord! "I am black -but comely!" It is this balance between the negative and the positive in God's dealings that accounts for the Rider of the

black horse having a pair of balances in His hand. The comeliness of those pressing on into God's fullness is revealed in the further ministry of the black horse. All is not negative, for there is great spiritual wealth and heavenly glory revealed there! "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny" (Rev. 6:6). The interpretation placed upon these words by the theologians and teachers in the church systems is that these symbols denote world-wide famine. Bread by weight and measure, say they, signifies scarcity of food. The argument goes something like this: The penny referred to was a day's wage and a measure (nearly a quart) of corn was a slave's daily ration, an amount usually purchasable for one-eighth of a penny. Ordinarily, one could buy eight measures of wheat or twenty-four measures of barley for a penny, but in the days of the black horse only one measure of wheat or three measures of barley can be bought for a penny. This will make food eight times higher than usual. A man would be giving all of his income for the bare necessities of life. However, much carnal guesswork among commentators and writers might have been avoided if recourse had been made to one passage in the Old Testament where there is a highly significant area of correspondence. Some teachers, without any investigation or spiritual insight, have settled for the shallow and literalistic idea of natural "food at famine prices," whereas the slightest acquaintance with Biblical prices and measures would have assured them of the contrary -that the food on offer is well within the capacity of everyone to purchase. Others, obsessed with the history of the Roman empire, have held that the prices have to do with the ruinous taxation imposed on the farming community in the days of the Roman empire's decline. With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit bypass all the carnal suppositions of men, drawing our reverent attention to the wonderful connection with the words of Elisha the prophet during the siege of Samaria. In the days of Elisha there was a great war between Syria and Israel; and Benhadad, the king of Syria, led a mighty army into the land of Israel and laid siege against the city of Samaria. So hard and so long was the siege that the people in Samaria could find nothing to eat; many died from lack of food and some killed their own children and ate them.

But through all the siege Elisha encouraged the king of Israel not to give up the city. When it seemed that there could be no hope, Elisha said to the king, "Hear the Word of the Lord, Tomorrow, at this hour, in the gate of Samaria, a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel." One of the nobles, on whose arm the king was leaning, did not believe Elisha's word and he said scornfully, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven and rain down wheat and barley, then this might be." "You shall see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha; "but you shall not eat any of the food." On the next morning, about daybreak, four men that were lepers were standing together outside the gate of Samaria. Being lepers, they were not allowed by the laws of Israel inside the walls of the city. These four men said to each other, "What shall we do? If we go into the city, we must die there from the lack of food; if we stay here we will surely die. Let us go to the camp of the Syrians; perhaps they will let us live; and at the worst they cannot do more than kill us." So the four men went toward the Syrian camp; but as they came near, they were surprised to find no one standing on guard. They went into a tent and found it empty, as though it had been left very suddenly, for there were food and drink, garments, and gold and silver all about. As no one was there, they ate and drank all they wanted; and then they took away valuable things and hid them. They looked into another tent and another, and found them like the first, but not a man was in sight. They walked through the camp but not a soldier was there, and the tents were left just as they had been when the men were living in them. In the night the Lord had caused the Syrians to hear a great noise like a rolling of chariots and the trampling of horses and

the marching of a vast host of men. They said to each other in great fear, "The king of Israel has sent for the Hittites on the north and the Egyptians on the south to come against us." And so great and so sudden was their terror, that in the night they rose up and fled away, leaving everything in their camp, even leaving their horses tied, and their asses and all their treasure and all their food in their tents. After a time the lepers said to each other, "We do wrong not to tell this good news in the city. If they found it out, they will blame us for not letting them know, and we may lose our lives on account of it." So they went up to the gate and called the men on guard. They told them how they had found the camp of the Syrians, with tents standing and horses tied, but not a man left. The men on guard told it at the king's palace. But the king, when he heard it, thought it was a trick of the Syrians to hide themselves and to draw the men out of the city so that they might take the city. The king sent out two men with horses and chariots, and they found that not only had the camp been left, but that the road down the mountains to the Jordan river was covered with garments and arms and treasures that the Syrians had thrown away in their wild flight.

The news soon spread through the city of Samaria, and in a few hours all the city was at the gate. When the food was brought in from the camp, there was abundance for all the people. And it came to pass as Elisha had said -a measure of wheat flour and two measures of barley were sold for a shekel in the gate of Samaria by noon that day! So the starving inhabitants of the besieged city found abundance of food at prices within the reach of all, within twenty-four hours of the prediction. The entire population sallied forth to possess themselves of the spoil abandoned in the camp of the heathen army whom the Lord had caused to flee in terror from some invisible foe. And let us note - the two primary food items available in such abundance were wheat and barley! The only difference between the relief afforded to the Samaritan multitude and that described in Revelation chapter six, is that food is both cheaper and more plentiful in the latter case! And the deliverance and provision under Elisha is but the type of the abundance of SPIRITUAL FOOD provided for the man or woman being processed into the image of Jesus Christ! The book of Revelation must be spiritually understood. The wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, symbolize spiritual values. All the symbology of the book of Revelation is, in fact, drawn from the imagery of the great spiritual types and shadows of the Old Testament!

WHEAT AND BARLEY

There are many types of the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament. The broadest and most all-inclusive type is the land of Canaan. This land is frequently referred to as the good land. The Lord called it "a good land," and "an exceeding good land." When the Lord says something is good, we must pay special attention. What is the goodness of this land? The land is good in many aspects. It is not our purpose to explore the manifold characteristics of the land -for that would make a book in itself. We come now to the matter that relates to our subject at hand- the unsearchable riches of the land. The land is good in its unsearchable riches. First of all it is rich in water. "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills" (Deut. 8:7). These waters are all types of various kinds of supply of the Christ-life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that He would give us water to drink that we never thirst again, and that this water would be a well of water within springing up unto eternal life. The Lord tells us that out of our innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. This is the supply of the Christ-life, the Spirit within as living water. Many times we are thirsty, not thirsty in our body, but thirsty in our soul. When you are

thirsty, it means that your soul is dry. But when you come athirst to the Spirit and contact the life of the Spirit, you are refreshed and quickened -you are watered. Your thirst is quenched. You are refreshed by the life of the Spirit more than by any cold water or beverage on earth. And as you drink and drink of the life-giving Spirit there will be a stream flowing forth from you- an emanation, an overflow of His life unto creation. In this land there is not only one stream, but many springs, fountains and streams. The spring (spirit) is the source; the fountain (soul) is the reservoir; and the stream (ministry) is the overflow. Within the Kingdom people there are many streams, a stream of wisdom, a stream of light, a stream of love, a stream of understanding, a stream of compassion, a stream of mercy, a stream of power, a stream of peace, a stream of joy, a stream of righteousness, a stream of praise, etc. How many streams are there within you, my beloved? We can love and bless all of creation as a living stream flowing forth.

"Stretch forth your hands, and heal the nations;
Speak forth the Word, and give them life.
This is the day, that God has chosen;
And as He is, so are we, in this world."

What a wonderful source we have! What a good land this is! The sons of God are the people of the Kingdom of the Most High, the joy of the whole earth, the hope of all creation -they are the good land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. What richness there is in this land!

Not only is the Lord, the Spirit, the living water of this land, but He is also the bread of the land, the bread of life. Something to drink always accompanies food. Water is refreshing and quickening; food is strength and sustenance. Food and drink always go together. So in Deut. 8 the very next verse says, "A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey" (Deut. 8:8). There are seven food items in all - the perfect, eternal food. There are two kinds of grain - the same grain mentioned in Rev. 6:6 - wheat and barley. What is the meaning of all these things? John 12:24 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ was a grain of wheat. Matthew 13:38 tells us that the sons of the Kingdom are grains of wheat. It is all CHRIST - the food of the land. It is interesting to note that both barley and wheat were connected with the feasts of the Lord in Israel. All the Feast days were associated closely with the agricultural seasons of the land of Canaan. Israel was an agrarian nation. This seasonal observance of the Feasts is a perfect allegorical type of God's redemptive processes. The Lord wished to convey in type and shadow how He would cultivate His crop (the people of God), until at the end of the season (age) there would be the firstfruit or wave-sheaf offering, the OMER OF BARLEY. Let me explain. In Leviticus chapter twenty-three the Lord gave Moses instructions concerning the feasts which the nation was to observe. On the fourteenth of Nisan at evening (or sundown) they were to begin to commemorate the Passover, and twenty-four hours later, on the fifteenth of Nisan, they were to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was to last seven days. After they came into their land and had a grain harvest, the Lord instructed Moses that they were to perform an additional rite during the seven day Feast. In verse ten we read: "When ye come into the land which I give you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it." The Sabbath was the Holy Convocation that marked the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

As part of the ritual, the priest would go out among the fields, select the grain that was ripe, gather a bundle and tie it into a sheaf. He would return to the Temple and there before the altar would wave the sheaf before the Lord as an offering of the firstfruits of the harvest. This act marked the beginning of the harvest which was to last fifty days. This feature of the Feast was marvelously prophetic in the case of Jesus. Jesus was slain for us at the time of the Passover Feast, becoming our Passover Lamb. His body was laid in the tomb. Then very early in the morning - the first day of Unleavened Bread - the celebration of the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits - the women came to the sepulcher and found that Jesus had been raised from the dead. And thus Jesus became the firstfruits of the harvest, the firstfruits of them that slept (I Cor. 15:20), the first to ripen into the fullness of the image and life of God, spirit, soul and body. We like to think of the Israelite priest fulfilling the rite of waving the sheaf before the Lord early in the morning, at the same time Jesus was fulfilling the type by being resurrected from the dead into the immortal and incorruptible life of God. Truly Jesus was the firstfruits of resurrection, immortality and incorruption. But, He also was to be the firstborn among a vast family of sons which the Father-heart of God would bring to birth, sons who would be tutored and led by His Spirit, who would learn obedience through suffering, and who would partake of holiness through chastening. For was not the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ that of bringing many sons unto glory (Heb. 2:10)? And was not He to be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29)? Therefore, the waving of the firstfruits sheaf spoke of an abundant harvest to follow. It was assurance that the patient sowing-watering-reaping process had not failed! In due time the whole field of barley would come to maturity! Ah, may we again look at that sheaf of the Firstfruits and see afresh our Lord rising from the dead. But may there also come exuberant rejoicing in our spirit in seeing that He is but the firstborn, and that an abundant harvest of sons will follow. Yea, let the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him come to rest upon us, and let us experience something of the exceeding greatness of the power that raised Him from the dead! Yea, let there come an enlarging of our vision and our hope, for our hope is not just to make it to heaven, but TO BE LIKE HIM - SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY!

The wave-sheaf was a sheaf of barley. Sowing of barley was done in the land of Israel during the month of Bul (October-November) after the early rains had begun to fall and the ground could be plowed. Barley matures more rapidly than wheat, and the harvest began in the early spring during the month of Nisan (March-April). Barley harvest thus marked a definite time of the year and its start corresponded with Passover time, the sheaf waved by the priest on the sixteenth day of Nisan being of the barley firstfruits.

Paul Mueller has gleaned some precious truths concerning the significance of barley and the harvest of the firstfruits. He writes, "The book of Ruth is one of the most fascinating books in the Bible, telling a story of love and redemption. The story begins with Naomi's desire to return from Moab to Bethlehem. There was a famine in the land and she heard tidings from Bethlehem that 'the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread (Ruth 1:6). How wonderful it is to hear that the Lord is visiting His people and is giving them bread, while dwelling in a land where there is famine and hunger. Presently, the Lord is again visiting His elect, giving them the bread of His living Word, even that bread which is His body and blood (Jn. 6:48-58). And all who hunger for that Bread will indeed make the journey from Moab to Bethlehem to receive that Bread, leaving the land of famine (the church system) for the realm of His visitation. Naomi's two sons had married two women of Moab, Orpha and Ruth. But her husband and her sons died, leaving Naomi with her two daughters-in-law who had no children. When Ruth heard that Naomi wanted to return to Bethlehem, she decided to go with her, but Orpha kissed her mother-in-law and

remained in Moab. Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem 'in the beginning of the barley harvest' (Ruth 1:22). Naomi then requested that her friends should not call her Naomi, but should call her Mara (meaning bitter), for, said she, 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Carnal Christians would certainly regard this as a tragedy, but the truly spiritual person will readily see that Naomi's experience was necessary in bringing her 'home again empty' even as it is with those of us who are among the Lord's called and chosen ones. The Lord has certainly brought us home again empty, for we have been emptied of man's lifeless doctrines and useless ways. Our past was a necessary part of our processing, for we did go out full, but the Lord brought us home again. What matters now is that we have come home and we can only come home empty, for how else could we receive the precious truths He has reserved for us?

"Ruth and Naomi came home to Bethlehem 'in the beginning of the barley harvest,' and that is a very significant truth, for the time of the barley harvest may correspond to the approaching visitation of Christ to His people at this time of the eleventh hour. Naomi's husband had a kinsman, Boaz, a mighty man of wealth. Boaz had fields of barley and wheat, and Ruth's first job in Israel was gleaning in the barley fields of Boaz. The second chapter of Ruth tells the story of her success in gleaning as Boaz ordered his men to leave 'handfuls of purpose for her.' Naomi then told Ruth to go lie at the feet of Boaz, for he was her kinsman-redeemer, and this was the custom to be followed concerning the right of the kinsman. When Boaz discovered her lying at his feet, he asked who she was. Ruth then told him, and requested that he cover her with his skirt, which was also the custom of the kinsman. Boaz then promised Ruth that he would fulfill his duty as her near kinsman. At this point, it is important that we understand the spiritual value of Ruth's growing relationship with Boaz. When she first arrived in Bethlehem with Naomi, Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz. But, when she became acquainted with Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer, Ruth ceased gleaning in the fields and presented herself to him for the fulfillment of the kinsman-redeemer role as her husband. The important spiritual truth we are to glean from this story is that when we come home we come to learn His ways and His truth. We come home emptied of all the former ambitions and ministries, and we cease gleaning in the fields of the world, for we are now being prepared to be joined to Christ. Early the next morning, before it became light enough for others to recognize her, Ruth returned home to Naomi. But before she left, Boaz filled her veil with "six measures of barley,' which she was to present to Naomi, perhaps as a dowry (Ruth 3:14-18) -end quote.

What then, does barley represent? THE RESURRECTED CHRIST! When the harvest time came, the firstfruits of the harvest must be offered to the Lord, and the firstfruit was clearly the barley. And so it is written, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20). The firstfruits of the harvest typify Christ as the firstfruits of the resurrection. How clearly this shows that barley represents the RESURRECTED CHRIST! But, by extension, the firstfruits include the elect sons of God in union with Christ. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. These are they which were not defiled with women (apostate church systems, etc.) for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed (fully) from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:1-4).

What aspect of Christ does wheat represent? Is it not written, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). From this passage we can see that the Lord is a grain of wheat falling into the earth to die and to be buried. The wheat represents Christ incarnated. Christ is God incarnated as man to fall into the earth, to die and to be buried. This is the wheat. It typifies the Christ who was incarnated, the Christ who died, and the Christ who was buried. But I would draw your attention to the setting of this beautiful statement. Andrew and Philip had just come and told the Lord that certain Greeks had requested to see Jesus. And this was the Lord's astonishing reply: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone..." Strange reply! But not hard to understand, when we realize that the Christ shall appear and shall be SEEN IN HIS PEOPLE, through His Cross and Resurrection. "We would see Jesus," said the Greeks. Then they must see Him in the harvest which His death would bring into being. They must see Him in the grain that would be reproduced after His very likeness, in His very image. They would see Him in His body! And the only way that we, as the sons of God, are going to manifest the life and resurrection power of Christ is by becoming identified with Him in His cross. It is not sufficient that we merely accept Christ and His redemptive work on our behalf. Doing that we are brought into fellowship with Him - but we "abide alone." We must share His sufferings, share His death to self, share His abandonment to the will of the Father, share His separation from the world and the flesh, identify ourselves with His cross, so that it actually becomes our very own - and then we shall rise in resurrection life to bring forth much fruit unto the Kingdom. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:5). No wonder the great apostle Paul who knew Christ, had personally seen His Lord on the Damascus road, had talked with Him and heard Him reply in an audible voice - yearned in the travail of his spirit for this great manifestation: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (out from among) the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11). Wheat represents the incarnated, crucified and buried Christ. Barley represents the resurrected Christ. These two kinds of grains represent two aspects of Christ, His coming and His going. They represent the Christ coming down to be the wheat and the Christ going up to be the barley. We must meditate deeply upon truths so great and so profound. Have you experienced Christ as wheat? And have you experienced Christ as barley?

The fact that Jesus took "five barley loaves" with which He fed the multitudes is a very positive prophetic picture. Most Christians are familiar with the miracle of the five loaves, but very few are aware that those loaves were loaves of barley. Jesus did nothing by chance! All that He did was prophetic pointing to a larger event that is far more glorious and significant than that which is seen on the surface. If the loaves would have been loaves of wheat, something would be wrong. But they were not wheat, they were loaves of barley. As barley loaves, they could feed five thousand people, and then His disciples gathered up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. This is the resurrected Christ, the Spirit, who can only be rich and full and inexhaustible to us in the fullness of His divine life. In His incarnation, He is exceedingly limited but in His resurrection He is abundant and unlimited. There is no limit, no measure, no boundary to the resurrection life of the Christ! As Christ incarnate, He was just one grain, a little Nazarene, a humble carpenter, an itinerant preacher in one of the smallest nations on earth for a mere three years and a half. But when He came into resurrection and returned as the indwelling Spirit of life, He was unlimited. Time and space and material things could limit Him no longer. There were five loaves, but in fact there were countless loaves. There was

enough to feed five thousand men plus all the women and children, with an overflow of twelve baskets full. Twelve is the number of absolute fullness, Kingdom sufficiency. It means that this is Christ in the power and glory of His Kingdom, in the inexhaustibleness of immortality and incorruption. You can draw from the abundance of His resurrection life and after you have eaten all you need HIS FULLNESS REMAINS UNDIMINISHED! Christ in His resurrection can never be limited or exhausted. Wheat is the valley of death, but barley is the mountain of resurrection. Whenever you experience Christ as the wheat, be assured that an experience of Christ as the barley will follow. Ah, precious friend of mine, regardless of the problems and pressures that hedge you in and shut you up, irrespective of the circumstances and conditions that appear to confine and limit and prevent you from the fulfillment of God's full purpose in your life, let me assure you - a barley loaf is within you! It is a loaf of the resurrected Christ who can never be limited. Apply HIM to the situation. He can never be exhausted. With the life of the resurrected Christ, you can live out the life of the unlimited God within the confines of your present limitation. You can do all things through Him who strengthens you, because He is resurrected in you and there is no limit. This kind of experience not only enables you to know the Christ within as the wheat and as the barley, but by this experience you become a grain of wheat, you become a loaf of barley.

You, as Jesus, in the present state of your development, can be limited in fullness. When Jesus was on earth He was always limited. He was limited by His flesh, limited by His family, limited by space, limited by time, limited by people's unbelief, limited by the plan and will of the Father. When the Christ took upon Him a body of flesh and the nature of man, He willfully subjected Himself to the limitations and restrictions of that which is material, earthly and mortal. Jesus did not walk among men as the incorruptible God, but as mortal man. It was as a natural, physical earthling that He was tempted; He hungered; He thirsted; He knew weakness; He wept; He slept; He suffered; He died. The life of God resided in His spirit, but that life was confined, restrained and restricted by the bounds of the material world which He had taken upon Himself. It is manifest that His body was not an incorruptible body, else He would not have died though nailed to a thousand crosses! It is remarkable that through the few years of Jesus' ministry He never performed one act, nor one miracle, sign or wonder on the higher plane of incorruption. Every miracle Jesus did was in the realm of mortality. He raised a number of folk from the dead, including Lazarus, but each and every person called back from the sleep of death was merely raised up again into the mortal life to continue on for a season in the same old corruptible body. All of them DIED AGAIN! Think of it! Not one single person was raised up out of corruption into an incorruptible body. Jesus cleansed the lepers and healed every manner of sickness and disease among the people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that each and every one of those good people got sick again and eventually died! Jesus performed many other types of miracles. He began by turning water into wine. And it was very excellent wine, indeed. But just wine, nonetheless. It was composed of the same chemical elements as all fine wine. It was material, physical, earthly. It was consumed by flesh and blood bodies and a portion eliminated from those bodies as waste. Not one ounce of spirituality was obtained by drinking it. And yet it is written: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY; and His disciples believed on Him" (Jn. 2:11). Yes, He manifested forth His glory. The life of the Father dwelt within Him. All power was incarnate within Him. And in limitation He lived in that life and ministered out of that life. What condescension!

Is not the fullness of God within us in limitation? Dearly beloved, whenever you are put into a situation by the Lord's sovereignty in which you are limited, in which you are

pressed, in which you are restricted, you are experiencing the life of God as wheat. When in the midst of that limiting and pressing situation you look to the Lord, He is just as a grain of wheat to you. For the sake of our learning, for the sake of others - how often He confines and limits us! We would like to send the lightning from our fingers and with a flash of fire and a blaze of glory reveal His power without limitation so that men would behold His omnipotence in us. But that is not how God works. He gives only what men are capable of receiving, so He comes in limitation lest they be blinded by the light and destroyed by the blast of His nostrils. He comes in the life of the little carpenter, the incarnate One, the limited One. There is power in Him to suffer any kind of limitation. If you are a follower of Jesus, if you are a son of God, you have to be limited. In many situations you must be like a car with a powerful engine of hundreds of horsepower, slowed down to fifteen miles per hour in a school zone, lest little children be run down. We cannot push or hurry things along. We cannot force things. We must not induce a premature birth. If it were left up to us we would bring in the Kingdom RIGHT NOW - invading and raping creation to deliver it. We want our husband or wife converted or changed now. We want God to deal with our children or loved ones now. We want deliverance from our problems and pressures now. We are not unlike the man who prayed, "O God, give me patience - and give it to me RIGHT NOW!" We would mass-produce sons in man-made training centers. We would mature sons of God in an artificial "hot-house" environment. May the blessed spirit of wisdom and revelation from God teach us the simple truth that the vision is caught, not taught! The wisdom and glory of God are revealed to the pure and humble in heart. God Himself is bringing up His own sons. We may be permitted to help a little here and there with a word of encouragement, a sharing of experience, a ministrations of understanding and wisdom, but in the final analysis each son must come to know God for himself. No man can come unto the Christ except the Father draw him. We may plant and water, but it is God who gives the increase. We must not resort to artificial "growth stimulants" contrary to the laws of natural growth. When one turns to carnal gimmicks he frustrates the grace and power of the Spirit and disqualifies a potential overcomer from becoming a part of the firstfruit offering unto the Lord. In all of these things the unlimited power of God in us must be manifest in limitation. It is the unlimited Christ living within us that causes us to follow the limited Jesus. And yet we live out of His fullness in the unlimitedness of His eternal and inexhaustible life.

HURT NOT THE OIL AND THE WINE

These two principles - wheat and barley - are the very principles revealed in the black horse in Rev. 6. "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny." Thank God! there is more barley than wheat for the same price. No sooner does the black horse ride into our land revealing and exposing the carnality in our lives, than he follows this action with the provision of an abundance of wheat and barley! There is a divine progression here. As we forsake the darkness and futility of the carnal mind (Egypt), there lies immediately before us the incredible fruitfulness and plenitude of the land of Canaan - the realm of the SPIRIT. As we enter into this land of His fullness and glory and unlimited power an injunction is laid upon us - "and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." The reference is, I believe, to the sacred wine and oil which the priests kept for the Temple ceremonies, and which was deposited in the inner Temple. The word for "hurt" is ADIKEO meaning "deal unjustly with." "See thou deal not unjustly with the oil and the wine." Another translation is, "Do not commit injustice in respect to the oil and the wine." Another version reads, "Do not injure the oil and the wine." Yet another rendering says, "Waste not the oil and the wine." It bespeaks of a sacrilegious wrong or a wanton

waste. In plain English it means DO NOT MISUSE the oil and the wine! Oil represents the anointing and wine is the figure for revelation. Do not MISUSE the anointing and the revelation! Do not play the rogue with the anointing! Do not prostitute or exploit the revelation! How this word is needed among the Lord's people in this hour when men use the gifts and revelation of God to their own ends, for self aggrandizement, to make a name, for financial gain, to get followers, to build a kingdom, etc. We are the people of His land, the priests of His temple. The oil and the wine are the visitation of the Lord to His body, to His church, to His elect, to His sons who are feasting upon the wheat and the barley, now becoming custodians of His priceless oil and His precious wine. The knowledge of this sublime truth will make you holy. No one can ever truly see his place in God and yet remain in carnality. Should one claim to see these truths and possess this anointing and yet remain as he was before, then he has not seen by the Spirit, but by the natural mind only. With weeping I must tell you that there are those among us today, uncircumcised in mind and heart, with the spirit of Babylon alive in the soil of their earth, who tread the courts of the holy temple of God and usurp the holy things of God with sin and pride, with self-seeking, self-indulgence, and self-promotion. Away with the spirit of Babylon! Away with the allurements and foolishness of the harlot system! Away with the repetitious babel of religion! Away with the methods of the world! Away with every vestige of the carnal mind, and every claim of the fleshly nature! Away with worldly wisdom! Away with the pseudo-spiritual domination of the Lord's people by men who manipulate and lord it over the flock! Or in the words of the Voice from the throne of God, "SEE THAT YOU DO NOT M-I-S-U-S-E THE OIL AND THE WINE!"

THE PALE HORSE

In closing I would mention briefly the fourth horse. "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, come and see. And I looked, and lo a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:7-8). There is a special significance to be attached to the description of the fourth horseman - he whose name is Death - and Hell followed with him. Death and Hell are specially linked in the Revelation. And since Christ came and abolished death (II Tim. 1:10) and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14), He now boldly proclaims: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH" (Rev. 1:18). And since the Christ now possesses both hell and death neither of them ride anywhere except by His authority! Now let us UNDERSTAND! This horse is given power over the fourth part of the earth-realm, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. This "fourth part of the earth" is clearly that portion of earthiness not already dealt with by the three preceding horses. It bespeaks of the conclusion, consummation and termination of the process. It means the final subjugation and destruction of everything within us that is contrary to HIS life and kingdom. And all the instruments necessary to accomplish this are in His hands and at His command.

There is an amazing and significant statement in the passage that we do not want to miss. "And power was given unto Him to kill...with death." To kill with DEATH! How does one kill with death? What can this cryptic statement mean? To kill with death means a death by death. Later on in the book of Revelation the same truth is presented thus: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of Fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14). Now let us turn this around for clarity. "The second death IS death and hell cast into the

lake of fire." Therefore we have exactly the same meaning either way it is stated. What is the second death? It is the first death and hell cast into the lake of fire! "Our God is a consuming fire." This fact is extremely IMPORTANT. The second death is not merely the lake of fire. Nor is the second death men being tortured forever in the lake of fire. The Holy Spirit has made it very simple and plain. The second death is the first death and hell CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything cast into the lake of fire pertains to DEATH? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, i.e. those who are dead, in trespasses and in sins, who inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. That is the end of death and hell and sin and sinners, for God shall destroy the whole realm of death in the lake of fire. He shall burn up hell in the lake of fire, He shall destroy death in the lake of fire, and He shall consume sin in the lake of fire. How I long to see the end of sin and death and hell! The time is coming, praise His name! God's Kingdom shall rule over all and God Himself shall be All-in-all. There shall be neither sin, nor sinners, nor death, nor hell. It is clear that God does not destroy men in the lake of fire, nowhere does it say that, for that would be a contradiction of terms. How can you destroy death by creating death? How can you abolish death by bringing men under the power of eternal death from which there is no escape? Oh, no, it is not men who are destroyed in the lake of fire - it is sin and death and hell that are destroyed. "And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26). "And there shall be no more death: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Thus, the lake of fire is nothing more nor less than THE DEATH OF DEATH! "And power was given unto them to kill...with death." O, the wonder of it!

The following words by Ray Prinzing give fresh insight into this wonderful truth: "The first Adam died to God and righteousness, and became alive unto sin. The last Adam died unto sin (Rom. 6:10), and liveth unto God, and so fulfilleth all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The FIRST DEATH was a transition from life to death, the SECOND DEATH is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to come alive to the higher realm. Because - the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God's universe. Death came as an enemy, the fruitage of an act of disobedience that turned man away from God and into the realm of carnality, minding self and flesh. Now God makes death overcome itself. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, a new life. It takes death to destroy death, and thus Christ 'did taste death for every man' - 'that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:9, 14-15). Since we are all under the effects of the first death, it is appointed unto us to die once more - not physical death, we are already in a state of mortality - but now a dying out to this present death state. We conquer this death of the carnal mind by dying to it - only God could use such a process bringing victory, but praise God, lie is destroying the first death with the second death" - end quote.

When the process is complete, and the last soul has emerged from the warfare of the Four Horsemen, fully yielding unto the Lordship of our Saviour, then at last shall be fulfilled the beautiful promise: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold,

the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be NO MORE DEATH, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

Chapter 25

Sagittarius-The Archer

(continued)

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

LYRA

The first is called Lyra. This star group is pictured as a Lyra or Harp. The harp is the oldest of stringed instruments of music. We find it named three hundred years before Adam died (Gen. 4:21). The only musical instrument mentioned in the book of Revelation in connection with heaven - the realm of spirit - is the harp. The harp was the famous instrument on which king David excelled. According to Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian, the harp of Bible days had ten strings which were plucked with a plectrum (pick). The harp was used on joyous occasions; for instance, it was stated in Gen. 31:26-27: "And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?" The Jews refused to play the harp during the Babylonian Exile. They suspended their harps upon the willows, how could they "sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Ps. 137:4). The harp was gay, and when the prophets of old admonished the people, they threatened that the harp, the symbol of joy and happiness, would be silenced unless the people repented from their sins. The harp was one of the temple orchestra instruments and its tone is described as sweet, tender, soft, and lyrical. I Chronicles 25:3 states that Jeduthun and his sons prophesied with a harp, and I Samuel 16:23 says about David and Saul: "And it came to pass...that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

Dr. Joseph Seiss, in his book THE GOSPEL IN THE STARS, wrote: "The placing of that harp as the first Decan of Sagittarius connects pre-eminent gladness, joy, delight, and praise with the action of this great Archer with His bow and arrows. There is but one such sign in all the ancient constellations, and that is associated with the going forth of this

double-natured Bowman aiming His arrows at the Scorpion's heart. That glorious Archer, as He appears in this sign, answers to the Lamb as John beheld Him, standing, having seven horns and seven eyes - all the fullness of regal, intellectual, and spiritual power. Heaven grew breathless as it gazed, and a thrill went through the universal heart of living things. A new song broke forth from the living ones and elders around the throne of Deity, accompanied by the celestial harps, and rolled sublime through all the heavenly spheres, till afar in the depths of space the voices of angelic myriads took it up, and every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and all things in these realms, were heard singing and saying, 'To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion for the ages of the ages!' - end quote.

Modern atlases depict the constellation of Lyra by an eagle holding the harp, or a harp placed over the eagle. There can be no doubt about the meaning - that praise shall ascend up AS AN EAGLE TOWARD HEAVEN. Two other conspicuous stars in this constellation are Shelyuk, which means "an eagle" and Sulaphat, meaning "springing up" or "ascending" - as in praise. And this praise is associated with the going forth of the victorious horseman. It is the celebration of His triumph in us, the extension of His Kingdom over our land. It is also interesting to note that the name of the brightest star in the constellation of Lyra is Vega, meaning He shall be exalted. Its actual magnitude is very great, perhaps a hundred times that of our sun. This sparkling gem of the summer sky directs our attention to the theme of universal praise, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously" (Ex. 15: 1).

I would like to take this harp out of the starry heavens above and out of the inspired pages of holy writ, and, by the help of the Holy Spirit, touch the strings and bring out of them melody for our souls. Music reflects the heartbeat of every culture. From the roll of African drums to the long mountain horns of the Swiss Alps to the sound of banjos around the campfire, music speaks a special international language of the heart. All people of all cultures express the wonder and joy of life in the sounds of music. There is, I believe, not only the audible song of earth, but symphonies which have always been playing in a realm that far transcends our natural ears. The earth, nature, atmosphere, sun and moon, trillions of blazing stars and shimmering nebulae above, together with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of the heavenly hosts are lost in melodies far, far more beautiful than any human ears can hear, but which can be heard by those who have "ears to hear." There is built into every atom and molecule of creation the harmony of a musical note; together the notes vibrate in a single and perfect chord which makes the universe sing. In the beauty of allegory the scriptures declare that the very elements give glory and honor unto the Lord of the universe. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa. 55:12). "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein" (Isa 44:23). "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee" (Ps. 145:10). "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all ye His angels: praise ye Him, all ye hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon: praise Him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He has also established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree that shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word: mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all

cedars; beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men and children: Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven" (Ps. 148:1-13). Some months ago a word from Bro. Carl Schwing crossed my desk and I was especially impressed by the following thought: "Some nights ago, upon my bed, as my thoughts were upon the Father, my spirit was carried away to the KINGDOM OF THE ELEMENTS...I felt the strong wind blowing against my face, I reached out to touch the rain and snow...I could hear the heaving of the oceans, and the song of the four seasons...I heard the clapping of the trees...I heard the mountains shout for joy and the valleys sing...and the song was always the same 'Christ is Lord! 'Christ is Lord! 'Christ is Lord!' I remained in that realm for an hour or so, as my body was in a state of perfect peace. Tonight I understand more deeply what I experienced: the Kingdom of God had visited the kingdoms of the earth (not of the world), for as He had created these kingdoms before creating man, so now they are first to receive the 'Knowledge of the Lord' (the awareness of His presence). My brethren, can you not see how close The Hour is!...the Father is walking amid His creation and all creation is being shaken by His presence...and we, O sons of God, are being changed in a 'moment, in a twinkling of an eye' by His presence!" - end quote.

Some time ago Bro. Paul Mueller shared the following experience in one of his papers. "To help us understand this truth, I would like to share with you a wonderful experience I had while in Nigeria, West Africa thirty years ago. One afternoon the Lord appeared in my room, and said to me, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand!' As soon as He said that, He immediately turned away and left the room. Needless to say, I was surprised and amazed by that visitation. As I thought about it later, I began to doubt that it was of the Lord. Since I saw no other manifestation of the Kingdom, I thought the whole experience should be questioned. A few days later, as I was walking down a path from our house to the Bible School where I taught Bible classes, the Lord again got my attention. This time, as I was walking through the lush, Nigerian bush, I heard the leaves, the shrubs, and the plants singing a combined song of praise to the Lord and of travail for the Kingdom of God. I stopped to listen! The sound of it all was so arresting that my attention was fixed for a few minutes on the awesome, majestic wonder of that scene. The sound was so awe-inspiring, I thought it to be a most heavenly sound. The whole creation around me came alive with that combined song of praise and travail. In fact, the creation is always singing and travailling (Rom. 8:22), but for those few minutes I was given ears to hear it. As I stood there, transfixed by the wonder of it all, the Lord spoke again and said, 'Now do you doubt Me when I tell you, the Kingdom of God is at hand?' I replied, 'No Lord, help me never to doubt Your word again.' With that, I ceased hearing the sounds of the creation, everything returned to 'normal,' and the heavenly experience ended" - end quote.

A distant relative of mine, Dr. Richard Eby, was accidentally killed a number of years ago when he fell to the street from a three-story building. Instantly he was conscious in the realm of spirit. One moment he was conscious with a flesh-restricted mind, the next moment with a heaven-released mind whose speed of function was that of light. He was instinctively aware that the Lord of lords was everywhere about him, though he did not at that time see Him. Hours later he was raised from the dead, and of one of the wonderful experiences encountered in that heavenly sphere, he says, "Music surrounded me. It came from all directions. Its harmonic beauty unlike earthly vocal or instrumental sounds was totally undistorted. It flowed unobtrusively like a glassy river, quietful, worshipful, excitingly edifying, and totally comforting. It provided a reassuring type of comfort much

like a protective blanket that whispered peace and love. I had never sensed anything like it. This music was sounding within my head, not from an eardrum. Obviously it was not airborne. Most unusual to me was the absence of any 'beat.' Then I realized that without time this heavenly music could have no beat which is a measure of time! I was hearing harmonic perfection, undistorted by any interposed medium between me and its source, as heard mind-to-mind." Richard Eby explains that since God is the Creator of the universe He is the Composer of the Song of creation. This universal Song is the prime communication of worship, praise and thanksgiving. Music became the resulting harmony from all creation, both of matter and energy. All resonated in unison with the Spirit. It is like a triad of sub-electronic particles with and around which God constructed everything in the universe. The wave-forms we call Light; whereas the material-forms we call earth and water and air. The original creation mirrored the composition and perfection of Person-God. All things vibrated in unison with Him! There was total accord and harmony everywhere as the whole cosmos was resonating with and in God. Each separate thing or being thus carried out an appointed task in His scheme for the universe. A celestial-form of music resulted as the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy! Dr. Eby adds: "The music around me suddenly seemed louder. I rushed to a nearby tree and grasped its trunk to my ear: it was 'singing.' I lifted my right elbow to my head; it too emitted the same joyous, beatless melody. Excitedly I stopped to pick some flowers, and found them already in my hand. They too were 'playing' the tune!"

The atmosphere all about us is permeated with this celestial song of creation. But only the sons and daughters of the Most High can tune in to that higher frequency and sing its melody, for these are they who are LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. This music transcends any earthly sound, nor are there necessarily any words of earth's feeble languages with it. It is not learned in words, nor does it depend upon the skill of utterance. But it is a living vibration of all that GOD IS which is released from the very substance of the spirit within, flowing outward from the tabernacle of creation. This music is the beauty of holiness, the glory of the living God, the divine communion between Christ and His body, the unspoken love between the Bridegroom and the bride, the spiritual harmony between the Creator and His creation - the triumphant symphony of glory! The source of power within this Song of songs is not tones and chords or melodies and harmonic sequences but SPIRITUAL VIBRATIONS of divine power and reality - Perfect Love, Life Everlasting, Joy Unspeakable, Infinite Light - incarnate in creation and redounding unto the praise of HIS glory! It is a Song born of Life, Light, and Love. It doesn't merely tickle the outer ear or stir the soulish emotions - it pierces the very heart and spirit of men! The Song comes in a vibration of a love so intense, a light so penetrating, and a life so transcendent that men's hearts are opened and melted as they hear. The day shall come, my beloved, when every creature in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and under the earth shall respond to the quickening power of that Song and join their voices with all the heavenly hosts and sing with such lyricity of being that the whole spirit, soul and body shall become enraptured into the beauty of infinite harmony! Hallelujah! Creation shall be released! Chains of darkness and death shall be broken! Captives of sin and sorrow and limitation shall be liberated as the resurrected Christ comes forth from within!

We as sons of our heavenly Father are called, not merely to sing that Song, but to BECOME that Living Song of Songs! "And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He MAKE JERUSALEM A PRAISE in the earth" (Isa. 62:7). It is when we become this mighty concerto of Life, Light, and Love that its power is made manifest. The release of the Christ-life within causes us to BECOME this rhythm of glorified Life - creation's

heartbeat of joy, peace, and victory. The Song is sung as Life, Light, and Love are expressed as the essence of Being. It is an Immortal Song - the vibration of incorruptibility. It is not in words spoken - it is in a state of being, the 'emanation of God's glorious and eternal reality to all about. Every man who develops the power to hear this Song out of the realm of the Spirit is given the ability to sing the Song, sending it forth to a burdened and captive world. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound...!" (Ps. 89:15). As the unquenchable fire of God can never be extinguished, so this Song has always been ringing throughout creation and its symphony shall never end. Its melody of Praise demands expression! Some men may stop up their ears, others may try to drown it out, but all their efforts can never quiet the crescendo of LOVE! Its power and impact is too great, it cometh from above. Sing that Song, O Jerusalem, for it shall never, never die! Sing that Song, O ye sons of Zion, for it shall eternally triumph! Let the beauty and majesty of the King of kings in the tones and chords of this Song vibrate from your redeemed spirit that it may fill the whole earth and subdue all the nations! Yea, all ye peoples of the earth, SING THAT SONG!

THE LOST CHORD

The story of the Lost Chord has been told in exquisite verse, and in rapturous music. Perhaps you have heard of the lady who in the autumn twilight laid her fingers on the open keys of a great organ. She knew not what she was playing, or what she was dreaming then, but she struck one chord of music, like the sound of a great Amen.

It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an angel's psalm,
And it lay on her fevered spirit
With a touch of infinite calm.
It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife;
It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.
It linked all perplexed meanings
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away Into silence,
As if it were loath to cease.

Something called her away, and when she returned to the organ, she had lost that chord divine. Though she longed for it and sought it earnestly in unnumbered hours of practice, it was all in vain. It was a lost chord. And so in our world today a voice of longing cries out of every human soul in surges of incomprehensible yearning. It is a voice that is felt, not heard. None has ever walked the pathways of this planet who has not felt the haunting refrain of that "Lost Chord" moaning out its unutterable lamentation. And one and all try to silence that plaintive cry as it sobs forth its heartbreaking sorrow beneath the burden of a faint glimmer from some long forgotten memory...or world...or lost existence. Whenever I hear the story of that "Lost Chord" it reminds me of the lost joy, the lost peace, the lost power, the lost life that has fled from mankind. That whining refrain of sadness, darkness and death, echoing weirdly out of each man's soul, is but the fragmented, scrambled notes of the great Lost Chord, as they are released with harmonic dissonance and discord. It is like the exquisite notes of a masterpiece sounded forth indiscriminately without harmony. The notes may all be there but there is no lovely melody, only a raucous racket. There is recorded in the book of Job the statement of a glorious former

time when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). That exquisite harmony was muted by sin and the subjection of creation to the bondage of corruption, as mankind became overwhelmed with the consciousness of this dense realm of the earthly, material and temporal. But through the quickening Spirit of the resurrected and ascended Christ A NEW SONG IS ARISING - the Celestial Song of Creation begins to sing within our hearts again.

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore,
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more."

Truly we experience those moments when verbal praises are inadequate to even begin to express that which surges deep within. There is a note, a chord, an inner song of rejoicing that finds no articulation in mortal words. From whence cometh this? In the measure body and soul are brought into subjection to, and union with, the spirit, the Song of the morning star begins to vibrate once more - there is a Song of songs to be sung unto His glory. It will be heard through the celestial realms again as the NEW MORNING STARS take up that Lost Chord and begin to express the Life and Reality of God in spirit and in truth. There is a glorious company that stands upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, they are of the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north (Isa. 14:13; Ps. 48:2), brought there by the transforming grace of God, and they sing as it were A NEW SONG before the throne, which no man (fleshly realm) can learn. Well did Ray Prinzing write, "Thrilling to note that the word 'song' is the Greek word for an 'ODE'. An ode isn't the same as a 'hymn' which is a song composed and sung, whereas an ODE is a spontaneous outflow of melody and praise that finds its expression in song by the spirit's inner prompting. Men can learn hymns, they are written out in notes and words. The unsanctified singer of 'rock and roll music' records his album of hymns to collect that money too. But there is a SONG that the unsanctified cannot sing, for it is not something produced by the carnal mind, it is a RELEASING OF THE SPIRIT'S MELODY. It is a song that dates back to when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. We have carried within us a song that could not be released because of the bars of self-will and carnal rebellion. But the CROSS is canceling out the self, and the hour is close when the last vestige of the threads of that veil shall be torn aside, there shall be an outflow of the Christ within, a new song. Praise God, the day shall come when the world, long accustomed to the pipings and shriekings of such distorted music, negative beats that inflame the bestial passions of the flesh, shall awaken to hear the pure melodies of the harmony of God. Never again will they be satisfied with the discordant notes and the off-beat that has so characterized our generation. As they hear the pure song that flows from the Spirit, out of the depths of our being, they shall hunger and thirst to be filled with the same, the harmonious chord of the morning stars' song. Now a morning star means the first, early, or foremost one. And they are given as the herald, messenger to announce the day which is coming forth. The night might seem dark, but the morning star shines out to announce that the GREATER LIGHT OF GOD shall soon be seen over all the earth. 'The knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.' Ah, this gives new hope for coming days, His lighted stars betoken the victory" - end quote. Another has written, "The universe echoes with the harmony of spirits made one in the Father! Yet taller, so much taller is our Elder Brother! Once we walked with Him...now we move and have our existence in Him. Once He walked with us, now He moves and has His existence in us...the two are One, and from that holy union comes forth God's Christ!"

I read the story of a young man who happened to visit a church one Sunday. He listened to the church service and heard an organ offertory played - a Bach toccata. When the service was finished, the young man inquired as to whether he could play the organ. "Oh no! Only our church organist is permitted to play that instrument." But the young man persisted. Finally, they agreed to let him play one piece of music. He looked over the stops, carefully set them, and then he played the same number that was played for the offertory, a Bach toccata. There were still people lingering around. They listened - enthralled, and when he finished, everybody applauded. The organist asked the young visitor, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Johann Sebastian Bach! I wrote that music!" And the organist exclaimed, "Oh, to think that we almost would not let the master himself play the instrument! Only now have we heard the real music come out." YOU, precious friend of mine, are an instrument designed to be a channel of Life, Light, and Love. And Jesus Christ is the Master and wants to play the strings of emotions and thoughts and nature within you until you become a son indeed, the Song of the Lord in the midst of the earth. Your life when it is hid with Christ in God becomes a beautiful thing: every drop of blood is singing His praise; every pulsation of the heart is a joyful harmony keeping steady time; your thoughts in unison with God are running along the lines which ever lead to God, for they diverge not; they are not like comets rushing out into the darkness, but they are like beautiful planets revolving around a Central Sun.

Handel Brown tells of a German ruler who wished to possess a Cremona violin. He offered an unheard of price. It was published in every market place throughout the realm. For months he had no success. Then one day an old man appeared at the castle gate. He was poorly dressed. He had a shabby violin case under his arm. The servants refused to admit him. Finally, because of his importunity, they agreed to carry his message to their master. He asked them to say, "Heaven's music is waiting at your door." The Prince ordered him to be admitted immediately. The old man drew from the worn case a perfect violin. He soon created marvelous music which won the Prince's ardent praise. "The violin must be mine. Name your own price," said the Prince. The old man shook his head. "I want no money," he said; "the violin may be yours only on condition that I pass my life within your house, and use the instrument every day." The Prince accepted the violin on these terms. Ah - the Master Musician (spirit) waits outside the door of soul and body. He offers us the harmonies He alone can create. He, the firstborn Son, can make us sons with whom the Father is well pleased. Let us recall the lovely prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Betimes the circumstances surrounding us appear to be chaotic and hopeless. But we are much comforted by the knowledge that the Composer and Conductor of this Symphony - THE KINGDOM OF GOD - knows every part and every player and is able to execute all phases to its grand conclusion. Discord only enters when we take our eyes off the Conductor or mistake another player's notes for our own.

THE CELESTIAL SONG OF CREATION

GOD ALL IN ALL - this will be the grand conclusion of the great drama of the world's history and of Christ's redemption. There will come a day - the glory is such we can form no conception of it, the mystery is so deep we cannot realize it - when the Son shall deliver up the Kingdom that God gave Him and which He won with His own blood and established and perfected from the throne of His glory. "He shall deliver up the Kingdom unto the Father...that God may be all in all." ALL IN ALL - such is the grand goal of our God! He will yet be everything to every one of His creatures, as it is fitting He should be. Nothing less will satisfy His heart for "He has created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4.11). Nothing less will vindicate His love or form a fit conclusion for the sin and sorrow and death of the ages. Let us with joy believe it! Let us exult as we receive it! Let us be "laborers together with God" to accomplish it! May this simple phrase, that the smallest child can utter, become the very basis of our being, the background of every act, the key to every occurrence, a light in every darkness, a balm for every wound, and our ages-lasting consolation and good hope.

Let us awake from the terrifying nightmare of Babylon's delusions and let us wing our spirits to God's glorious consummation. Here is a vision worthy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - GOD ALL IN ALL. And now, this ultimate reality must begin in us who have received the call to sonship. If this is what fills the heart of Christ; if this expresses the one end of the work of Christ, then, if I would have the spirit of Christ within me, the motto of my life must be: Everything made subject and swallowed up in Him "that God may be all in all." What a life that will be when that really becomes our banner! To serve the Father fully, wholly, only, to have HIM ALL IN ALL! I am praying, believing, and pressing on "that God may be all in all;" that the day of glory may be hastened. Would that all the saints of God realized with what a grand cause we are working and praying; that all had some conception of the Kingdom we are partakers of, and what a manifestation of God we are preparing for! That He is not All-in-all at the present is quite obvious, for only a fraction have faintly felt that God was indeed ALL to them. Some have known Him as their Saviour, some have experienced Him as their healer, some have received gracious gifts from His hands, some have acknowledged Him as their Lord, and a few have found Him as their ALL. Happy are they who know Him thus! They have tasted of the cup ineffable, which quenches every thirst, satisfies every hunger, conquers every enemy, meets every need, dispels all darkness, and destroys all death. I am living for this - that God may be all in all. I am living in Him, and I shall be there not only as a witness, but I have a part in it all. The Kingdom delivered up to the Father, and God all in all! I shall have a part in it and in adoring worship share the glory and blessedness. Let us permit this to penetrate deeply into our hearts that it may rule our lives - this one thought, this one faith, this one aim, this one joy: GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL! Everything in history is moving inexorably toward a day when Jesus will have conquered everything and everyone. Like a mountain of dirt before a gigantic bulldozer steadily moving forward, all that can be conquered is being collected into the loving arms of Jesus, whose right it is to rule. When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the pit and also set forth this greater purpose: "Now He that

ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS" (Eph. 4:9-10). The message is clear - redemption includes the complete transformation of the entire universe and all that is within it so that God shall FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe, nor one creature in it, where He shall not be LORD AND KING. EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE SHALL BE RESTORED TO THE BEAUTIFUL HARMONY AND ORDER OF THE LOVE OF GOD. Indeed, HE SHALL FILL ALL THINGS SO THAT "GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL."

When God becomes All-in-all there will be no more preaching, teaching or prophesying. We won't need admonitions or reproof because ALL will know the Lord fully for themselves and live wholly in and unto Him. But there will be a lot of singing and praise! I think that music is something right out of the heart of God, the pulsating of His divine life. In the scriptures music is mentioned far more often than preaching as an expression of the spirit. Under Old Testament economy the primary manner of presenting God's Word in the Temple service was through Levitical singing rather than preaching. The major ingredient of Old Testament worship was the chanting and singing of Psalms. Then, as now, music freed the soul of the worshipper and lifted the spirit toward God. Music was also the principle characteristic of the New Testament church. Pliny, the Roman statesman and writer of the first century A.D., writing to the Emperor, and asking what he is to do with this new-fashioned sect, the Christians, reports that they seem harmless folk who gather together before dawn, and sing hymns to Christ as God. That singing is a Christian novelty. No religion on earth sings like the people of God! Most have very little, if any, music at all. The sound of singing and praise echoes and reechoes in the early church, and down the years. And naturally so. For the New Testament is the happiest book in the world, written by men who had heard news too good to be true, yet it was true; who had had spiritual experiences so extraordinary that plainly they were just impossible, and yet they had happened to them; who, as Paul puts it, piling metaphor upon metaphor, had passed out of the cold and dark night into the glory of full sunshine; men who had become new creatures, needing a new name to describe them, because the old one, with its miserable connotation, no longer fitted them, for whom life had become so strangely big and purposeful and glorious. A new name and a new song - these are the marks of the New Creation!

The fourth Psalm is a Davidic Psalm. The inspired superscription reads, "To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David." The superscription is a part of the Hebrew text, so we can know that King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, was the human author. However, there is nothing in the superscription to let us know when, or under what circumstances, David wrote this Psalm. Taken in the divinely arranged order of the Hebrew songbook, the fourth Psalm is the first of the Psalms that include a musical superscription. In our standard English translation, that superscription reads, "To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David." The untranslated Hebrew word, "Neginoth," means "stringed instruments." So, this Psalm is written "To the Chief Musician on Stringed Instruments." Who is the "Chief Musician"? In Psalm 22:22 we find these words, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION WILL I PRAISE THEE." The writer of the book of Hebrews translates this verse, "...I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH WILL I SING PRAISE UNTO THEE" (Heb. 2:12). The One who is spoken of in these verses is our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. HE IS THE CHIEF MUSICIAN; He is the One who inspires the singing of praises throughout all eternity! He sings praises in the midst of the church, and He leads the music of praise of His elect people from

henceforth and for evermore. The superscription to this Old Testament Psalm dedicates it to the living Christ, the firstborn among many brethren. In this Psalm we hear the voice of David's greater Son: David's Lord, our Saviour!

The Lord Jesus Christ is both the Director of the heavenly choir and the Song that it sings! He it is who sings praises unto the Father in the midst of His elect. The praises that are sung in the midst of the Lord's many brethren are not the feeble praises of man, but the very Word of the Lord Himself. During the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit in those heaven-blest years following 1947, many thousands of the Lord's people entered into the high praises of God that burst forth from within. We literally experienced the Christ of God singing praises in the midst of His brethren. Some churches today are trying to "teach" people how to praise the Lord, how to sing and dance "in the Spirit." I do not hesitate to tell you that there is a realm of "strange fire" that is offered before the Lord today. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, "offered STRANGE FIRE before the Lord, which He commanded them not," and "they died, when they offered strange fire" (Lev. 10:1; Num. 26:61). Strange fire was simply fire of their own making - fire that had not been kindled by the Lord. Then there was also STRANGE INCENSE. And so we read, "Ye shall offer no strange incense..."(Ex. 30:9). Incense bespeaks of WORSHIP. And regardless of how we want to say it, your worship is YOU. Worship is more than speaking words, lifting the hands, bowing down - it is simply the expression of your inner life toward the Lord. Paul says, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (II Cor. 2:15). "A sacrifice unto God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph.5:2). We pour ourselves out to Him and it is to be IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. But strange fire and strange incense is that which is offered up from our own SOULISH EFFORT; rather than the spontaneous outflowing of His life. In many circles the pleasure of music as an art or as entertainment is provided, in place of the anointed praise and spiritual worship that is inspired by the Spirit of God. "I hate, despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. TAKE THOU AWAY FROM ME THE NOISE OF THY SONGS: for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:21-24). "And the songs of the temple shall be HOWLINGS in that day saith the Lord," we read in Amos 8:3. I have heard those howlings, my beloved, even among "sonship" and "kingdom" people - the noise and confusion of people praising and worshipping God apart from the anointing, the hollow melody of those who sing not by the spirit, having merely "learned" how to go through the motions, creating the harmony with their lips, but with no divine flow of life. They are trying to sing the Song of the Lord, but the voice of the Christ is not heard singing in the midst. It has fallen upon my ears and I have discerned it by the spirit as the sound of a pack of wolves howling at the moon in the night. The Word of the Lord declares that the Lord Himself will sing praises to the Father in the midst of the church. It is not the fleshly efforts of man, but the quickening presence of the King of glory manifesting Himself as life in praise and worship among the many sons He is bringing to glory.

In the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain, we heard the "heavenly choir" singing praises to the Lord from within the temple of His many-membered body. It was an incredibly glorious wonder to hear such celestial harmony issuing from untrained lips of clay. As the saints were gathered together by the Spirit and in the power of the Lord, the entire gathering, whether ten or ten thousand in number, would all break forth into spiritual song and psalms and hymns, and would all sing the same song BY THAT SAME SPIRIT. The organ, piano and other musical instruments were in divine harmony with the many voices.

One brother related the example of a large congregation all singing Handel's Messiah, from beginning to end, singing every word and every note in DIVINE HARMONY under the anointing of the Spirit, although no one in the congregation knew Handel's Messiah. I have sung the Song of the Lord and sensed every part of my being tuned, vibrating like a harp, the hand of the Master Musician plucking from my strings a melody divine. Have you ever heard the heavenly choir? It is a most remarkable experience, nothing like the empty sounds coming from the church systems today. And when the beat is the polluted, satanic beat of rock music, there is no way that it is going to be an offering acceptable to the Lord. The religious world speaks of "Christian rock music," but I have no hesitation in telling you that the word "Christian" and "rock" constitute an unnatural and unholy union - an abomination. The rock beat is the ba...ba...ba...beat of the jungle, a reversion to savagery. There is actually very little melody, little sense in the lyric - only rhythm. The mass hysteria present in the rhythmic chants of primitive peoples is perpetrated today upon the youth of our generation under the guise of "music." The so-called music is loud, primitive, insistent, sensual, strongly rhythmic, and releases the phenomena of mass hypnosis, contagious hysteria and the blissful feeling of being caught up in all-embracing, animalistic, orgiastic experience. On the other hand, music that is constructive contains always beautiful melody, wonderful rhythm and marvelous harmony; for all constructive sound is comfortable to the feelings, forever producing ecstasy, alertness and peace, energizing the mind and body, facilitating balance and self-control in the listener.

Paul Mueller penned the following words of wisdom for the elect of God. "The wonderful HEAVENLY CHOIR does not sing the high praises of the Lord without purpose. All that God does is for a glorious design, and He does nothing without an objective. The praises of the Lord which we experienced in the last outpouring came forth to prepare His elect to hear His Word and bring them to greater maturity. All that the Father intended to do in that last outpouring He fulfilled in every detail to every one of His elect who were set apart for that glory. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds as they watched over their flock by night to tell them of His birth. Then, suddenly, there appeared with the angel 'a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Lk. 2:14-15). The heavenly host thus appeared to the lonely shepherds to confirm the blessed truth that had just been announced to them by the messenger of the Lord. The heavenly choir came with a manifestation of Spirit power and glory. And we are persuaded that a similar manifestation of Spirit glory will attend the birth of the corporate company of sons who are now being brought forth. When this corporate Christ company is birthed into the fullness of His life and glory, the heavenly choir will again sound forth the high praises of the Lord. Then the glory that is now within us will be openly manifest to a waiting, groaning creation, and will be joined with the greater glory of the heavenly hosts just as it was on that night of HIS birth. The wonderful phenomenon that took place in the presence of the watchful shepherds must have been a most magnificent event for them to witness. They were accustomed to the loneliness of the night watches on the hills of Judea. They had spent many such nights with the sheep, but this night was different from all others. An angel appeared as if from nowhere. Their first reaction was one of fear, until the heavenly messenger clearly announced, 'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' The word of the Lord gave promise and hope of a Saviour for all people, which is CHRIST THE LORD. The present generation is in desperate need of 'good tidings of great joy.' Soon Christ shall appear, this time in His fullness. Then Christ, both body and Head, will be complete. He must have a body upon which to place the Head, which He is (Lk. 9:58). Therefore, the Lord is faithfully preparing

a body who shall be as glorious and honorable as the Head. They will be joined to Christ the Head to make one COMPLETE MAN, who will be the hope of all creation. When this Christ company is complete the heavenly hosts will announce their birth. Many in the world who now languish in sin and darkness will then hear the good tidings of great joy at the creation of this anointed company. The message from the heavenly hosts will again be directed to all people. As the angel gave promise of a Saviour to that generation, so this corporate company is created and brought forth for the deliverance of the present creation. With that glad proclamation of victory, every created thing will join the heavenly hosts in praising God for the complete and joyful triumph of His salvation (Rev. 5:9-14)" - end quote.

THE HARP OF PRAISE

We mentioned earlier that in the constellation of Lyra an eagle is holding a harp. The message is clear - praise shall ascend up AS AN EAGLE TOWARD HEAVEN. It is interesting to note that in nature besides man, no animal can sing, unless it can fly. That is a very significant point, particularly when you remember that even that which can fly does not sing if it is a scavenger - one that feeds on putrid flesh. Buzzards don't sing! Once the rotting flesh of our self-life and the carnal mind has been dealt with and done away, we shall be able to soar into the heavenlies and fully join in that heavenly chorus, intoning the glory of God.

The harp is mentioned several times in the book of Revelation and in Rev. 14:1-2 we read, "And I looked and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." In this passage we find this company standing with their Redeemer upon Mount Zion. Zion represents the very highest position attainable in the Kingdom of God. Such are the ruling class in the capital city, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by King David who dwelt on the natural Mount Zion of old. And this company standing with their Lord can represent nothing other than they who have followed the Lamb experientially all the way from the death of Mount Calvary to the power and glory of Mount Zion, and will now reign with him on His throne forevermore (II Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17). They are said to have "His Father's name written in their foreheads" in distinction to those who, in Rev. 13:16, take the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The mark of the beast denotes that those who bear it have subscribed to the mind - the doctrines, blasphemy, idolatry and nature of the bestial system of this world. Therefore the mark which these 144,000 bear denotes that they are not defiled with the antichrist doctrines, methods and shame, but are in every respect perfected in the divine nature. Following, in verses two and three, we find a voice of singing and of music. The singing is "as the voice of many waters;" that is, of many peoples and tongues, and it is of great volume, "as the voice of great thunder," denoting almighty spiritual power. They sing a "new song" which no man could learn except the 144,000. A song is peculiarly expressive of praise - praise with a message. And the quality and depth of praise is dependent on one's spiritual progression in God. Those who have received salvation, but have never followed on to know the Lord more intimately, are limited in their praise; for the more we receive from the Lord, the more we learn His will, His word and His ways. Saints are filled with praise according to their individual capacities. Consequently, while unfaithful and immature saints will be filled with the good things of God according to their various capacities, yet these can never render the same worship as those who have followed their Lord all the way into the fullness of His life. Therefore these sons of Zion

are said to sing a NEW SONG that no one can learn, except those who have traveled the same road as they, even as theologians, or great scientists, or business executives, or powerful political figures, have very little in common with the untutored and the unlearned in the natural. All have different capacities and different interests. A song in scripture represents both praise and a message. It is praise that bears a message, or beyond that, praise which is birthed out of revelation and experience with God. You can tell the spiritual level of a person by the songs he sings. A person's "song" will always express his depth of understanding and relationship with God. When we receive new revelation from the Lord, experientially inworked into our lives, a new song is created. There is an old English ballad the first line of which runs, "I cannot sing the old songs." Some change has taken place in the singer's feelings which makes the old song inappropriate, impossible. We all know something of this kind of feeling. Sometimes I look back over old sermons, and very often I have to say to myself, "I could not preach that again." God has been teaching me during the years of my ministry, leading me into a fuller knowledge of Truth and a deeper walk in the Spirit. Hymns and choruses which once ministered life no longer express what the Spirit is saying and doing in our lives, so we no longer sing them as we once did, and betimes change the wording. In the things of God, as in well nigh everything else, "Time makes ancient good uncouth." Thank God there is a new song, a new revelation, a new message, a fresh word, a higher experience in God for this day, and for all the days to come! Those who sing the new song have outgrown the old ones. They no longer express their experience or satisfy their needs.

What saith the scripture? "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Ps. 22:3). God INHABITS THE PRAISES OF ISRAEL! Listen and pay attention, ye sons of God: When you proclaim the praises of the Most High, when you exalt Him, He inhabits that very expression of your heart. Applaud Him! Exalt Him! Laud Him! Worship Him! Rejoice in Him! Sing unto the Lord a New Song! We are much too stuffy and we have too many "religious hang-ups." There is yet so much religion, so much vain worship, so many commandments of men. "Go forth from Babylon, flee...with a voice of singing declare...the Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob" (Isa. 48:20). "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 89:1). "Sing unto the Lord! Sing praises to His name! Extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him" (Ps. 68:4). In the Philippian jail, "...at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praise unto God" (Acts 16:22-26). "Serve the Lord with gladness! Come before His presence with singing!" (Ps. 100). "I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing!" (Ps. 101:1). "Sing unto the Lord, because He has done excellent things..." "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving" (Ps. 147:7). "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people" (Isa. 49:13). "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation" (Ps. 95). "O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth; sing unto the Lord, bless His name." "The Lord is my strength and my song...sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously..." (Ex. 15). "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth...let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains; let them give glory unto the Lord and declare His praise" (Isa. 42:10-12).

Some time ago the following prophecy came forth, declaring, "For surely men fill balloons with helium and the balloons rise, and bear men up into the air to great heights. And as they ascend, and cast out their ballast they ascend even higher. What they have done, and the heights to which they ascend, is not because men have lost the pull of gravity, but because they have hitched themselves to a heaven bound substance, and have cast aside the weights that hold them to the earth. So, My people, I would say unto thee, cast

aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset, and hitch thyself to the heaven bound substance that will bring thee into My presence. For I would say unto thee that praise is heaven bound. It is directed toward the Throne. It has a power and a force that will carry it to the Throne. And in the midst of thy praise, thou shalt find thyself being lifted into the heavenlies, casting aside every weight, every sin, every condemnation and guilt. In the midst of thy praise thou art lifted into the heavenlies. I would bring thee up, and have brought thee into heavenly places where thou has known in thy spirit newness of life, where thou hast found a new dimension of the Spirit. The hour is at hand when I will have a people that through their praises shall rise into the heavenlies. And as they cast aside every weight, they shall rise even higher. And as their praises become heated up, ascending up into the heavenlies, SO SHALL THEY ASCEND HIGHER INTO THEIR GOD."

There is something else that we may fail to grasp that is an incredible principle in the Kingdom of God. Many years ago the Lord spoke suddenly and powerfully to me, saying, "I have N-O-T COMMANDED YOU TO PRAISE ME!" I was astonished, incredulous, speechless at His word! In my understanding I was absolutely certain that God had repeatedly commanded us to praise Him! I rushed home, got out Strong's Concordance, and began a search of all the scriptures on praise. How clearly then the truth dawned on me! Yes - we are commanded to praise - but the command was not issued by GOD! Instead, men of God, caught up in the Spirit of God, beholding the splendor and majesty of God, cried out in spirit, "Praise ye the Lord!" I quickly discerned the pattern. It is never God speaking in the first person, proclaiming, "I command you - worship Me!" There is no such command anywhere in the Word. God speaks of worship and praise, but not in terms of an imperative. It is always the man of God, with the veil drawn back from his vision, getting a glimpse of the Lord of Glory, as the prophet Isaiah said, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord...high and lifted up," - that is the beginning of worship. We could easily understand how God who made us could command us to do what He wants us to do. After all, He is our Creator! We could even understand how He could command us to say what we should say or even to think what He would have us to think. And He does, indeed, do that. He says that every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. But, to go into that innermost closest, that deepest recess of the human heart of our love and affection and to say that we must love, to command us to love, and to say that we must praise, to command us to praise, seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Yea, it is more than that. Were God to command us to praise and worship Him He would thereby display the most proud, egotistical, conceited, self-centered and vainglorious personality in the universe! Have you never met an egoistic, self-seeking person reeking with the odor of their own self-importance? I have known men who were obsessed with their importance and power who manipulated others to constantly fawn before them and heap flattery upon them. There is something in me that has always detested such and found them among the most despicable specimens of manhood. Shall we now attribute such contemptible characteristics to the great and glorious God! Can you imagine saying to anyone, "Thou shalt love me!" "Thou shalt adore me!" "Thou shalt praise me!" "Thou shalt rehearse in my ears how great and wonderful I am!" We have had the idea that God is good and knows He is good; that God is holy and knows He is holy; that God is great and knows He is great; that God is omnipotent and knows He is omnipotent; therefore He is justified in commanding our respect, love and praise. But what is worship? It is simply man's response to the REVELATION OF GOD. When we see God we will worship Him and our worship will be in direct proportion to the clarity of our vision of Him. God has no

need to command us to worship - He reveals Himself for what He is. The response of all who behold the King in His beauty is the same - the revelation redounds in blessing and honor and glory unto God because He is worthy! Worship is man's response, not God's command. And the response of the man to whom the Lord has truly unveiled Himself is as natural and spontaneous as breathing.

God has revealed Himself in nature and in His Word. We see God revealed in the thunderstorm. In fact the passage which says, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," is taken from the Psalm which describes a great thunderstorm that sweeps off of the Mediterranean and crashes over the hills of Lebanon and down into Judea, wrecking havoc on every side. David, the psalmist, tells us that here the majesty and the power and the might of God was revealed in the crashing lightning and the clap of thunder. Here we see the power of His arm and in all of that we are to give glory to the Lord because we get some faint glimpse of His might and His power. God has revealed Himself to us in His Word; preeminently we see that revelation in His Son Jesus Christ who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person. Ultimately we behold the revelation of God in our own experience and reality as CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY. Have you discovered the wonder of the Christ within? Have you beheld the beauty of the Christ within; have you inquired of Him in His temple? What makes people gamble! People don't gamble for money - for very few win. They gamble because of the thrill and the tingle of gambling. They gamble because they love to stand right on the edge between total disaster and great wealth; because it makes their pulses pound and their hearts throb. They do it for the thrill of it. What is the reason people climb mountains and walk tightropes. It is the reason that people go to football games! If you were to pass some law that a football game was to be watched scientifically and dispassionately (like watching in a museum, for example), the stadiums would be empty overnight. People go there because they find in that one or two hours a thrill. They are lifted up out of the drabness and dullness of their life and find an excitement. They become a "fan" and they shout and they scream for joy for their team. And yet, it's an amazing thing that if person shows just a little bit of excitement and enthusiasm for the living God, he is not a "fan," he is a "fanatic." Because that is what a fan means! Fan is but the abbreviation of fanatic. Are you a fanatic for football, and blah for God? That is what a lot of professed believers are. They can work up more enthusiasm for a football game in two hours than they have for God in the last twenty years. The message is clear - they have not yet seen the Lord high and lifted up, with His train filling the temple. They have never discovered the treasure within their field, the glorious and eternal reality of the Christ within!

Praise is not an instrument by which we can "get" things from God - it is our response to His reality within ourselves. The Psalms are inspired songs of praise. Praise, not pity. That is the repeated message found in the Psalms. Praise for the goodness and greatness of God and for the constant care He gives His creation runs throughout the book. It carries, also, the spirit of a deep devotion to God, and a willingness to trust Him in any circumstance. It overflows with testimony of God's love, His faithfulness, His righteousness. The truths found in Psalms reveal God's unfailing care for man. But they do it in a special way - through praise. As it says in Psalm 107, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" Praise, of course, is not something we plug into so that things will work out for us. The very thought "Praise God" recognizes the presence and power of God right where we are. As someone has written, "God is not moved by the breath of praise to do more than He has already done, nor can the Infinite do less than bestow all good, since He is

unchanging wisdom and love." Praising God, then, isn't meant to persuade Him to help us. Instead, it lifts our burdens by opening our eyes to God's presence within us, and we gain a fresh perspective on spiritual creation, as, for example, in Psalm 104: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works.... Thou sendest forth Thy spirit and they are created." But can praise actually help us in practical ways? Not if we're trying to use praise as a technique. But if our praise is the natural outpouring of joy and gladness as we become conscious of more and more of God's Life, Light and Love, then praise does have a practical impact on our life, for God inhabits the praise of His people and there is the revelation of HIMSELF. In the revelation of God we can "Praise the Lord from the heavens and praise Him from the heights" (Ps. 148:1). We can so rejoice in the Lord, we live in the praises; all heaviness, doubts, and fear are gone and we laugh at impossibilities. As Evelyn Isaacs wrote, "The land of the miraculous is our native land. If people would continue praising Him they would enter into the unceasing praise of the spirit. It is then, all the powers of gravity would lose their hold and men would ascend from plane to plane. There is no space in heaven, on earth, or underneath the earth where spirit is not. It has no dimension, and goes beyond the extremist point of the imagination. There can be no greater fullness than that of spirit, nor can there be any greater height or depth. No mortal mind or eye can scan immortal heights, neither can depths be plumbed. No substance can bring greater expansion than that of spirit for its immensity and density are unscanned. No space is devoid of that which is substance so we may cease reasoning with the finite mind and rise to the infinite. Those who are flooded with the spirit, are not ordinary men, and unless God's people are moved into the place they are called, they too will die" - end quote.

All the sacrifices of the heavenly realm into which we are now translated are spiritual sacrifices. The altar upon which the spiritual sacrifices are offered is Christ Himself as it is written, "BY HIM therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). The "sacrifice of praise" in no way infers that we must consistently and persistently mouth words of praise and thanksgiving unto God when we in no way feel like doing so. That is the idea many people have. They feel they must "wring" some praises out of their soulish senses in order to offer a "sacrifice" of praise to God. To the contrary, the sacrifice of praise must be the very BEST of our powers, like the lamb without blemish in the Old Testament, painstakingly selected and carefully and reverently brought to the Tabernacle door. In the awesomeness of His presence and glory we launch joyously down our little rivulet, until we are borne out into the great ocean of praise, which is ever breaking in music around the person of Jesus. Praise is one of the greatest acts of which we are capable; and it is the transcendent service of heaven. In that blessed realm of spirit they ask for naught, for they have all and abound; but throughout the cycles of glory the inhabitants of those bright worlds fill them with praise. And why should not our earthly tasks be wrought to the same music? We are the priests of creation; it becomes us to gather up and express the sentiments which are mutely dumb, but which await our offering at the altar of God. The praise of the order of sons is not that which is offered in the assembling of the saints, in which so much is soulish instead of spiritual, but the daily expression of the spirit of sonship - thanksgiving and honor and glory to the Father in all things and for all things, in the nitty-gritty of everyday experience and under the pressures and problems of life. More than words, this sacrifice is an attitude, a disposition, a STATE OF BEING. It is the outraying of the nature, love, grace and mercy of God in all and unto all. It has been said that the messenger must so

become one with his message until the messenger BECOMES THE MESSAGE. In the same vein, the praiser must so become one with his praise until the praiser BECOMES THE PRAISE of God in the earth. This is the greatest of all spiritual sacrifices! In these blessed ones is fulfilled the Sign of LYRA in the heavens - the eagle holding the harp. In these the praise of God ascends into the heavens as the Song of the Lord personified in God's Christ!

Chapter 26

Sagittarius-The Archer

(continued)

The first of the Decans (minor constellations) in the house of Sagittarius is THE HARP (LYRA). The harp is the oldest of stringed instruments of music, mentioned in scripture almost from the beginning of history. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments the harp is the supreme symbol for praise and worship. Modern atlases depict the constellation of Lyra by an eagle holding the harp, or a harp placed over the eagle. There can be no doubt about the meaning - that praise shall ascend up AS AN EAGLE TOWARD HEAVEN. Two other conspicuous stars in this constellation are Shelyuk, which means "an eagle" and Sulaphat, meaning "springing up" or "ascending" - as in praise. And this praise is associated with the going forth of the victorious Horseman. It is the celebration of His triumph in us, the extension of His Kingdom over our land. It is also interesting to note that the name of the brightest star in the constellation of Lyra is Vega, meaning He shall be exalted. Its actual magnitude is very great, perhaps a hundred times that of our sun. This sparkling gem of the summer sky directs our attention to the theme of universal praise as every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and all things in all realms are heard singing, and saying, "To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion for the ages of the ages!" (Rev. 5:13).

It is my purpose in these articles on THE HARP to take the harp out of the starry heavens above and out of the inspired pages of holy writ, and, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to touch the strings and bring out of them melody for our souls. Our heavenly Father has acknowledged us as His children. He tells about how He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and how we were with Him in the celestial councils when the worlds were framed, when the gargantuan galaxies and the distant array of spiral nebulae came into being, when in the heat of nuclear fury the first photon burst forth at the fastest of all speeds at the command of the One who said, "Let there be light" - with that command a universe of raging infernos came into existence - and you beheld all this! And every time a new sun was born, or a new solar system came into being, or a new life was formed, you were filled with joy at the wonder of Father's great and glorious plan, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, all the morning stars sang together, rejoicing over each creation, its splendor, its magnitude. My beloved, you are not an insignificant, purposeless blob of earth trapped on a smaller-than-usual planet full of ailments and disorders, lost amidst millions of other whirling galaxies. YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH. I want you to know that your names were written down in the Family Book in the heavens, the Lamb's book of life, before the light of the sun ever brought the beauty of the dawn or kissed the everlasting hills. Never forget - the sons of God were with the Father before the world was, eternal children of the heavenly Father whose plan and purpose and power and love reaches out throughout all time, and who gave the world His best when He sent His First-begotten into the world. He has redeemed His own, He has brought forth a first-fruits of that redemption, He has established them into a

Kingdom, to bring a wayward world devoid of spiritual consciousness back into relationship with Him. This earth, this solar system, this vast universe beyond is not going to be left to someone else. No one is going to come in some distant age and behold the desolation and ruins of this planet, as they look at the ruins of ancient empires, and say, Here it is, the place where the Christians lived; here it is, the planet where Jesus lived and died and rose again; here it is, the world where the sons of God once aspired to deliver the whole race from the bondage of sin, sorrow and death, and lift it up to righteousness, joy, peace and life in the Spirit. That chapter of history, precious friend of mine, is never going to be recorded, because you are a part of God's bright today and His endless tomorrows, for you have been with Him from the beginning, and are going to be with Him in His creative and redemptive and reconstructive work in all the glorious age and ages to come, when every knee shall bow in homage and every tongue shall frankly and openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This is the message of the Kingdom! This is the great gospel of God! This is the word of the sons of God, that mighty household of warriors in the earth! This is the unmistakable message proclaimed from times immemorial by the portentous portrait in GOD'S BIBLE IN THE SKY, the wonderful picture of Lyra, the Harp, held high by the Eagle. The message is clear - in all, through all, by all, and unto all THE LORD SHALL BE PRAISED! The Oracle can by no means fall short; the Prophecy cannot fail. It is written in the Signs of the heavens, it is written in the pages of Holy Writ, it is written in the minds and hearts of God's sons. The almighty Father calls on you to stand, to conquer the darkness, to break the power of the adversary, to vanquish death, to know that you can move forward with new assurance, new faith, new strength, new understanding; for His purposes for you abide forever.

THE NEW SONG

"And I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him a hundred and forty four thousand who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads; and they sing a NEW SONG before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever He goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless" (Rev. 14:1-5, R.S.V.).

We have pictured here for us the company of the firstfruits unto God. These are a company of overcomers as signified by their having the Father's name and the name of the Lamb written on their foreheads. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God...and I will write upon him My new name" (Rev. 3:12). The number of them is 144,000. The number is symbolic, as are all the scenes in the Revelation. Twelve is the number of divine government. The number is twelve squared: twelve times twelve. It is divine government brought to its fullest and ultimate expression and reality. It is not a literal one hundred and forty four thousand; it rather means that all who make up this company have attained unto a place of rulership with the Lamb in the Kingdom of God. There are some things said about this group to which I would draw your reverent attention. Besides having the name of the Father and the name of the Lamb written on their foreheads, which indicates the position unto which they have attained, they sing a new song which no one else can sing but the hundred and forty four thousand. A name in the scriptures is descriptive of the character of the one who bears

that name, especially when God gives the name to that person. Names are very important and this is why God many times changed the names of some. Jacob, the deceiver, the supplanter, had his name changed to Israel the prevailer, a prince, a ruler with God. His name had to be changed because he had a change of nature and his old name was no longer descriptive of him. Abram, a high father, was changed to Abraham, a father of multitudes. Abram's wife Sarai, which means Yah is Prince, was changed to Sarah, a princess, because from her kings would be born. This first-fruits company bore the name of God and the name of the Lamb, which tells us that they had attained unto the image and likeness of God and were filled with His fullness.

They sang a song that no one else could sing. A song bespeaks of an experience. Aboriginal people often do this. We civilized ones do not; it is something we have lost through our civilization. A dear brother told of his experience while in missionary work in Liberia. He said, "While we were in Liberia we often witnessed people singing out their experience. If a hunter had killed an elephant, a buffalo, a leopard or some other large animal, the village people would all gather around him to hear about the hunt. They would all sit in a circle and he wouldn't just tell them about it, he would put his experience into a song and he would sing it and dance, acting out how he stalked the animal and killed it. This was his song, no one else could sing it. It illustrated his experience in the hunt and he would sing and dance to the enjoyment of all the villagers." The new song the hundred forty and four thousand sing is of their experience and theirs alone, which they have had while following the Lamb. It is a song of victory over death, of conformation to the image of God, of life and triumph for evermore. Others cannot sing this song, for they have not had the same experience.

Today God is declaring new things...and every time God declares a new thing there is a NEW SONG. The new song of the Spirit that is being sung throughout the earth in this hour is not the work of accomplished musicians whose talents have birthed a new sound - but the new song of the Spirit is the expression out of a people of the "new thing" that God is speaking and doing in the midst of His elect. Long millenniums ago the sweet singer of Israel intoned, "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth..." (Ps. 96:1). It is the song that God gave David at the time of the dedication of the Ark of God on Mount Zion...and it concerned the "new thing" that God was doing then. But it was really prophetic of the "new thing" that God is doing now. It is the song of His Glory, the song of His Kingdom, the song of His righteous judgments in the earth, the celebration of His immortal and incorruptible life formed in a people. The voice from heaven (Rev. 14:2) as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps, appears unquestionably to be the voice of the company of the redeemed as they celebrate the consummation of God's great redemptive process. The new song can only mean that they have experienced within their lives the last, the final, the full and complete outworking of redemption. It is called the new song because the old song was the song of creation "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). At creation, when life sprang forth into the conscious enjoyment of celestial being, the heavenly chorus filled all the vast realm of visible and invisible things with rapturous and melodious praise and thanksgiving for the privilege of life in all the intensity and beauty and wonder and mystery of it. The creation of man was designed to be the topstone of this mystery as there was entrusted to him the dominion of the lower creation in anticipation of his ultimate rule over the entire creation. The disruption of this unspeakable joy by the fall of man, opened the way for a yet higher creation - the NEW CREATION - by which God would participate in the infinite sorrows of that which had fallen, and bear through death

its curse, its pain and its tears, to establish that new creation of unsullied joy and peace, love and truth, life and glory which, because united with deity incarnate, could never fall again. Hence the "new song" which can only be sung when redemption is finally accomplished, and realized in the triumph of the Redeemer over all forces and powers of evil, including the Last Enemy which is Death. Singing is the antithesis of sorrow. There will be no cessation to the new song, because within those who sing it Christ has put an end to the reign of sin and death from which all sorrows spring.

No man can learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand which are redeemed from the earth realm, from the power of sin and the dominion of death. As the triumph of His life works within we are more and more learning to sing that song, the new song. The melody of praise which arises from the soul set free is rising as a sweet incense unto the Lord. All praise to the Lamb who hath redeemed us! All praise to the Lamb who hath given us of His victory! He alone shall be exalted! He alone hath gotten the victory! The new song, no mortal can learn, for it is born of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Even now there are beginning to vibrate within those chords of Life, Light and Love which shall burst from our being in manifestation as the shackles of sin and the grave clothes of death are left behind. At the dawn of creation we sang the Song of the ages, when once the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. How glorious it was! Yet this new song shall be greater far than that primeval song - for the Song of Redemption exceeds the Song of Creation, as the new creation transcends the old. It is the blessed privilege of every apprehended one to join in the glad tidings of victory as we approach our destiny in God. We were begotten, called and ordained in the bosom of the Father in an environment of singing and rejoicing. And when we are restored to the glory that we once had with the Father before the world was, we shall surely embody a Song as we never have before. As Paul Mueller so aptly wrote: "Surely all the Lord's apprehended ones can sing and give praise to the Lord for His goodness and mercy. By His omnipotent Spirit, the Lord is able to put a song in the heart, even though that one may be bound up and imprisoned by the soul that is darkened by doubts, fears and unbelief. Because of His life within, we are able to Sing and praise the Lord. We have been given a glimpse of the glory before us and can now sing and rejoice in the spirit of triumphant victory. We should be comfortable midst the true spirit of praise, worship and rejoicing, for we received our instructions in that environment, and we are also returning to that same divine realm of glory, light and life. We will lift up our hands in the holy sanctuary of the Lord, and will bless Him when we have arrived at the end of our journey to His house. Then our praises to Him will bring forth His blessing out of Zion (Ps. 134:3).

"The prophet foretold our ascent up to the hill of Zion in this very night, when he said, 'Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel. And (in the same night-time) the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm...with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest, and hailstones' (Isa. 30:29-31). The good news we may now receive and cherish is that we shall have a song to sing during this present time which is the night of this dying age of man. The song we now sing is not a song of doom, gloom, and despair, but a song of victory, of triumph, and of jubilant fulfillment. In spite of the darkness and gloom all about us, we have a song to sing that defies all human reasoning and understanding. It is the song of the redeemed, the song of the Lamb and the song of Moses (Rev. 5:9 14:3 15:3). This song we now sing was not given us by man, nor could we have ever sung it while in captivity in Babylon's strange land. No man can sing this new song but those who have been caught up in His glory. In the midst of this night the

Lord has given this promise for His chosen ones: 'But for you will there be a song, as in the night when a sacred festival is held, and gladness of heart, as when one sets out with a flute, to go to the mount of the Lord, to the Rock of Israel' (Isa. 30:29, Smith-Goodspeed). Brethren, we are not in darkness. This day has not overtaken us as a thief in the night. We are sons of the new day, sons of light. Children of the night and of the darkness of this world sleep on, but we will watch and be sober, waiting for His appearing. The Lord hath appointed us to obtain full salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. REJOICE, YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH!" - end quote.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB

In chapter fourteen of Revelation we have the 144,000 singing a new song, accompanied by harpers harping with their harps, and shortly there follows another of these beautiful and illuminating passages wherein we read, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:2-3). "The song of Moses and the Lamb" - whatever can it mean? Well, we will see, for we will turn to the passages in the scriptures, in which the idea is referred to. We will take the song of Moses first. You will find it in Exodus 15. It is the song of the great leader of Israel just after he and his followers had passed in safety through the Red Sea. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my Father's God, and I will exalt Him" (Ex. 15:1-2). Now to enter into the full significance of this song we shall have to enter into the secret place of the heart of Moses himself. We cannot do that in its entirety as it ought to be done, but we are able now to measure and to estimate the value of the life of Moses as those who stood near him could not possibly do. Now, to understand why this song is put into his mouth, we must try to enter into his experience at the moment when it was first sung. This man of faith and courage has been leading a poor slave-hearted people out of bondage. There never was a more lonely figure in all history than he, and not one amongst his followers could understand the greatness of the sacrifice he had made. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24-25). Thus Moses leaves behind him all the advantages of Egypt and the favor of its king; and for the sake of his "father's God" he deliberately chose the hard way, the solemn way, the way of Yahweh, and now he sings his paeon of praise for victory granted. It could not have been but that he sang it all alone; there was not another man in the whole host who was worthy to sing it with him. It says the host of Israel sang, I know, but, for all that, Moses sang alone, and I think the Spirit has really entered into the situation when He makes Moses say, "My God, my strength, and my song. He also is become my salvation." For this man, all alone, has wrought for God, all alone has he been chosen to be the deliverer of Israel, and even now he sings his song of triumph on the very eve of a long pilgrimage. For his probation is not over. I pray you not to miss this point. Moses is not singing in the promised land, he is singing on the desert journey, he is singing on the borders of the Red Sea, he is singing amid trials and wearinesses innumerable. Moses' hardest battles had still to be fought, yet he is singing, "The Lord is my strength and my song." This, then, is the song of Moses. It is the song of a victory and

salvation being inworked and wrought out by faith through the crucible of the journey. And none can learn this song but those who are experientially pressing forward against all the odds to lay hold upon the prize of HIS LIFE.

Now what is the song of the Lamb? The teachers and preachers in the church systems suppose it means that the blood-washed throng, the believers out of all the ages, around the throne of God in heaven, whose toils are over and done with for evermore, are there singing "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And among this throng they include all who are saved by free grace alone, including the last murderer who has paid the penalty of his crime, and died in the odor of the electric chair; or the loathsome degenerate, whose flesh has reaped corruption as a result of his immoral life style, but who has achieved an eleventh-hour death-bed repentance, and now stands with Moses and the saints of all ages before the throne of God in heaven singing, "Worthy is the Lamb!" If this is your conception, my friend, you frustrate the meaning, for that is not the thought conveyed by the Spirit of God in this beautiful passage. The Seer of Patmos, who was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, looks as it were from heaven, but it was upon earth that he gazed. "I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous" (Rev. 15:1). What he saw from heaven was what you and I are doing, and he describes the sons of God on earth as singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. True, it is the song of heaven too, but it is a song that is begun on earth, and only those who have sung it here are entitled to sing it there.

Let us see now some of the references to this in the New Testament. The Lamb is first and foremost our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the body of the Lamb, that glorious company who have followed Him all the way to Mount Zion by way of Mount Calvary. If you turn to Mark's gospel you will discover one most illuminative phrase in his account of the eve of the Passion of our Lord. It is this: "And when they had sung a hymn they went out" (Mk. 14:26). More accurately: "When they had sung a song." What was it! It was one of the songs of Israel, one of the prophecies of Himself. In all probability this was the song that Jesus sang on the eve of Gethsemane, and in the shadow of Calvary: "Bind the sacrifice with chords, even unto the horns of the altar." "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, because His mercy endureth forever." Now, brethren, consider: twelve men were singing that song, but one that had been of the company was on his way with busy feet to betray his Master; and the other eleven sang as loudly as Jesus, we may be sure, like the host of Israel on the shores of the Red Sea; but, for all that, Jesus sang alone. No other could possibly sing that song and know what Jesus knew, feel what Jesus felt, do what Jesus did. August loneliness of the Son of God, singing His death-song in the shadow of betrayal and torture and death! This was the first note of the song of the Lamb that was slain; and yet, I say, though it was the first note, in a sense, it was not. The whole life of Jesus, the oblation that He made from the day of His call unto the day of His death, was the song of the Lamb that was slain, the song that was heard in heaven, but the song that was sung on earth and is still sung on earth by those who follow in His footsteps. Jesus began His song when He began His oblation of the life that was laid down for mankind, and still Jesus is singing that song, for the Lamb that was slain has not ceased His activity - He is going forth to the ends of the earth conquering and to conquer.

Of that on-going song we read, "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters" (Rev. 14:2). John was listening as from heaven, and the voice that he heard was not only there, it was here, singing, as it were, a new song. "And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song...and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed

from the earth" (Rev. 14:2-3). He does not mean that they had been plucked away from the earth, for our Lord's prayer had to be answered: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (Jn. 17:15). And, lastly, our text: "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire" - like the Red Sea - "and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:2-3). So Jesus from His throne, and the saints around it, and the warriors on earth, join in one glad triumphant song; IT IS THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB. The song of the lamb is not the song of sinners saved by grace; it is the song of joy out of sorrow, of peace in the midst of storm, of perfection out of suffering, of light out of darkness, of righteousness triumphing over sin, of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, of life conquering death. It is the song of the overcomer! The "Lamb" bespeaks of the humiliation and suffering that leads to life and exaltation. Ah, there is no victory without a battle, no overcomer without the powers of death and hell. My soul, consider! what was that which to the Seer of Patmos made the harmony complete? It was the vision of a vast multitude taking up the song - the experience - of the Lamb of sacrifice. There was a time when, to that multitude, the spectacle of sacrifice would have brought discord to the heart; but in the completed harmony it brings joy. The sweetest music is the song that is born of experience. The universe is all music, but it is not all music to our ear. We only hear a few chords, and they are minor chords. The minor chords seem discords when they stand alone; they lack the full symphony to bring out their symmetry. Thou art living in a world of perfect music, only thou hearest but a small portion of the music. Often art thou saying that the coming melody shall atone for the jarring chords. Nay; say rather that the jarring chords themselves shall be revealed as part of the completed harmony! The melody is not to come; it has come already; it has only to be revealed, and then the harpers stand upon the glassy sea. Until we thoroughly understand how suffering is preparation for reigning, we shall never be enthralled by the song of the Lamb. The minor chords get a meaning and receive a vindication when we stand upon the sea of glass and sing and harp this song. Do you not know that this was from the outset the goal of your being - to be made perfect through suffering? It was for this that your first innocence was clouded. It was for this that your first joy was dimmed. It was for this that you were lowered from the garden of God to the field of thorns and thistles. It was for this that your first hope was shaken - that you might reach Mount Zion by the steps of Mount Calvary. The minor chords of testing and trial played together with the chords of faith and patience harmonize into the symphony of perfection and glory. The wilderness of the Son of man is better than the garden of Adam. The morning stars sang together over your untried nature; but there awaits a yet grander music - when the harps of God shall proclaim that you have conquered all and stand triumphant in His image!

Just as the Israelites of old, after having passed through the Red Sea dry shod, stood upon the shore singing the song of Moses, Miriam and the women playing upon their timbrels, while their enemies perished in the waters, so these victors of our text, having passed over another sea and through the fiery trials of this earth life, stand at the transparent sea mingled with fire, where all is purged, purified, and transformed, singing a similar song of triumph for the manifestation of divine judgment, which is called "The song of Moses and the Lamb." What might this company be? What might be the sea upon whose shore they sing the song of victory to their Lord and Deliverer? Me thinks I have stood upon that very shore. This song is sung by a people who have been

redeemed from the world systems symbolized by Egypt. This song of deliverance and triumph is sung by all who get the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. Our deliverance from the Babylon systems is much greater than Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Greater. Think of it! But the deliverance is on-going, and the song is ever intensifying in tone and fervor. Our full deliverance will involve even our bodily transformation, as Paul Mueller wrote, "Only as we are delivered from this body of sin and death can we realize fully the victory of this prophetic song. He who is Lord of all is just as able to change these bodies as He was to wall up the waters of the Red Sea so that the people walked over on dry land. Then, He who is declared to be 'King of saints' shall in truth and in fact be that which the term implies, for He has caused them to triumph victoriously over sin and death. We shall then be overcomers indeed! When we have experienced the predicted deliverance, we shall then sing the song of Moses with joy and victory, saying, 'I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thy arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever' (Ex. 15:1-18).

"What a wonderful Kingdom song! Moses and all Israel with him sang this song and prophesied that those of Palestina, Edom, Moab, and Canaan would be 'still as a stone till Thy people pass over' into the promised land. The Canaanites possessed the land that God promised to Israel, but they were assured that the Canaanites would be 'still as a stone' while Israel inhabited the land. This is truly one of the examples that our God has provided for us. It is an example illustrating His faithfulness to lead us into the abundant land of the Kingdom of God, just as He led our forefathers into Canaan's fair land. As historical Israel was delivered out of Egypt and led into the promised land, even so shall we be delivered of the conglomerate Babylon systems of this worldly order and into the Kingdom of God. And then we shall sing the song of Moses with the experiential knowledge of the prophetic truth this inspired song foretells. The Lord Himself was the song that Moses and all Israel sang just as He is for us today. The fresh, new wine of the Spirit is beginning to flow in our lives. We are now beginning to sing a new song, even a song of praise to our Lord, for He is being revealed as our salvation unto the fullness. While all else around us may be quiet and uneventful, we are beginning to sing a new song unto the Lord. Our spirits within us are becoming alive to a new and greater salvation. The Christ within is the song we sing, just as He was the song that enabled Moses and all Israel to sing unto Him. As the Lord sings His praises within us, nothing can stop the flow of life that comes from the wells of salvation. Therefore, with joy we will continue to draw water out of the wells of salvation" - end quote.

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

Soon after John the Baptist was thrown into prison, Jesus left the country near Jerusalem with His disciples, and went toward Galilee, the province in the north. Between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north lay the land of Samaria, where the Samaritans lived, who hated the Jews. They worshipped the Lord as the Jews worshipped Him, but they had their own temple and their own priests. And they had their own scriptures, which was only the five books of Moses, for they would not read the other books of the Old Testament. The Jews and Samaritans would scarcely ever speak to each other, so great was the hatred between them. It was a long and tiring journey from Judea back to Galilee, and as He walked along the broad, hot valley floor of the ascent of Lebonah, Jesus would have seen the low-lying hills to the east and the gradually rising heights to the west. He would then come to Sychar, near the ruins of the ancient Shechem. And here, being much wearied from their journey, Jesus and His disciples paused to rest at the well at Sychar. This well had been dug by Jacob, the great father of the Israelites, many hundreds of years before. It was an old well then in the days of Jesus, and it is much older now, for the same well may be seen in that place still. Even now travelers may have a drink from Jacob's well. It was early in the morning, about sunrise, when Jesus was sitting by Jacob's well. He was very tired, for He had walked a long journey; He was hungry, and His disciples had gone to the village near at hand to buy food. He was thirsty, too; and as He looked into the well, he could see the water, a hundred feet below, but He had no rope with which to let down a jar to draw up some water to drink.

Just at this moment a Samaritan woman came to the well, with her water jar upon her head and her rope in her hand. Jesus looked at her, and in one glance read her soul and saw all her life. He knew that Jews did not often speak to Samaritans, but He said to her, "Please give me a drink." The woman saw from His looks and His dress that He was a Jew, and she said to Him, "How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask drink of me, a Samaritan woman?" Jesus answered her, "If you know what God's free gift is, and if you knew who it is that says to you, Give me a drink, you would ask Him to give you living water, and He would give it to you." There was something in the words and the looks of Jesus which caused the woman to sense that He was not a common man. She said to Him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where can you get that living water! Are you greater than our father Jacob, who drank from this well?" "Whoever drinks of this water," said Jesus, "shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." "Sir," said the woman, "give me some of this water of yours, so that I will not thirst any more nor come all the way to this well." Jesus looked at the woman and said to her, "Go home and bring your husband and come here." "I have no husband," answered the woman. "Yes," said Jesus, "you have spoken the truth. You have no husband. But you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not your husband." The woman was filled with wonder as these words penetrated her soul. She saw that there was a man who knew what a stranger could not know. She felt that God had spoken to Him and she said, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet of God. Tell me whether our people or the Jews are right. Our fathers have worshipped on this mountain. The Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men should go to worship. Now, which of these is the right place?" Her concern, and the major issue of the moment for her, had to do with the specific proper location for worship. In this respect, this woman differed little from multitudes in this hour who ask, "Where should we worship! What church should we attend." "What ministry should we submit to?" The Lord did not dodge her question. Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and

in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The time would come, said the Lord, when both "this mountain" and "Jerusalem", as well as any other geographical locality, or appointed structure, would be considered completely irrelevant as a condition to worship.

A recent newspaper article was entitled, ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS STRIVE FOR SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL HOME. It included the views of a rabbi and a Palestinian activist. The interview with the rabbi stated, "Today, Jews believe that worshipping in Jerusalem is essential to serving God, many of whose 613 Biblical commandments can be fulfilled only here." At the same time, the interview with the Palestinian pointed out, "So sacred is Jerusalem, Muslims believe, that a good deed committed here has 1,000 times the normal weight, while a sin committed here has 1,000 times the normal gravity." Opinions and sentiments concerning Jerusalem still run deep and are strongly felt by the carnal-minded after two thousand years! The modern city of Jerusalem still is the object of a struggle for power involving pride, envy, oppression, tyranny. The Samaritans for generations had worshipped God in Mount Gerizim and the Jews had for generations worshipped in their temple in Jerusalem. Each scorned the other's place of worship and Jesus is here speaking to the woman of Samaria and telling her that PLACES ARE OF NO CONSEQUENCE. God is spirit - and mountain worship will not be acceptable. Neither will temple worship in Jerusalem be acceptable to God. If man is to worship God, then man must worship God AS HE IS, and not as man thinks He is or where man thinks He may be. Carnality and the natural man attempt to bring God into a realm that will enable them to see God according to their belief. Therefore some worship idols or images of metal, wood, or stone. Others worship the sun or the elements. Some must go to a building to worship God and others must have all manner of rites and ceremonies. Some must have a Jesus in a body of flesh, before they can worship God. But Jesus said that God was seeking a people who would worship God in the realm and sphere in which God is - in Spirit and in Truth. Worshipping a physical location is not spiritual worship. "Oh," you say, "I do not worship the location, I just go there to worship God." Precious friend of mine, if you must go there in order to worship God, you are worshipping the place! When we worship God in spirit and in truth, it separates us from all the "helps" and "crutches." Such a worship takes away all the traditions of men, all the ceremonies and all the rituals and all the forms that every religious body of people are cumbered with. We won't go to a mountain, neither will we find it necessary to go to a temple. We will not have to work anything up or pray anything down. Certainly the Lord draws His people together for seasons of fellowship, praise, instruction, and edification. We do not oppose such gatherings, as the Lord ordains. But true worship will not take place just on Sunday morning or perhaps a night or two each week. True worship is a CONSTANT, CONTINUAL STATE OF BEING. God is spirit, and who can know spirit except God take us unto Himself in the realm in which He abides. God, Spirit and Truth, fills all space, is everywhere present, eternal and unchanging. When we live and walk in the spirit we are always dwelling at home in Him. We are always able to know and experience Him in the heaven of His presence, the true home and heaven of the consciousness of the life, reality and substance of God within.

This is one of the great truths that the vast majority of church members have not grasped to this day. That is, that the place of worship has no bearing whatsoever on the act of worship. Today, in order to hold together the system, the religious system men have developed, there must be a place of worship, and men must gather themselves together at that place so that they may worship. Anyone who claims to be able to worship God at any time and in any place becomes a heretic to the organized religionists. For, if the

places of worship were taken away, and men truly worshipped in spirit and in truth, the whole religious system would fall apart. There would be no reason for it to continue. The whole religious system is builded upon having a "place" for people to come to so that the works of men may continue to be carried out. Again, let me affirm that God does indeed gather His people together, but such gathering together is UNTO HIM, and the place and order becomes inconsequential. It is when the place becomes important, it is when preachers and organizations demand your attendance, your submission, and your allegiance to them and their program, asserting that you cannot make it in to heaven, or the Kingdom, or sonship, or immortality apart from their teaching, their method, their order, their program - it is there that worship in spirit and in truth is usurped by worship in "this mountain" or in "Jerusalem." Religion always tells us where, when and how to worship. Ah, but the Spirit, like a rushing wind carries us off to that realm of spirit and truth...far beyond place, time and methods...into the very presence of the Father...for it is there we gather to worship!

Let all who read these lines know of a certainty that worship in spirit and in truth is the worship of the New Covenant. This worship of the New Covenant and Testament is a new worship, which Christ Jesus, the heavenly spiritual Man, the second Adam, set up almost two millenniums ago; and then put down and abolished the worship at the mountain, and the worship at Jerusalem, when He set up this worship in spirit and in truth. And this spirit and truth must every man and woman know within themselves, by which they may know the God of truth, who is a spirit, within their spirit. The Jew inward worships in temple, his body being the temple of the Holy Ghost. And the Jew outward, in the Old Covenant and Testament; they sing and pray and preach in their temple, an outward temple made with hands. But the Jew inward, in the spirit, in the New Covenant and Testament, the new and living way, sings and rejoices and ministers and prays in the Holy Ghost, their bodies being temples of the Holy Ghost. And not yet the outward body of flesh, but the body of the inward man, the house from heaven, the spiritual body, the body of the Christ which every man who is putting on Christ is building within his own reality of Christ within. The type has passed, and we know that the temple built with hands is no more. But what do we see! Men are trying to reproduce it or to invent a substitute for it, thus perpetuating the Old Covenant, to walk as outward Jews. Church buildings, cathedrals and temples are pawned as the meeting place with God! Call these "churches" if you will. THEY ARE NOT CHURCHES. The very name is a blasphemy. They are mere buildings; and there is nothing sacred or holy about them. They are not the "house of God" as the ignorant love to call them. We praise God for the privilege of gathering together with those of "like precious faith," and rejoice in any assembling of saints that is truly unto Him: but in point of fact it is not in any building made with hands that the Father is worshipped. Ah, how greatly we misconceive our true position! We certainly need not the Tabernacle of Moses, the Temple of Solomon, nor any cathedral or so-called church building to worship the Father or to minister as the Lord's anointed; because we are constituted priests of the HEAVENLY TABERNACLE, which no human hand ever reared, and which is the true meeting-place between God and His spiritual priesthood, yea, of all who come to God.

It is an indisputable fact that in all of the recorded history of the human race men have been prone to associate their worship of God with places and things, and to attach some special sacredness or power to that place of thing, until the places and things become more important than God Himself. Many precious folk imagine that because they met God in some glorious experience in such and such a building, room, or seat, they will find Him there again. I remember seeing people during the great healing campaigns of the

late 1940's and early 1950's, long after the tent was folded, the lights out and the trucks departed, returning to stand in the saw dust at the exact spot where the glory of God had been seen, expecting to meet God in just the same way again. Jesus said: God is not a place, a building or a mountain; God is SPIRIT. You cannot confine God to a temple or a time. God does not move exclusively on Sunday morning at twenty minutes past eleven, following three choruses and two minutes of singing in the Spirit. His Spirit is everywhere, all the time. Whatever your expression or ministry is it should be able to function at any time and in any place, just as well as it does at "church." That is how Jesus ministered. He ministered in the fields, in the mountain, in the streets, in the homes, on the lake, and in the temple. His meetings never started at ten and ended at twelve. He was the temple of God at all times and in every place. And God manifested in His temple at all times and in every place. This will be the mark of the manifested sons of God. Their ministry will not be in church buildings nor in auditoriums. Their meetings will not be scheduled for certain hours on Sunday and Wednesday. There will be no newspaper or television advertising. There will be no campaign manager, music director, or prescribed order. They will appear and show forth the glory of the Father in the restaurants, in the homes, in the fields, in church buildings, on ships at sea, in airplanes streaking through the skies and trains racing through the night. It will be the sovereign, spontaneous, continuous, unrestrained, unplanned, unrehearsed, omnipotent outflow of Life, Light and Love. It will change lives, transform churches, revolutionize cities, conquer nations. It will redeem society and sweep the nations and all things into the Kingdom of God. IT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT. Even now we must learn to live and walk in the Spirit if we treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God. They that worship God must do so in a state of being: in spirit and in truth.

I was greatly blessed many years ago by the following words written by George Hawtin: "There is a place in God where saints may dwell ten thousand times more real than any natural realm. There is a true temple, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, eternal in the heavens. It is the mystical temple, which is HIS BODY. There is a church which is THE TRUE CHURCH. Its happy saints dwell in the realm of the Spirit, and, because they do, they continually worship God in spirit and in truth. I anticipate that many will ask, 'How do we worship God in Spirit?' But this you will not discover until the hour comes when you learn that neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, nor in the church system, nor in the denomination, nor in the mass, nor in the ordinances, nor in any such thing do men worship the Father. When you have departed from all these things and broken these idols from off your neck and cast their image from before you, then you will see no man but Jesus only, and then only will you understand what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. When this wisdom is sweet to your soul, then like the woman of Samaria you will drop that jug with which you for so long a time drew natural water from a natural well, and you will run off as she to unashamedly declare, Is not this the Christ?" - end quote. May God help all who have received the call to sonship to realize that we do not have to go to Jerusalem or to a mountain, or be at a special time or place to worship the Father, or use special words or a certain form, or go through the religious exercises the whole church world goes through every Sunday, but that we worship the Father at all times and in all places because our whole life IS WORSHIP. The great apostle Paul declared, "I am poured out like an oblation." Like incense, his whole life was an offering to God. May God almighty do a work in us and cause us to be true worshippers, that whether we are in the desert, or in the mountain, or in Jerusalem, or at home, or in a gathering of the saints, whether by voice, or by offering up, or whatever we are doing, reality be in us, so that whatever we do, we are doing it out of that reality. Strange, isn't it, that most "gifts of the Spirit" only work after three choruses or at the close of the sermon! Let us ask God to

help us not to be PROFESSIONAL WORSHIPPERS, but to be TRUE WORSHIPPERS of the Father.

There is a wonderful scripture passage which is troubling to many wherein the inspired writer admonishes, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). Be not alarmed or distressed because of those who would use the letter of this word as a hammer to bring condemnation to one who does not attend their weekly or daily set times of assembly! Nor, on the other hand, should you use your "liberty" as an excuse to "do your own thing," becoming self-righteous in your "freedom," independent and exalted in your own "spirituality," cutting yourself off from the body of Christ! Both extremes are unbalanced. On the one hand, there is the person who is in bondage to a group or leader or religious system, being careful to observe the letter of the law, attending every time the group assembles, regardless of the spiritual quality of the meeting. The other extreme is the one who is so independent and self-sufficient that he holds nothing but contempt for any gathering, regardless of the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. In seeking to be free, he has come into bondage to lawlessness and rebellion. He is going his own self-righteous, puffed-up way, not being led by the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, the righteous Judge, bring us into balance, that we may truly be free in our spirits from man's religious requirements and bondages, yet humble before the Lord and before our brothers and sisters in Christ, ready to serve one another, and ready to receive from each other, as He leads, and gathering together as He directs, with meek and receptive hearts.

But there is a truth in this passage beyond all this. The Greek word for "assembling" is EPISUNAGOGE. It is a compound of the Greek prefix EPI with the word SUNAGOGE from which we get our transliterated English word Synagogue. EPI means superimposition - that which is above, higher than, highest, upon. SUNAGOGE means a meeting, assembly, or gathering. Putting these two together, EPI-SUNAGOGE means THE ABOVE SYNAGOGUE, THE HIGHER MEETING, THE HIGHEST ASSEMBLY, THE HIGHER-THAN-ALL-GATHERINGS! It bespeaks of something greater far than merely collecting so many breathing bodies together in one place. It is a meeting in a higher realm, on a higher plane, in the high places of the Spirit, and in the heights of Truth. It is a gathering together in a dimension above. It indicates an assembling IN THE SPIRIT, as Paul also testified, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Tens of thousands, yea, tens of millions of believers gather together in "church buildings" every Sunday morning, and because they make the effort to get out of bed, get the family ready, and drive off to warm a pew, they are convinced that they have met the requirements of the divine fiat: "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." My beloved, they have not even touched the hem of the garment of this truth! We are not to forsake or neglect that wonderful seating we have together WITH CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLIES! That is precisely what the passage is saying. Hebrews 10:25 is nothing but lifeless words, until one sits in the presence of the Father, joined in worship with kindred spirits, and partakes of that holy communion within the veil! It is only as spirit calls to spirit that the depths of eternal truth are opened. And multitudes who meet together every week for singing, teaching, etc., have never discovered the glorious and eternal reality of that ABOVE SYNAGOGUE. They do not meet or minister or live from that higher-than-all-heavens realm of HIS LIFE.

When we meet with a company of the elect, we are not to think of them as the whole of those with whom we worship and minister. The true priest is one of a great festal throng,

which is comprising the spiritual temple built of the living stones of redeemed and transformed men and women. As priests in the HEAVENLY SANCTUARY, the TRUE TABERNACLE which is above, we are but part of a great and universal congregation consisting of all the elect saints who have gone before, and those now living, gathered out of all ages, and throughout the vast universe of God. The preacher, the prisoner, the traveler, the mother, the king - all meet there IN THE SPIRIT REALM, and worship and minister from thence. All are priests, and yonder is the great High Priest of our profession, who has pressed through the heavens and ever lives as the Minister of the heavenly sanctuary. He is "a minister of the true tabernacle." And such are we! He has raised us up and made us sit together with Him in these heavenly places, and He has made us to be a kingdom of priests. It is not "in church" on Sunday morning that we know the power of this priesthood; it is IN THE SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, it is ASSEMBLED TOGETHER IN THE ABOVE SYNAGOGUE, in reality wrought within, every moment and everywhere and in every situation and circumstance as we live and walk and move in HIS REALM.

The regenerated spirit becomes a component factor in the sweet harmony of God's spiritual Kingdom. And what a Kingdom! And what a harmony! In duration it is from everlasting to everlasting. The granite hills shall melt away; the earth shall leave its orbit and fall into the chaos of crashing worlds; Orion, Arcturus, and Pleiades shall cease to travel the holy aisles of heaven; the sun shall be turned into darkness; the heavens shall be rolled back as a scroll, and as a vesture shall they be folded up; but beneath the scepter of the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Father, the Kingdom of Heaven shall still remain and move on in sweetest harmony with His holy will. For in this high and holy Kingdom no forces ever clash, no laws ever fail, no truth ever goes astray, no beauty ever fades, no light ever loses its luster, no good ever grows less, no life ever gets old, no love ever becomes cold, no joy ever ceases, no harmony ever has a discord. From the time when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God first shouted for joy, rhythm and rapture have rolled upward and onward through all the boundless and eternal spiritual universe as the sweet expression of the mind and will of almighty God. This universe, this higher-than-the-heavens universe, this Kingdom of Heaven, is the home and heritage of every son of God. He belongs to it, and it belongs to him. He is in it, and it is in him. He holds himself in harmony with it, and it fills his soul with its songs. He apprehends its truth, enjoys its beauties, and partakes of its holiness. There is no place in it where he may not feel at home - no place where he has not a right to be; for it has been the Father's good pleasure to give him the Kingdom. His life is not measured by years, but by its possibilities and expansiveness. He has already been translated into this Heavenly Kingdom (Col. 1:13)! And the inner man which is renewed day by day, the heavenly man born from above by the incorruptible seed of the word of God, the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness cannot, by the very nature of his being, ever be separated from the consciousness and reality of this heavenly existence, contrary to the contentions of those who teach that departed saints are dead like dogs, without consciousness or being, until the day of resurrection. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). Divinity and eternity are born within the man who is born of the Spirit. Now he is a child of God, but it doth not yet appear what he shall be. We are not to forsake this UPPER-SYNAGOGUING of ourselves together - the communion and fellowship and expression together in this highest of all realms - THE SPIRIT! Though we should meet and sing a thousand songs of praise and preach a thousand sermons out of the Good Book - if we fail to touch that high realm of life and reality in the spirit we have

not "upper-synagogued" at all - having merely assembled and done some religious things on the low plane of soulish activity.

THE CELESTIAL SONG OF CREATION

More than a hundred years ago a preacher by the name of George T. Lemmon penned the following report: "At the last session of Parliament Tomlinson brought his wonderful Apollo Chorus of four hundred and fifty voices. The members of this Chorus were his own choice from the twelve thousand members of his four great classes of the three preceding years. Every member of the Chorus was a soloist of skill and power, yet all were here massed as the keys of a splendid human instrument of harmony. For the closing session of this remarkable assembly they were to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus." Dr. Barrows had pledged the Parliament that they would hear such music as had never charmed their ears before, and the music that thrilled six thousand souls that night more than fulfilled the pledge. The Chorus rises. The gallery has been given over to their use. Here at the right rise one hundred basses. Next to them stand eighty tenors. Across on the left are one hundred and twenty altos, and stretching in a double row from end to end of the rear gallery are one hundred and fifty sopranos. No orchestra is to share tonight with the full, rich melody and uplifting power of the human voice. The piano gives the chord, and then the only instrument that aids the choral host is the tiny baton in their leader's hand. The moment has come in the movement of the oratorio for the songs of men to lift their ascription of praise and honor to the Christ of God. First bursts forth the deep tones, repeated over and over again, of the rolling, stirring bass: 'He shall be King of kings. He shall be King of kings.' Then the altos lift the same great title on the pinions of their melodious tones: 'He shall be King of kings. He shall be King of kings.' The tenors are now inspired, and still higher they raise the glorious strain: 'He shall be King of kings. He shall be King of kings.' Now with full voice the one hundred and fifty sopranos ring out high over all 'And Lord of lords. And Lord of lords.' And then the four hundred and fifty joining, voice to voice, swell the exultant unison: 'He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords. He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!'

"Then, as if from out of the eternal splendors, a voice that would sound the hearts of men put the query: 'How long will your hallelujahs ring! How long shall Christ be King of kings, and Lord of lords?'" The Chorus gives reply. Deep as from hearts long schooled in sorrow, but now alive with joy, rolling out the profound utterance of the bass: 'He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords, forever and forever and ever and ever and ever.' Then the altos lift the confident acclamation, as from hearts in which the Christ was newly born 'Forever and forever and ever and ever and ever.' Higher still the tenors steadily raise the resounding note of faith, as though they would conquer the world with song: 'Forever and forever and ever and ever and ever.' Then, like a prophecy of the music that carols from the spirits of the ten thousand times ten thousand burst out the sopranos with the same unending song. Once again the full Chorus unite their soul-revealing voices, and on and on and on as though time were already dead, they repeat the stirring truth. This time not four hundred and fifty merely, but thousands added unto them, are singing the spirit-inspired chorus. For once at least God heard from hearts His Spirit taught that matchless chorus sung, and as I joined my voice to that heavenly throng moved by the anointing of worship there flashed upon my mind a vision of the day that is to be, when from out of the everlasting city the Son of God shall come enthroned in glory and the gathered host bend adoring hearts to the Lamb who for them was slain. Then, as about that great throne there gathered the people from the ends of the earth, and the kings of all nations laid down the scepters of their power, I heard the thunderous bass of Africa's ransomed

millions roll out the adoration of their hearts to Him who broke the shackles of their darkness. Europe, her millions upon millions singing with all the gladness of victorious faith, lifted voice to swell far and wide her melodious alto. From the vigorous host that come from the two Americas there rings out such a triumphant tenor that a smile answers them on the face of Christ. And then Asia, old Asia, the mother of all religions, bows at the feet of Him who brought the true, and from her reverent host that outnumbers all the rest, the glorious climax rises, 'He shall be King of kings, and Lord of lords, forever and forever and ever and ever.' Onward, ever onward rolls the glorious song, and as in my ears that choir keeps singing ever louder and more glad my soul beats high with exultation as I pledge it a part in that world-ending, heaven-enlarging chorus; ever rolling onward until every created thing, every living, pulsating, vibrating spirit in the vastnesses of infinity shall be as harps in tune, which, with individual variations, and yet in perfect symphony, will make universal melody unto Him. And to the sons of God who pray with me that that day may quickly come I would repeat over and over the message that commands my soul: The world, and the whole of it, for God and His sons. No less will satisfy the Father. No less will satisfy His sons" - end quote.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship.
When, at His bidding, every storm is stilled,
Or who can say how great the jubilation
When all the hearts of men with love are filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
And myriad, myriad human voices sing.
And earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer,
At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!

Thirty centuries ago the Psalmist cried out in spirit, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being" (Ps. 146:1; 104:33). All the way through the book of Psalms, even in its most sorrow-laden passages, you feel that you are walking in a smoldering volcano of praise, liable to burst out at any moment into a great flame of thanksgiving to God. And as the book draws to its close, the flame leaps high from the crater: here you have praise, and nothing but praise. You have perhaps watched a great conductor bringing every member of his orchestra into action towards the close of some majestic symphony, have seen him, as the music climbed higher and higher, signaling to one player after another, and always at the signal another instrument responding to the summons and adding its voice to the music, until at the last crashing chords not one was left dumb, but all were uniting in a thrilling and triumphant climax. So these final Psalms summon everything in creation to swell the glorious unison of God's praise. They signal symbolically to the sun riding in the heavens, "You come in now, and praise Him!" Then to the myriad stars of night, "You now, praise Him!" Then to the mountains, piercing the clouds with their summits, "Praise Him!" Then to the kings and judges of the earth, "Praise Him!" Then to manhood in its strength and maidenhood in its grace and beauty, "Praise Him!" Then to the multitude of the redeemed in earth and heaven, "Praise Him!" The crescendo continues until the wide universe is shouting with every voice the praise of God alone. The Psalms in their sequence show forth the redemptive progression that can only end when every heart beats in unison with the heart of God; when every mind shall harmonize with divine wisdom and purpose; when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

Herein is fulfilled the Oracle of Lyra in the heavens, the prophecy of the Harp written eternally in the shimmering night skies above! The loving, praising, worshipping attitude of the whole universe is to be complete and perfect. Thus all the ends of the earth shall offer up their praise and thanksgiving to Him for His great love and salvation and inflow of life. What a THANKSGIVING DAY that will be! Every knee on this globe, and in the heavens above, and in the underworld shall confess the Lordship of God and His sons. What a TESTIMONY MEETING! There has never been one like it. The summing up of the universe is the revelation of harmony. It is not that the harmony comes at the end, but that the harmony is revealed at the end. The universe is all music, but it is not all music to our ear. We only hear a few chords, and they are minor chords. The minor chords seem discords when we hear them in their fragmented position; they lack the full symphony to bring out their symmetry. Often our hearts cry out that we are living in a world filled with discords. The Father must teach us that we are living in a world of perfect music, but we only hear a small portion of the music. Sorrow, pain, disappointment, heartaches, frustration, and travail, not to mention sin and death, seem to our ear sad and discordant notes. Often we feel that the coming melody shall atone for the grating chords. Nay, my brother, my sister; say rather that the grating chords themselves shall be revealed as parts of the completed harmony. Then shall we fathom the depths of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, then shall we understand His ways that are past finding out, then shall we see just how it is that all things work together for good. The melody is not to come, it has come already; it has only to be completed to be revealed, and then the harpers shall stand upon the glassy sea.

Chapter 27

Sagittarius-The Archer

(continued)

The second of the Decans (minor constellations) in the house of Sagittarius is ARA-THE ALTAR. It is illustrated as an altar, placed significantly in the up-side down position. It is one of the southernmost constellations in the heavens, and the regions below this were considered from ancient times as the lower regions, the underworld, the regions of darkness, referred to as "outer darkness." Ara is seen as an altar or burning pyre, up-side down, pouring fire into the dark and hidden abyss. The Greeks used the word Ara in the sense of a curse or the effect of a curse-ruin and destruction. The spiritual symbolism here bespeaks of the consuming fires of judgment which devour the mighty enemies of Sagittarius. So the constellation of Ara reminds us that the conquering Sagittarius (Christ) goes on in His battle beyond the wielding of the sword to the complete destruction by judgmental fire of all that opposes Him from the kingdom of darkness. Scripturally, it is expressed by the apostle Paul in these graphic words: "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: who shall be punished with age-lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; 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). Peter also speaks of a day when the world will be purged by fire. We know what it is for saints to experience Christ as a refiner's fire consuming the hay, wood and stubble out of our lives. Let us now meditate upon what it means for the world to be purged by fire.

THE THREE WORLDS AND THE THREE HEAVENS

There are important time divisions in the plan of God which the scriptures refer to as "worlds" or "ages." The word "world" does not generally refer to this physical planet with its mountains, oceans, rivers, trees, etc. The word is often translated from the Greek word COSMOS which means "an order, system, or arrangement of things." The present order, system, or arrangement of things upon this earth involves all the institutions, organizations, laws, traditions, customs etc. which have been developed to either control or give motivation to the lives and actions of men and nations. This includes all governmental systems, educational institutions, religious organizations, economic orders, traditions, customs and every other thing that gives form and substance to our present social order. All of these, together with the time period during which mankind functions within their frame work, constitute a biblical "world."

In Peter's second epistle, chapter three, we are told of three such "worlds. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out

of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:3-13).

If we truly desire to understand the marvelous things which relate to the day of the Lord, we must look at them from the standpoint of God and not from the human (carnal) standpoint. That is, we will be forced to take a spiritual viewpoint instead of the natural. Bible teachers of prophetic subjects have in the vast majority of cases taught from the natural, literal interpretation, and that is the reason there is so much misunderstanding concerning prophetic subjects today. With this in mind, let us reverently go back and take a closer look at the significant words of the apostle Peter. "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby THE WORLD THAT THEN WAS, being overflowed with water, perished." Now let us read this from the New English Bible: "In taking this view they lose sight of the fact that there were heavens and earth long ago, created by God's word out of water and with water: and by water THAT FIRST WORLD WAS DESTROYED, the water of the deluge. And THE PRESENT HEAVENS AND EARTH, again by God's word, have been kept in store for burning." That first world, then, existed from the time of the creation unto the flood. Thus, the entire period of time from Adam to the great Deluge is called "a world" - the world that then was.

What kind of world was that ancient world? The Bible says of it: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all they chose. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. And the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for ALL FLESH HAD CORRUPTED HIS WAY UPON THE EARTH. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6:1-13). Peter writes of that world, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (II Pet. 3:6). Does the fact that the world of that day "perished" and was "destroyed" mean that we are not living on the same earth that saw the flood in Noah's day? Does it mean that this planet was obliterated so that it no longer existed! Does it mean that Noah was "raptured" off to some distant planet or to some far-off heaven somewhere while God created a new earth for him to live on? Of course not! Then what "world" or "earth" was destroyed by the flood? The scripture shows plainly that it was a world of people and a WAY OF LIFE-a COSMOS- a social order, a world system and arrangement of things! So we see that the world that was destroyed in Noah's day was not this physical earth of mountains, valleys, rocks, rivers, trees and oceans, for of that earth the scripture is emphatic that "one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but THE EARTH ABIDETH FOREVER" (Eccl.

1:4). And again, "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He FORMED IT TO BE INHABITED" (Isa. 45:18). It is clear that while God did not destroy the planet, He did bring an era of unbridled wickedness and utter depravity to a screeching halt and total end, thus destroying, not only fleshly men, but a WHOLE WAY OF LIFE including all the institutions, organizations, governmental systems, economic orders, religions, traditions, customs etc. that were characteristic of that corrupt civilization.

The world of old passed away and there was no memory left of it. The earth was now free of the iniquity and ungodliness which had cursed it before the flood. I have often wondered how it must have seemed to Noah and his family when they stepped out of the ark onto an earth cleansed of sin. To know that they were the only people on earth and that God was beginning a new age, a new dispensation and a new way of life through them. That the earth had been washed free from the perversion, violence and shame that had polluted it. They were to be the beginning of a new race of people to populate the earth. And yet, we must remember that the same old sinful nature was being loosed upon the earth again after the flood, for that nature was in Noah and all his family. It had not yet formed itself into a "world" - an institutionalized way of life. But in this new world God began a new method of dealing with mankind and would introduce Himself into the human race. Noah built an altar and then we read in Gen. 8:21, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done."

THE WORLD THAT NOW IS

Peter identifies the second world and the second heaven for us. "But the heavens and the earth, WHICH ARE NOW, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be... (II Pet. 3:7-12).

Peter here refers to THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WHICH ARE NOW. And what kind of world is this second world-the one in which we live? This world began at the end of the flood and continues until "the day of the Lord," at which time it too "passes away." Let us look at some of the characteristics of this present world. The apostle Paul writes, "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD" (Gal. 1:4). The description of this present world declares it to be evil, and Paul asserts that we are being delivered or saved out of it through Jesus who gave Himself for us. One cannot read these words without a feeling of utmost wonder at the revelation that just as it was the ark that saved Noah from the world of his day, so it is Christ who saves us from this present evil world. Noah was saved from his world by a ship, whereas we are saved from our world by a glorious Person! To be delivered from this present evil world does not mean to be "raptured" off to some "beautiful isle of somewhere" any more than Noah was removed to another planet when he was "saved" from the world that then was. Of Noah's blessed deliverance we read: "For Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were SAVED BY WATER" (II Pet. 3:18-20). Yes, precious friend of mine, Noah was saved by water-the very same water that destroyed the world! He was saved from a world, but the wonderful truth is that he had been "saved" from that "world" a long time before the waters of the flood arrived! For even as the scripture declares of Jesus, that He was "harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," so the Word also testifies of Noah that he was "a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Noah was saved. From the world of his day. He was no part of it, though it was all around him. Noah was different. He danced to a different tune. He lived out his life by a different set of standards. He walked with God while all the rest of mankind wallowed in the filth of the lusts of their flesh. And now, in this our day, God has sent forth His Son Jesus to save us from THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD! Vast multitudes of men and women all about us walk through this life with their minds closed, their hearts centered in this old world. How men's hearts and lives are tied to this world! The man who is living in this world is forever worrying about earthly things -how he can provide more in the bank for old age, how he can provide more to see and hear and taste and feel and smell-the pleasures of this world, how he can be sure he will never want for food, clothing or shelter. His concern is that the physical man, the earth-man, the man of this world will never be in need, never be unsatisfied or dissatisfied. He is always mindful of the comfort, entertainment, protection and provision of the natural man. However much we may elaborate on this point, we will not express it more aptly than did the apostle Paul when he declared, "For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh." On the other hand, there is a small minority who spend their lives minding the things of the spirit. The welfare of the spiritual man, the new creature, the inward man, the heavenly man is uppermost in their thoughts, for they seek the mind of Christ. They, like Paul, "die daily" to this present evil world, counting it as a passing thing that is destined for destruction. The child of God stands out as the revelation of the divine power of Jesus Christ to come into the spirit of man, and change it and make it lovely and pure and wise and powerful like God Himself. To come into the mind of man, and take possession of all its faculties, infusing the mind of Christ until that man esteems the fashions and fantasies of this world as less than nothing, seeking always to be one with the Father. To come into the nature of man and transform it by the power of God until his thoughts and desires and actions are filled with wisdom and understanding, manifesting the life and glory of the world to come, the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. These, being after the spirit, mind the things of the spirit. These are putting on immortality and incorruption, for the Christ shall come into even our diseased and mortal bodies until the action of the Holy Spirit revolutionizes every cell of the blood as it is written, "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion" (Joel 3:21). This, my beloved, is what it means to be SAVED FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD!

How many of the Lord's precious people in ignorance do err, always equating salvation with heaven and hell. Religion has indoctrinated its servants into the idea that God's great and eternal purposes are basically of geographical or territorial consideration. Religion teaches that we are saved from one "place"-hell, to go to another "place"-heaven. And of course neither of these places are on this earth, so therefore the only purpose for our being on this earth at all is to make preparation to get out of here and go someplace else! Too long preachers have tried to scare people into heaven by painting lurid and horrible pictures of hell, rather than preaching Jesus Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, who is made unto all that believe wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. I know of nothing that will so thoroughly awaken the

fathomless depths of wisdom and understanding than the blessed knowledge of the sacred mystery that Christ saves men right now FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD. And while you, dear reader, may be one of those waiting to be "evacuated" off this earth to spend eternity in some far-off heaven somewhere, Peter expresses the true desire of all sons of God who groan for the deliverance of the creation and the coming of the Kingdom of God, saying. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found in Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet. 3:13-14). It is an incontrovertible fact that the average Christian today is not looking for the same thing Peter was looking for- new heavens and a new earth. Did Jesus teach us to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, and take us home to heaven," or did He teach us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven?" To be delivered from this present evil world doesn't mean to be taken anywhere. It means to be transformed, it means to be in a different condition, or state of being, than the world. It means to be holy instead of vile, spiritual instead of carnal, heavenly minded instead of earthly minded, peaceful instead of agitated, full of wisdom and understanding instead of ignorant and foolish, full of faith instead of fear and frustration, living instead of dying. As our Lord implored, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jn. 17:15-17). This was Noah's condition, his state of being, in his corrupt world. He was perfect with God. And now, in the end of this world, it is our turn to be perfect in our generation, to walk with God, and be completely delivered out of this present evil world into the life and power and glory of the Kingdom of God-the new age, the new condition, the new state of being-the new world order, the world to come!

It is very essential that those who study the word of God should always keep in mind that "world" means an order, system, or arrangement of things. This involves a way of life, social structure, culture, philosophies, political ideologies, religion, economics - all products of the carnal mind of man. It is difficult for many of the Lord's people to understand this one simple truth: "THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN WICKEDNESS" (I Jn. 5:19). The entire passage is even more enlightening. "And we know that we are of God, and THE W-H-O-L-E W-O-R-L-D LIETH IN WICKEDNESS." The Amplified Bible correctly translates the latter part of the verse: "The whole world around us is under the power of the wicked one." This whole world system not only made its bed in wickedness, but it lies in and is under the control of THE WICKED ONE- the satanic spirit incarnate in the Adam man. How few truly comprehend the vital significance of this! How many precious saints are yet deceived into believing that there is at least something of God in the politics of this world, in the educational programs of this world, in the economic system of this world, in the fashions, laws, philosophies, and culture of this present world system. This is especially true of believers in the United States and in the other so-called "Christian nations" of the West. Somehow it does not sink in that these institutions are, one and all, without any exceptions whatsoever, PRODUCTS OF THE CARNAL MINDS OF NATURAL MEN! I do not hesitate to tell you that the vast majority of the men and women who fill the smoke-filled rooms where the ideas are hatched and the decisions made concerning all of these affairs are indeed carnal men, sold under sin, dominated by the spirit that controls this evil age. We have wanted to believe that our present political system, democracy, or republicanism, is somehow an expression of the Kingdom of God because it was given to us by noble and religious men. We have reasoned that our educational system was at one time a godly institution because it espoused higher moral standards, practiced corporal punishment, and had prayers in the classroom. We have

imagined that Capitalism is somehow a God-ordained economic system because it brings material blessing to so many people. So we have men busy trying to preserve and perpetuate a passing order, a carnal institution which is steadily disintegrating before our very eyes, as God demonstrates for all to see the immutable and incontrovertible truth that even our cherished systems and institutions are OF THIS WORLD "which passeth away." Some still entertain the hope that out of our present government will come the integrity and wisdom to solve the immense problems facing our increasingly weakening and depraved society and explosive world situation. Surely, think we, the Democrats, or the Republicans, or an Independent will come up with the answer! Certainly a Bush, or a Clinton, or a Perot is what this nation needs to lead us out of our political, economic and moral morass. If only we could elect more Conservatives, or more Liberals, or more Christians! How many Christians have swarmed to the polls like herded cattle to cast their vote for some candidate they were propagandized into believing was a Christian, or godly, or honest, or Conservative, or religious, or something else; only to awaken later to the unvarnished fact that in spite of all the shrewdly managed image-building and propaganda he was, in fact, just another politician like other politicians, a specimen of the system that spawned him, controlled by the spirit of the age of this world system, which, as truthfully as the word of God has taught us, "is under the power of the wicked one."

There is a simple, but sure, test by which one may discern whether anything pertains to the Kingdom of God or is of "this world." The truth is that all that belongs to the Kingdom of God originates in and proceeds forth from the SPIRIT OF GOD. Every thought, word, desire, action, activity, method, system, movement, or institution which originates in and springs from the life of the Spirit of God IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Conversely, all that is of this world originates in and proceeds forth from the carnal mind which mind is under the dominion of the ruler of this world. The truth of this is powerfully set forth in Eph. 6:12. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Let us read this from the Amplified Bible: "For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood - contending only with physical opponents - but against the despotism, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere." The Phillips translation says, "For our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against organizations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil." Thus, every thought, word, desire, action, activity, method, system, movement or institution which draws its genius from the natural mind is not from the Kingdom of God, but of this present world which passeth away with the lusts thereof.

Are we willing to permit everything around us, and all within us, to be judged by this test? All of our desires, hopes, ambitions, actions, teachings, prophecies, commitments, involvements? Let us apply this simple test to a few of the things in the world around us with which we are all acquainted. POLITICS - Is the political in the United States (or any other country) a reflection of the mind of the God, discovered by Spirit-led people waiting upon the Word of the Lord, or is it a product of the carnal minds of natural men and determined by debate, ideological agenda, public opinion, or the votes of the masses of un-spiritual citizens? BOARD MEETING - Is your Church (denomination) walking in the Spirit or after the flesh? When the board or ministry of your church (denomination) meets, do they seek the face of God and wait upon the Spirit of the Lord until He speaks and reveals His will, or do they discuss and argue their cases and then vote to see what 51% of them think ought to be done? ORGANIZATION - Was the organizational structure of

your denomination or religious organization inspired by the Holy Spirit under the sovereign Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ! Does it function as a living expression of the mind and wisdom of Christ, or, was it designed by men energetic to organize God's people to build a name and a kingdom, and is it, with its State Charter, unscriptural "board," "board members," "committees," "president," "vice president," "Sunday School Superintendent," etc. patterned after the order of worldly organizations and institutions? PASTORS - Were the elders, or pastors, of your church raised up and established in their ministries by the anointing of the Spirit, or were they "voted in" by the "sheep" in the same way officials are voted in an out of worldly corporations; or "placed" by some "board" or "committee" without the leadership of the Holy Spirit? MEETINGS - Are your meetings conducted under the Headship of Christ, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, with each member of the body supplying toward the mutual edification of the whole body as moved by the Spirit! Does "every one" of you have a psalm, have a doctrine, have a tongue, have a revelation, have an interpretation (I Cor. 14:26), or, do you all just sit back, facing the platform, as in a theater, and watch the "show" put on by the "pastor" and the "music director" from the stage?

It is my deep prayer that by these few examples we may see how easy it is to move out from under the power of the Kingdom of God and simply operate according to the carnal systems of this present world. It requires no spirituality at all to walk after the order of the world, but it takes a true commitment to the Holy Spirit to walk in the order of the Kingdom of God, which is the order of the Spirit. I pray that all who read these lines may be given wisdom to plainly see just how much of our so-called spiritual activities are not of the Spirit but OF THE WORLD. The beloved apostle John tells us plainly just what the world is. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, IS NOT OF THE FATHER, but is of the world" (I Jn. 2:15-17). The divine formula is simple - whatsoever is not of the Father I-S OF THE WORLD! It's just that simple, my beloved. That one easy to understand principle is applicable to our individual lives, collectively to our nation, our government, our church systems, our meetings, our business, our ambitions, plans, hopes, dreams, aims. In everything WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF THE FATHER IS OF THE WORLD! This wonderful law of the Kingdom should greatly assist us in our walk to separate the hay, wood, and stubble from the gold, silver, and precious stones of the living temple of God.

Armed with this understanding we can grasp the full import of the message delivered by John. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world around us is under the power of the wicked one." This world is not for us. Its ways are not for us. Its methods are not for us. Its fashions are not for us. Its spirit is not for us. We are different. We are of God. We are called to higher things. We are led by the Spirit, the sons of God. God is saving us out of this world. Those apprehended to sonship are overcoming this world even as Jesus said, "I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). John wrote, "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I Jn. 5:4). Peter admonishes, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:4). And finally, the apostle James warns against walking in the spirit of this world or being entangled therein: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God! whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!" (James 4:4). And, thank God! this world shall pass away. Not the earth that we live on, but the world. This whole present carnal system of things. And with it, all the chaos, sin,

war, crime, poverty, pain, pride, deceit, death; yea, all the ways of man shall be brought to an end. We look for NEW HEAVENS and a NEW EARTH wherein dwelleth righteousness. And the time for this change is at hand. It is already happening in God's elect, for we are children of THE DAY. Many think that we have come to time's last hour with nothing ahead but fear, catastrophe and annihilation. True, we are living in the closing days of the age, God's great clock of time is tolling out the dark hours. Six thousand years of man's mis-rule has cursed the earth. And now we are living in the most momentous days since the dawn of history. It is the breaking of the day! We have arrived at the hour for the NEW WORLD ORDER to begin. Even now as we learn to rise up in God, to walk in HIS WAYS, to be LED BY HIS SPIRIT, to know HIS VOICE, to be CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE, the nature, glory and authority of that NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH is being formed within us! There has been released from heaven in the last several years a great and wonderful expectancy. It is the expectancy that all heaven is about to break loose in the midst of the Lord's people and on a worldwide basis. Do you identify with that expectancy? God is raising up voices throughout the length and breadth of the land to say, "The earth is about to see the glory of God in an unprecedented way." A host of heavenly messengers has been released to every corner of the globe bearing the message: "And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:5). Even as I write the world is in the greatest spiritual, political, and economic change since World War II. The consequences of the demise of Marxism and resulting realignment are not yet apparent, but one-third of the world will be directly affected. The decade has changed - the century and the millennium will soon change. History's "odometer" will turn up to 7000 - the beginning of the seventh day since Adam sorrowfully departed from Eden's fair garden. The Father has opened the gates to a "new beginning" for mankind, and for us, who He has predestined to be the forerunners as the dawn of the Kingdom spreads its first rays of light across the horizon. In this new world the powers of sin and sorrow, of darkness and death will have no authority or dominion. The carnal mind of man will not rule nor will his flesh labor in this glorious Sabbath of God. In the new age, in the new world there is to be a housecleaning, every enemy shall be put under the feet of the sons of God, every work of satan destroyed from off the face of the earth, sorrow and sighing will flee away, and the whole human race will be delivered and lifted up to see life as God intended it for them. All of this work will not be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, but it will come under the administration of the sons of God who shall rule and reign over the earth. I tell you this day that THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND!

THE END OF THE WORLD

A friend said to Mark Twain: "I am worried. The world is coming to an end." "Don't be worried," replied the famous humorist, "we can get along without it." Mark Twain may not have known it, but he spoke the truth. We can get along without it, because God has arranged to fashion a new world by fire. The apostle Peter wrote "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet. 3:10).

In keeping with the modern use of language we might speak of the three worlds of II Peter 3 as the world of yesterday, the world of today, and the world of tomorrow. Much of the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of God's purpose for humanity has been occasioned by a failure to understand what a world really is. The biblical "end of the world" has been misconstrued to denote the burning up of the literal earth, and all things

upon it. On account of this misunderstanding of what is meant by "the end of the world" many saints have feared its approach. Many Bible students have endeavored to project it far into the future and others have come to look upon it as a mere superstition of the Dark Ages, unworthy of being given any serious consideration. But when we realize that what the Bible speaks of as the end of this present world, means just what we now see taking place as the whole world political, economic and ecclesiastical system is weakening and preparing to collapse, then the whole subject takes on an important, yea, a vital meaning to all who are interested to know what the world of tomorrow, the third world, is to be like. I tell you by the word of the Lord that God is even now creating a mighty "vacuum" in the world, that into this void may rush the power and wisdom and life of God through His manifested sons.

Let us look at the parable of Jesus about the wheat and the tares, in Mat. 13:39-41. Here Jesus is explaining the parable to His disciples, and says, "The enemy that sowed them (the tares) is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels (messengers), and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." Evangelists have taken this statement about the end of the world and have painted some very lurid and frightening pictures of the holocaust which, they say, will destroy this earth. THE END OF THE WORLD! The very thought strikes terror into many hearts. It sounds ominous indeed, and it will be for all the pride and haughtiness of men who now rule in wickedness over this earth. But when we see what a "world" really is, and consequently what the "end of the world" really is, we get a glorious picture of the beginning of a new age. It is not the earth that is ending, but an age, an order, a system of things, a condition, a state of being, a WAY OF LIFE. So you can stop looking for the sudden destruction of this planet, and begin looking for what really is about to happen-the closing, conclusion, consummation, and completion of this present evil age with its reign of unrighteousness, darkness, bondage and death, and the coming of a new age, a new world, a new order and system of things in which the sons of God will rule and bring the blessings of the Kingdom of God upon all the families of the earth.

Peter informs us of the time and the manner in which this world will end. He says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be...hasting unto the coming of the day of God wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Pet. 3:10-12). The prophet Zephaniah speaks of the same judgment and the same fire, saying, "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for My decision is to gather the nations, to draw together the kingdoms, to pour upon them My indignation, even all My fierce anger. For all the earth shall be DEVoured with the FIRE OF MY ZEAL. Yea, then will I turn unto the people a pure language (the pure word, a living revelation uncontaminated by human tradition), that they may call upon the Lord, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:8-9). What a day!

This "fire of God's zeal" is a symbol-and a forcible one-representing the intensity of the judgmental dealings of God which shall involve the whole world system. That it is not a literal fire, as some suppose, is evident from the fact that the people remain after it, and are blessed! "For all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of My zeal. T-H-E-N WILL I TURN UNTO T-H-E P-E-O-P-L-E a pure language, that they may call upon the name of

the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." That the people who remain after this devouring fire are not the saints or the elect is evident from the fact that they are then turned to serve the Lord, whereas the saints are turned (converted) already. This time of burning was foreseen by the prophets as the great and terrible day of the Lord when the earth would quake, the heavens tremble, the sun become dark, and the stars withdraw their shining. It would be a day, said the prophet, when "a fire devoureth," and "a flame burneth." Over and over again the prophets used the word "fire." Many times in the Bible the word "fire" is not the fire of combustion as we commonly know it. The scripture teaches that God uses fire as a cleansing and purifying agent. When we read that the Holy Spirit came as "tongues of fire," we do not suppose these were literal fires singeing the hair of those upon whom they sat but rather a representation of the character of the Holy Spirit coming in power to cleanse, purify and transform. Certainly it will be a fire of judgment upon the world. However, it will be not only a fire of judgment but a fire of cleansing and purification. The process of change that will produce the new heavens and the new earth is seen in these words: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness..." It is remarkable that two thousand years ago a divinely inspired writer should have used the term "dissolve", which has become suddenly fraught with modern meaning through contemporary science. "Dissolved" was the same word Jesus used when Lazarus stood before Him in front of his burial tomb, bound in grave clothes. Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go" (Jn. 11:34). Dissolved and loose are both translated from the same Greek word LUO, and when this world "shall be dissolved" it shall be "loosed" from its grave clothes of fear, ignorance, disease, poverty, sorrow, bondage and death. The whole creation shall be let go into a new and glorious state of existence. Every one of us has dissolved a tablet in a glass of water. What took place? The tablet disappeared, loosed from its solid form, but it was not destroyed. Instead of a solid, it became a liquid. It changed its appearance but not its substance. It assumed another form of existence. Some such dissolving as this will take place in both the heavens and the earth - the spiritual and the natural realms - not destruction or extinction, but a change into new forms, conditions, and occurrences. The Lord declares, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). God will do this by means of fire. This leads us to ask these questions: Why a new heavens and a new earth? Why fire? Why judgment? Why cataclysmic change? Why not instead of these things the continuation of human progress producing a golden age? The answer lies in the fact that sin and death cannot be destroyed by any scientific process. Just as God sent Jesus to redeem His body and prepare the vast family of the sons of God, so there must be another divine event to end evil in the world. Jesus came with His gospel of grace to build His church, but the sons of God will come with their rule of authority and power to conquer the nations of the earth. The new heavens and earth will emerge from a world on fire. Every vestige of sin, rebellion and corruption must be destroyed. All of society with its various institutions must be purified. Every aspect of the primeval curse must be obliterated. The world must be let loose and freed from the restrictions and limitations imposed upon it by the curse of sin and death. There must be a universal riddance of the rule of the carnal mind and nature, so that no handicaps are carried over into the structure and composition of the new world. Praise God! "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 Jn. 2:17).

The ancient world was destroyed by water, and the present world shall be destroyed by fire. The fact that the water was literal leads some to believe that the fire must also be literal, but this by no means follows. Under the Old Testament all things were literal, whereas under the New Testament all things are spiritual. The temple of God once was

of literal stones, but now the true temple is built up a spiritual house made of living stones, not of earthly material. Noah's ark was literal too, but it served as a type and example of the greater ark of the New Covenant - Christ and the power in Him which will save the sons of God from the loss of this perishing world and through them will replenish and renew humanity. When "fire" is mentioned most Christians think of hell fire, but not heavenly fire. But the testimony of scripture is that OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE (Heb. 12:29). "And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp" (Num. 11:1). "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house" (II Chron. 7:1). "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:23-24). "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1-2).

The only light in the Most Holy Place was God's Shekinah glory, brighter than the sun. It is also described as a "pillar of fire." When Elijah had his contest with the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, he built the altar and laid the sacrifice thereon, and the wood; then he instructed those around him to haul some water, and they poured twelve barrels full of water over the altar until everything was saturated and the water filled the ditch around the altar. There was no known fire that could possibly light that altar and burn that sacrifice. But this was no ordinary fire that would come to consume the sacrifice, and Elijah was going to prove it. When they had finished the preparation Elijah prayed, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and Thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (I Kings 18:37-38). My, what a fire that was! It not only burned the wood and the sacrifice, but also burnt up the stones the altar was built of, and the water that was in the trench and the dust underneath. There was absolutely nothing left of the altar or the spot where it had been. I do not believe that we could be wrong in saying that this was no ordinary fire. This was the fire of the Lord, and how it consumed! The fire that consumed Elijah's sacrifice was obviously literal in its manifestation. There is no doubt it was literal. Yet, in II Kings 6:17 the "chariots and horses of fire" that appeared before the prophet Elisha in the city of Dothan became visible only after the Lord had opened the eyes of Elisha's servant. It was still fire and just as real, but not naturally visible. The New Testament manifestation of God as a consuming fire began on the day of Pentecost when tongues of fire rested upon the waiting disciples. They were accepted, approved, transformed and anointed when God's spirit-fire baptized them. They would never be the same again. They were the sacrifice, God sent the fire and they (their carnal state) were consumed. What a refining came to the apostles on that glorious day! How full of self-seeking they had been up to the very last supper! At the last supper they had a dispute as to who should be the first in the Kingdom of Heaven, but after Pentecost they no longer thought of self, but Christ. How weak and cowardly they had been right up to the crucifixion! They all forsook Him and fled, and Peter denied Him, at the accusation of a servant maid, with oaths and curses. But after the day of Pentecost, that same Peter that cursed and swore and denied Christ when the servant maid accused him of being a

follower of Jesus, faced the very council that condemned Him, and said, "If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:9-10). What a cleansing the baptism of fire does in a moment! These tongues of fire in Acts 2:3 were not seen by the multitudes. Such a strange phenomena would have been recorded. It was the vocal tongues that amazed them and not the "tongues of fire." Apparently, they were not seen, they were felt. John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire. The obvious change in the disciple's lives after Pentecost proves John's prophecy. Peter's change of nature is outstanding. He met the glory of God and tasted the fire of God. A coward became a conqueror!

The prophet Daniel spoke of the coming of the Lord in judgment and described the awesome scene: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days, did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set" (Dan. 7:9-10). So we also read in the Psalms: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him" (Ps. 50:3). So again in Isaiah it is written: "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire: and His breath as an overflowing stream (of fire). Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared: He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. 30:27-33).

There is no better way to deal with filth than to deal with it by fire. The final work of God in this world will be the destruction of the world by penal fire. That will change all things. That will melt up all the real estate, so that no man will be able to tell you where his original grab was. That will burn up all the stocks and bonds. That will melt all the gold and silver, and destroy all the landmarks, and make of this world a New Heaven and a New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Every man's work will eventually be tested by fire. The fire will try every man's work of what sort it is. If you and I build into our spiritual activities wood, hay and stubble, the fire will find it out, and the wall will come tumbling down. Every child of God is building his spiritual life upon the foundation that is Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation that can be laid, or is laid. We are either building the quality of gold, silver or precious stones or the weak and unprofitable things of wood, hay and stubble that are soulish self-efforts and carnal. If the works that I do are gold, then surely it must mean that I am building out of the Spirit. Am I led by the Spirit of God? Or am I fulfilling my own ambitions? There is a vast difference. The heart of man, even the believing man, is often found to be desperately wicked in this regard. It is not difficult to find men who glibly make great claims to being led by the Spirit of God, but many, alas, are involved in gaining a following and building their own kingdom, though they imagine they are building for God. Beware the man who tells you that he alone has the truth, that he alone bears the message of the hour, that you will not hear the deep secrets of the Lord from any other source, and his word alone holds the key to life and immortality, to sonship and the fullness of God. These people still move in the wicked spirit of the Babylon system, working over time to build up their own Babylonish Kingdom. Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. These are self-deceived egotists, not discerning the Lord's body. God has not made me a

ruler or a judge of my neighbor's motives, but it does not require an exceptional gift of discernment to conclude that much of the work done in God's name is in reality the wood of a deceitful heart, hay of spurious revelation, and the stubble of carnality. All work, whether carnal or spiritual, will be subjected to the testing fire of God. If it is gold, silver, or precious stones it will stand the test. If it is the wood, hay, or stubble of self-effort it will be burned up and destroyed. If any man's work can abide the fiery testing of God's judgmental fire, then that man will receive a reward for the profitable work he has accomplished. But if any man's work abide not the fire, but rather is consumed by it, then that man will suffer humiliating loss. All that he has done through a life-time of supposed service to God will all go up in smoke before his eyes, and he will suffer dreadful loss. He himself will be saved, but his loss will be disappointing and fearful.

Let us get to the foundation of things. The foundation of the revelation of God is the revelation of a God who answers by fire. When Israel was sunk into the deepest depths of degradation, Moses, whom God had specially designed to deliver His people, went away and committed that terrible blunder of yielding to the unholy fire of unholy anger and the self-effort it engendered. The Bible says he looked this way; he looked that way; he looked all around; he looked on every side; but he did not look up; and because he did not look up, he went away and did a thing that caused him forty years of exile. Yes, Ex. 2:12 says, "And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian and hid him in the sand." Ah, Moses, why did you not remember that God saw you, and that "Be sure your sin will find you out!" is eternally true! Moses could not hide his sin, with the body of the man he hid in the sand. He killed an Egyptian, and that caused him and the people more suffering, crime, and sorrow than can be measured.

Moses, it is universally admitted, was the heir apparent to the throne of Egypt, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Pharaoh had no son, and this adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter would, when Pharaoh had died, have been seated upon the throne of Egypt. To think, he would have been king! He would have been Pharaoh, and could have established the religion of God in Egypt, because the Pharaoh was an absolute monarch, and was the head of the religious as well as of the political system of the kingdom. Then he could have delivered God's people without all the miseries, and plagues, and agonies, and wretchedness, that came upon them because of his sin. It seems to me that if Moses had just brought the offender who was oppressing the Israelites before the proper tribunal for punishment, it would have been alright. It was his duty to honor the law. Instead of that he killed him. The very next day he reaped the consequence of his crime, because when he interfered and tried to stop two Israelites from quarreling, one of them said, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us! Thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killed the Egyptian?" Then he saw that his crime was known. He looked on all sides, but the very man in whose behalf he had intervened had betrayed him, had told of the crime that he had committed, and Moses had to flee. The result was forty years that are a blank as far as he is concerned; but they were forty long, torturous years of oppression and slavery for God's people, with all the debasement of such conditions.

I do not say that God did not teach Moses something in those forty years. No doubt He did, but he had to go away into Midian and marry a Midianitish princess; and he was settling down to be merely a master of large flocks, when God revealed Himself by fire. It took a fire to do it. As Moses, forty years after his exile, was walking there in the plains near to the Mount of God, he saw a strange sight. It was a burning bush, right there in the

midst of the plain, and the more he looked at it, the brighter it seemed. Strange that it did not burn up! The brighter it burned, the brighter the bush seemed to be. He said, "I shall go nearer and see this strange sight." When he drew near, he heard a Voice out of that bush say, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground." It is my own conviction that God ordered Moses to get out of his shoes so that GOD COULD GET INTO THEM. Moses had walked in his own way long enough; now it was time for him to walk in God's way. He did as he was bidden, and then he heard from that bush the Voice of Yahweh saying, "I AM." That Voice told Moses to go back to Egypt, and return to the work from which he had run away forty years before, when he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. If God the Almighty brought you into this world to do some work, you had better do it before He takes you back by the ear to do it. Some of God's servants have to be dragged back to their work. You think you can get out of it. You cannot! You have to do it, and you had better do it without being forced. Even if it is after forty years, you will have to go back and do it. But you will not do it as well as you would have done it forty years before; you will find it ten times harder. Moses found it so, because the people had been suffering for forty years. They had gone down into a deeper degradation; the iron of slavery had entered into their very souls, and they were hopeless and despairing under the taskmasters of Egypt.

It is a terrible thing to neglect your call, and have to come back to it after forty years. Terrible! Terrible! You must fulfill God's purpose in your life. God will have it done, and if it is not done one way, it will have to be done another. Moses was hand-picked; schooled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, de-schooled on the backside of the desert; from kingly robes to a shepherd's smock, from the banqueting hall to the lunch bag, from a master-builder to dunking lambs, from knowing it all to knowing nothing. At forty years of age he could take on all comers, at eighty he didn't know if he could speak up for Israel. To some it was lost talent and a wasted life of a brilliant mind, stuck in the wilderness just feeding sheep. Out of the burning bush God spoke. "Oh," Moses objected, "I cannot talk." A man who is a stutterer has to be really made to talk, and it took forty years for Moses of old to learn. Then he had to be sent down to Egypt to talk. It took the fire of the burning bush to give him a burning message, a burning word of authority from the eternal I AM. Unless you have heard the Voice, precious friend of mine, you have no message from God. Unless you have contacted the Fire, you have no authority from God. Now Moses saw the fire, Moses heard the fire, and Moses received the fire. That burning bush, that burning fire is God. "Our God is a consuming fire." What do you think Christ came to this earth to do? He said, "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled?" Do you know He came to send fire? Do you know that He came to set fire in the hearts of men? Do you know that He came to touch your lips with the fire from His altar? Do you not know that God "maketh His Messengers spirits; His Ministers a Flaming Fire? (Heb. 1:7). Fire! The fire of God must come in to destroy. The fire of God came to Egypt. The fire of God brought the children of Israel out of bondage. The fire of God had consumed the old Moses of forty years ago. The fire was in Moses' heart. The fire was in Joshua's heart. The fire was in Caleb's heart. The fire was in the hearts of those who had ears to hear and eyes to see and hearts to understand. Moses died. Forty years more passed away, and Joshua, the great warrior, with that fire which had never burned out, was now the leader of God's people. That was a royal generation with faith in God, with hope in God, with love for God, with the word of God living in their hearts which came up out of the deserts and took possession of the Promised Land. They marched in faith around Jericho, and its walls fell flat. That fire burned before them and devastated the enemies.

The first apostles were constantly arguing about which of them would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. John and James thought they would get a start on the rest, so they came to Jesus and brought their mother with them to make a request of the Lord. They asked if He would grant that one of them would sit on His right hand and the other on His left in the Kingdom. These were the chief positions. Jesus answered them by asking them a question. "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" They answered, "Yea Lord, we are able." So He said, "You shall indeed drink of that cup, and be baptized with that baptism, but to sit on My right hand or on My left, is not Mine to give." The cup was the cup of suffering, and the baptism was a baptism of fire. They were not going to be promised the chief seats in the Kingdom, but if they were to have a part with Him in the Kingdom, they had to drink of that cup, and be baptized with that baptism. And so must we all. There is no getting around it. It is my conviction that we will all be given the opportunity to make a choice, whether to be willing to follow Him and walk as He walked, go through what He went through, or take an easier way. The choice is ours. But do not forget-HE WILL DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDINGLY!

In England there was a blacksmith, a very rough and uncouth man, an ungodly man. One day the Lord Jesus Christ walked into his blacksmith's shop and said, "Follow Me." He answered the call and began to follow the Lord. Soon it seemed that everything was going wrong, turning against him. His business was failing, his wife took seriously ill and spent most of her time in the hospital. With business poor, doctor's and hospital bills to pay, and a lot of other things working against him, he was having a very hard time. One day one of his old cronies came into the shop and said to him, "Why don't you give up this silly religious thing you have got yourself into; all you have had since you got religious is bad luck, and everything is against you. Why don't you give it up?" Jim looked at him, and then pointed to a pile of metal lying in a corner. "That is my scrap pile. When I want to make something, I choose an appropriate piece of metal. I heat it to the necessary temperature-red hot or white hot-required in preparation for its intended use. Sometimes this is almost to the melting point. Then I take it out and hammer it on the anvil, then plunge it into cold water or oil and perhaps heat it again and hammer it some more. If it will take what I put it through, I will make what I want of it. But sometimes the piece will not stand up through the process, it will break down, then it is of no use to me and I throw it on the scrap pile. I just say to the Lord, Lord, you can do whatever you want to do with me, you can put me through the fire, you can hammer me on the anvil, you can beat me, put me through the water, do anything you want with me Lord, but please Lord, don't throw me on the scrap pile!"

Many years ago there was found in an African mine the most magnificent diamond in the world's history. It was presented to the king of England to blaze in his crown of state. The king sent it to Amsterdam to be cut . It was put into the hands of an expert lapidary. And what do you suppose he did with it? He took the gem of priceless value, and cut a notch in it. Then he struck a hard blow with his instrument and-lo!-the superb jewel lay in his hand cleft in two. Did he do this out of recklessness, wastefulness, or criminal carelessness? Indeed not! For days and weeks that blow had been studied and planned. Drawings and models had been made of the gem. Its quality, its defects, its lines of cleavage had all been studied with minutest care. The man to whom it was committed was one of the most skillful lapidaries in the world. Was that blow a mistake? No! It was the climax of the lapidary's skill. When he struck that blow, he did the one thing that would bring that gem to its most perfect shapeliness, radiance, and jeweled splendor. That blow which seemed to ruin the precious stone was, in fact, its perfect redemption.

For, from those two halves were wrought two magnificent gems which the skilled eye of the lapidary saw hidden in the rough, uncut stone as it came from the mine. So, betimes, God sends a stinging blow to fall upon the lives of His elect sons and daughters. The blood spurts, the nerves wince. The soul cries out in agony-Why? The blow seems to you an appalling mistake. But it is not; for you, precious child of God, are the most precious jewel, the rarest gem, to radiate the glory of your Father's Kingdom. And HE is the most skilled lapidary in the universe.

The baptism of fire is that baptism which enables us to receive God Himself: the all-consuming, the ever living fire. Christ, who was baptized with the baptism of suffering and death, arose triumphant; He reigns in heaven; He reigns on earth; and He will establish His Father's Kingdom over every heart, and every spot of ground. Because He lives, we shall live also. We cannot die. Let us live it, and carry the fire that will consume every unclean desire in every heart, in every home, in every city, in every nation, until the earth is purged with the purifying power, and Christ our King has come to reign, until the time when every foe is vanquished, and He delivers up the Kingdom to God, even the Father. As Peter told us, "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." We read about the passing away of this present cosmos, the heavens and the earth, and the establishing of the new in Isa. 65:17. "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Hallelujah! What a wonderful thing that God will so thoroughly cleanse our own little world and the whole vast cosmos (world order), that even our minds will be purged from the remembrance of it. Wonder of wonders, to be able to forget that sin and death ever existed! God will make such a good job of His work, that the past will be completely obliterated and never thought of any more. Blessed be His name!

THE WORLD TO COME

The coming "world" will be one that will see the fullness of God in operation through His sons, the demonstration of the mighty power of the Kingdom of God. It is not a mansion over the hilltop, or a cabin in the corner of glory-land, or white night gowns, or harps, or palm branches, or dangling feet in some stream of celestial water. There is a job to be done. A battle to be fought. A victory to be won. An enemy to be conquered. "And there shall be no more death." This is God's will for humanity on this earth, and this is what our call to sonship is all about. It would be a most beautiful thing if all the saints of God could have an open vision that would enable them to understand the glory of God's purpose on earth, and His election in man. We read in Heb. 6:4-5: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME..." The Rotherham translation renders this last statement, "Mighty works also of a coming age." The Interlinear Greek New Testament says, "The works of power of the age to come." Jesus said, "Greater works than these shall YE DO!" But have the followers of Jesus really done any GREATER WORKS than Jesus did? The book of Acts doesn't record them. Neither do the epistles. Nor does church history. And, my friend, after more than a hundred years of the restoration to the church of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; after more than sixty years of the restoration of the five-fold ministry, the gifts of the spirit, and the prophetic flow, have you seen any GREATER WORKS than raising the dead, cleansing lepers, walking on water, calming storms, turning water into wine! You know you haven't. But according to Heb. 6:5 there are MIGHTY WORKS OF A COMING AGE, GREATER WORKS THAN JESUS DID TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO!

And all we have experienced of God, of His Spirit, Of His Word, His power, glory, miracles and revelation, has been merely a small taste, a little sampling, of the glory and power of that coming age! Why friends, we have only seen the firstfruits of what God will do through His enChristed body upon this earth. The hospitals emptied, the dead raised incorruptible, natures changed, nations turned to God, the crucial problems of poverty, crime, violence, war, and corruption solved, the whole world system transformed - and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YOU SEE as the glorious mind of Christ rules and reigns over the earth realm through the manifested sons of God. The fullness of what we have just had a taste will be the normal works on behalf of humanity during that world to come. Thus seen, the next dispensation is to be so different as to be the very reverse of the present one in almost every particular.

The heavens and the earth which are to come are the third heavens and the third earth since that long ago beginning. Paul knew a man who was given a glimpse of that third "heaven," that coming arrangement in which the saints will reign from the heavenlies. He says he was "caught away" (spiritually or physically, or both, he could not tell, things were so real to his view) down the stream of time to the new condition of things, the new heaven, hence the third heaven. He thus saw things AS THEY WILL BE under the ministry of the sons of God, things which he might not at that time even disclose, for they were "not lawful to be uttered" (II Cor. 12:2-4). Doubtless these were the same things John the beloved saw afterwards, and was permitted to express to the church in symbols, which things may only be understood as the Spirit of God brings to light their fulfillment within us. John, in the revelation given to him by our Lord on the Isle of Patmos, was in vision carried down through the church age and its changing scenes of church and state, to the end of this present world, and there in spirit he saw satan bound, a manchild ascended to the throne, a hundred and forty four thousand sons of God standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, the perfected and glorified bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem in glory and exaltation, a royal priesthood ministering the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God to all kindreds and tongues and peoples and nations, the NEW HEAVENS (spiritual government) and the NEW EARTH (social order) established; for the former heavens and the former earth were passed away.

Rejoice, O ye saints of the Lord, for the end of the world is upon us! ARA - the up-side down altar of fire - is now ready to pour its judgment upon the depths of the kingdom of darkness and all things shall be committed to the fire for purification. "Behold, I make all things new!" saith the Lord. It is important that we make a difference between "all new things" and "all things new." God shall not end this world and call forth the new by destroying either His creatures or His creation. Not one thing, not one person shall be lost! He shall bring this world to an end and establish the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness by MAKING A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S N-E-W -changed, purified, and transformed by fire. Blessed be His wonderful name!

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).