

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Book Two

By J. Preston Eby

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Chapter 14

How The Kingdom Comes

The history of every son of God will eventually be the story of a progression from the natural through the spiritual to the celestial; passing from the realm of darkness and death through the realm of quickening, change and transformation, to the fullness of stature and glory in the image and likeness of God; from the world of sinners through the realm of the Church to the power and glory of the Kingdom of God; from the brazen altar of sacrifice for sin in the outer court to the golden altar and table of prayer, praise and communion in the dim light of the candlestick in the holy place into the Holiest of all, where shines undimmed the more excellent glory of the undiminished majesty of God.

This brings us to an important question — Is the Church this Kingdom of God, or, is the Church part of this Kingdom? The Lord Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Like believers, the Kingdom of God is IN this world, but is not OF this world. It is not established by the world’s methods. It is not moved forward by the politics of this world. It is not represented by the Constitution of the United States of America or of that of any other nation on earth. God’s Kingdom does not contain a Republican or Democratic platform. It is established and maintained on a different basis from that of our world.

Again I ask the question — Is the Church this Kingdom, or, is the Church part of this Kingdom? Many proclaim that this present age is the “Church age” and that the coming age is the “Kingdom age,” thus separating the Church from the Kingdom on the basis of time. The difference, however, is not one of time but of relationship and administration. For you see, the Church is a present reality and the Kingdom is likewise a present reality. If you say that the Church is not the Kingdom, I think you are accurate; but if you say that the Church is not part of the Kingdom, then you are wrong. May I illustrate. Texas is part of the United States, but Texas is not the United States. It just is not all of the United States either quantitatively or qualitatively. It pertains to the United States, and the federal government has an authority over the state of Texas, but Texas is not the United States. It has a different name, a limited area, and its own state government and its own state laws. It functions within the framework of the United States, but it does not function as the United States. Just as the laws and powers of the federal government supersede those of the state government, so does the dominion and rulership of the Kingdom — with its King-Priesthood after the order of Melkizedek — transcend the powers and ministry of the Church with its apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The Kingdom order is: “Thou...hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on (over) the earth” (Rev. 5:10). “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6). The Church order is: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (I Cor. 12:28).

Now the Church is the very heart of God's program as He moves us toward His glorious Kingdom. Are you moving with Him? It is my conviction that God's great men of the past moved with Him. When John Knox said, "Give me Scotland or I die," he was praying, I think, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." When the Puritans came to this country to establish a place where they could worship God and propagate the gospel of Christ, they were saying, in fact, if not in word, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And there are times when you and I arise to that high level and say from our hearts on behalf of all creation, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven!"

The Kingdom, however, is never to be identified as the Church. Nowhere in the New Testament is such an identification made. The Kingdom is always prior to the Church. God is King. As King He has a Kingdom. John the Baptist first announced the Kingdom among men. The Kingdom came into manifestation through Jesus Christ and He afterward created the Church. His disciples were first heralds of the Kingdom before there was a Church. They were sent to proclaim what they had seen and heard from Jesus of the rule of God. When Jesus sent the 12 and the 70 on their missions, He sent them as ambassadors of the Kingdom. They were an extension of His own ministry, and thus He gave them the "power of the Kingdom." Everywhere they proclaimed the arrival of the Kingdom and demonstrated the authority and rule of God with mighty signs, wonders, and miracles. Kingdom and Church are related terms, but they are not synonymous terms. The term "kingdom" is found about 160 times in the New Testament. The term "church" is found about 115 times in the New Testament. The Kingdom is the dynamic rule or reign of God and the sphere in which His rule is expressed. The Church is a body of people — the congregation of believers. The Greek word for church is ECCLESIA meaning "the called out" or "an assembly."

In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Often this verse has been used to stimulate "church attendance." "Put the Church first," it is said. The subject, however, is not the Church, but the Kingdom. Instead of thinking of people when contemplating the Kingdom of God — the rule or reign of God — dominion and royal power are the proper reference. All the Lord's people, His called out ones, constitute the Church and when any of these assemble in any place, even two or three in a home or on the street, you have a Church. But that assembly is not the Kingdom. Let me illustrate again. Every country has a government. The government is the "rule," "authority," and "dominion" of the nation. From that government proceed the laws and powers that regulate and control the society. The nation is composed of "people" — men, women and children. But the people are not the government. If a hundred thousand people in a city are gathered in a stadium for a ball game or concert you have a congregation of citizens, but you do not have the government. The government is something above and beyond the "gathering."

The government is thus a higher dimension than a mere congregation of people. In like manner, the Kingdom is the rule of God; the Church is a congregation of believers. The saints may "see" the Kingdom, "enter" the Kingdom, "receive" the Kingdom, or "inherit" the Kingdom, but being members of the Church does not make them the Kingdom. You do not "receive" or "inherit" the Church! The many sayings about seeing and entering into the Kingdom are not equivalent to entering the

Church. You may enter a Church by walking into the midst of the believers, but one does not enter the Kingdom in that way. Every citizen of the United States has entered the nation, but only a few of them have entered the government. The Kingdom as the sphere of God's rule is invisible, not a tangible phenomenon in this world, whereas the Church is a visible body of redeemed men and women. There is never the slightest hint in scripture that the visible Church IS the Kingdom of God. All the analogies are different. The members of the Church may come under the rulership of the Kingdom, but they are not the Kingdom.

The Church of the living God must remember that it is not the whole thing; that the Kingdom of God is greater than the Church; that men must press into the Kingdom of God, through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom, and through qualifying we may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom, but there is no need to press, suffer tribulation, or pay a high price to enter the Church. The Church is, after all, only an ecclesia, a people gathered out of sin and the world unto God through faith in Jesus as Saviour. Just as the true Church births the manchild, so is our experience in the Church a prerequisite for entrance into the Kingdom. Is not this the very reason why the Holy Spirit testified to each of the seven Churches in the book of Revelation, "To him (in the Church) that overcometh will I give power over the nations...to him that overcometh shall I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I am set down with my Father in His throne." It is the processing of the Lord in the Church realm that qualifies one for a place in the Kingdom and the Kingdom is greater than the Church. The Kingdom can be the outcome only of a Church which has followed on to know the Lord, purged and purified, changed and transformed, growing up unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ. The Churches on earth comprise forgiven sinners. The Kingdom of God comprises new creatures. The Church consists of all unto whom the righteousness of Christ has been imputed by faith. But not every one that saith "Lord, Lord," shall enter the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of his Father in heaven.

Great and powerful as the Church is, Jesus made very little of it, compared to the Kingdom. He said, "I will build my Church" (Mat. 16:18) and He mentioned it two times more in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew; that is all Jesus ever said about the Church during His earthly ministry. He gave no "church" teachings; He answered no "church" questions; He told no "church" parables; He made no "church" promises; all He said and taught and demonstrated had to do with the reality of the Kingdom. In all the Gospel according to John the word Church is not once used. In all the Gospel according to Luke the word Church is not once used. In all the Gospel according to Mark the word Church is not once used. During the forty days between His resurrection and ascension the Lord never once spoke to His disciples of the Church, but on nearly every occasion when He appeared to them He opened the scriptures to them and spoke to them of the Kingdom of God. The Church idea, great and glorious as it is, is narrow and small compared to that of the Kingdom. We are a Church within the Kingdom, but the Kingdom is greater than the Church.

It is the Kingdom, and not the Church, that breaks in pieces and consumes all the kingdoms of the world and of the increase of which there shall be no end. The fervent prayers upon the lips of holy and seeking men has ever been, not, "Thy church come," but "Thy kingdom come." Let your heart consider what I now say. Every man, woman and child who throughout this blessed dispensation of grace has trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour and been washed in His precious blood has been

numbered in God's great Book as members in His Church. We are now, one and all, in the Church of Jesus Christ. We do not need to pray to enter, seek to enter, press on to enter, overcome to enter, or meet any further qualification to enter. We are the Church, and only by faith in Jesus Christ and His salvation. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41,47).

But those faithful and persevering ones who follow on to purge themselves of the corruption of the flesh; who fully partake of the divine nature, putting on the mind of Christ; who give all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience God-likeness, and to God-likeness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness the love that is agape; to those who do these things the blessed promise is held forth of an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:4-11).

The sun is setting rapidly upon this tired old age in which we have lived so long. The Church during this age has dwelt in the realm of limitation, of mixture, equipped only with the firstfruits of the Spirit. As Paul by the wisdom granted unto him truly stated, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:9-10). The Church of the dispensation men call the dispensation of grace pertains to the "in part" realm. The Kingdom, on the other hand, is the realm of fullness, an abiding, triumphant dimension of life. "Revivals" are a characteristic of the Church realm. Fullness and permanence are characteristics of the Kingdom realm. God's purpose in His sons is to move us from revival to unmovable stability — from the Church to the Kingdom.

In praying for and seeking revival we develop a revivalistic mentality which contradicts the purposes of God for this Day. When one examines revivals historically, he finds that when you live in the revival mentality you are like a person who gets "high" on a drug — you soon need another "fix". Revivals throughout history are recurrent activity — activity that returns from time to time. Revivals are those kinds of divine intervention which bring about awakening, followed by spiritual declension and apostasy. It is a vicious, never-ending cycle. Awake, asleep. Awake, asleep. Alive, dead. Alive, dead. Delivered, bound. Delivered, bound. Refreshed, sluggish. Refreshed, sluggish. Filled, empty. Filled, empty. Revivals are oscillating in nature, swinging back and forth between two extremes. Furthermore, revivals are occasional and variable. They occur now and then. In and out, up and down, here and there, now and then, back and forth, awake and asleep — do you feel yourself getting motion sickness?

In the 1800's there was a revival called "The Great Awakening." As someone has pointed out, unfortunately it was followed by "The Great Asleepening." We don't need another Great Awakening so that we can have another Great Asleepening so that we can have another Great Awakening. What the world needs in this hour is not another revival. No revival has brought the ultimate triumph of God's Kingdom in the earth. No revival has brought the universal defeat of sin, sorrow, sickness, limitation and death. No revival has brought an end to war, strife, hatred, corruption, fear, tyranny, pain, hunger, or any of the other problems and curses that blight mankind. And no revival has ever brought perfection and the fullness of God to the Church!

Ah, our prayer should be, “Lord, don’t send another revival!” Our prayer should be as our Lord taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come!” I am not a revivalist. I am a Kingdomite! I am a son of the Kingdom, an announcer of the Kingdom, a proclaimer of the Kingdom, an ambassador of the Kingdom of God. A Kingdomite is just the opposite of a revivalist. Instead of advocating and praying for a move of God that returns from time to time, the Kingdom Ambassador views the presence and rule of God as perpetual, constant, progressive — never vacillating and never retrogressing.

Our God is abiding and progressing from glory to glory, from realm to realm, from age to age — not sleeping and awaking. The Kingdom sons are builders who build a place for God to inhabit permanently — not a resort for Him to visit occasionally. I want to be a builder! Jesus said, “We will come and make our abode with him.” What God desires in this hour is a place to stay, a temple to dwell in, a throne to sit upon, a nature to be formed in, a Kingdom to rule from forevermore. The focus in the New Testament is upon Christ and His Kingdom — not revivals. You don’t read about revivals in any of the writings of the apostles. The word revival does not appear in any dictionary of Kingdom terminology. So far as the New Testament economy is concerned, revival is an unscriptural and extra-biblical concept. You won’t find the idea anywhere! Jesus didn’t promise revivals. The apostles never taught or exhorted or gave any instructions about revivals. Amazing, isn’t it, how much of the language of Babylon we still speak over here on Kingdom territory!

HOW IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD ESTABLISHED

GOVERNMENT means to rule (govern) thoughts or the mind. The suffix “ment” and the word “mental” are both derived from the Latin root ment. Both human and divine government are forms of mind-control; human government is by various forms of control by the carnal mind, whereas the rule of God is by the direct control of the mind of Christ. The carnal mind molds and shapes the carnal man through fleshly passions, impulses, propensities and expediencies. The carnal mind also influences and controls the carnal man through outward agencies such as television, teachers, books, magazines, movies, advertising, laws, fashions, parents, peer pressures, etc. The mind of Christ molds and shapes the life of the sons of God by the inward law of life, by the living word of God, by the promptings and dealings of the Holy Spirit, as well as through the outward agencies of godly examples, instruction, counsel, manifestations of the Spirit, preaching, teaching, and the overwhelming presence and power of God.

I have written all these things that our hearts might be prepared for the truths that concern the establishment of the Kingdom of God. How is the Kingdom of God established? Let me first say how it cannot be established. When our Lord spoke of the Kingdom of God He said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Jesus had just told the disciples where the Kingdom is and how the Kingdom does not come. Before you can ever see the Kingdom you have to know how it’s not coming — because the first thing we try to do is build it by the natural. I tend to be “conservative” in my political thinking where the politics of this world are concerned. But I must tell you there is something terribly wrong with what is known today as the “Christian Right.” They are possessed of the notion that they can establish the Kingdom by political involvement, without the Holy Ghost. If somehow we can gain enough votes by the people — people of any religion, spiritual or carnal, saved or

unsaved, moral or immoral, lovers of God or haters of God, Jew or Gentile, if we can get enough votes to kick this or that president out of power, to elect this or that congress, to send to Washington people of a particular political philosophy or party affiliation, to enact this or that piece of “godly” legislation, then somehow the Kingdom of God will come in America.

Furthermore, many hold the absurd idea that the Kingdom of God is America and that righteousness can be legislated through our branches of government. I tell you today that you cannot establish or demonstrate or walk out the life of the King or the Kingdom as long as you don't know how it's not coming. Jesus says that the Kingdom is not coming by observation — it is not a visible, tangible, external operation. The reign of the King is a peaceful reign. Yes, He comes to make war, but the warfare He makes is an internal battle, not an external conflict of bombs and bullets. The reign of the King is a reign of righteousness, but that righteousness is not established by external rules, regulations, laws, or any police action or military enforcement. Some have actually thought that the way to establish righteousness in the heart of a seventeen year old girl who is scared and frightened because she is carrying a baby that she doesn't know how she is going to pay for or care for — some have honestly thought that the way to establish righteousness is to stick a placard in her face as she enters the abortion clinic and scream at her that she's a M-U-R-D-E-R-E-R! The King will never do anything that violates His character and His nature of LOVE. He came not to condemn the world, but to save it, and as the blessed Saviour He doesn't go about screaming at people who are lost and frightened and hopeless. “Neither do I condemn thee,” He whispered tenderly to the adulterous woman who under the law deserved to be stoned. The abortion problem will never be solved by demonstrations, intimidation, condemnation, arresting doctors or bombing clinics. Such activities are diametrically opposed to the Kingdom of God. They are religious carnality at its highest intensity. The spirit of wisdom and understanding from God must deliver us from our confusion about how the Kingdom of God comes. It cannot be established by force. It cannot be established by law. It will never be established by political action. It is impossible for it to be established by the will, efforts, or programs of men or of governments.

NOT BY FORCE

How far can force go in this world? Is force the final word, the end of all argument, the arbiter of every dispute? Men have tried to answer this on a thousand battlefields. The answer is that force can go a long way. It is a mighty power. Jesus was crucified by force. Roman soldiers must have cynically laughed as they pressed His hands to the cross and drove the nails through His flesh. He was helpless before this overpowering might. Yet Christ had power to destroy those men's lives if He had the will. When He stood there with the cross in full view, He said to His persecutors that it was in His power to call twelve legions of angels. If that heavenly host which hovered about that Son could have once made itself manifest, O how they would have swept that doomed city, that accursed conclave of false priests, and those wretched, blind and filthy-minded heathen soldiers! How the breath of these heavenly angels could have swept the life out of them and swept them down into hell and the grave. But that is not God's way. That is not the mission of the Son or the sons. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.”

Brutality has been the hallmark of mankind's turbulent and violent history. Man has no answer to the dilemma. But God has the answer! It was brutal force that nailed the firstborn Son of God to the tree — but the third day He arose triumphant from the grave! The account says that the soldiers who guarded the tomb “were like dead men” — they were like dead men before the might, the sheer might of this rising Life. Those soldiers and the irresistible force of Rome they represented perished with the hour, but this Man lives on, His might unfolding in ever-increasing splendor with the passing of centuries. He stands deathless — and invincible. The greatest might in the world is not brute force — it is LIFE! As a groveling worm is transformed to become a butterfly, so our Lord was transformed from corruptible to incorruptible, from natural man to manifested Son of God. He arose in the celestial light of the glory of God, the Shekinah. He is not a reflected light, but the manifestation of the light which He Himself is.

His light is the light of life. It is the same glory that lighted the world in the beginning when the almighty Father said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, and in Him was life, and His life was the light of men. Nothing can stand before the power of this light of life (which is love) and all things that are touched by its life-giving rays are completely transformed thereby. Resurrection life is the mightiest power in the universe. But it is not force — it is the quickening, transforming, creative power of life. That is the power of the Kingdom of God. God does not rule by the sword, by intimidation, by coercion, by armies, by slaughter and destruction. Oh, no! The world knows nothing of this power of life, for it abides in death and rules by death. That is the only way it knows. Men dead in trespasses and sins are blind to the power of life, so they turn to force to overcome evil. Anything gained by force must be held by force. You cannot fight the devil with his fire without getting yourself burned. They that use the sword shall perish by the sword, saith the Lord. We cannot by some alchemy get the gold of brotherhood out of the base metals of hate and brutality. The only possible way to get rid of the enemy is to turn him into a friend — the only possible way to turn him into a friend is through the transforming power of the light of life.

The Kingdom of God is within, for life is within. That is a principle so simple and yet so powerful that any child should be able to understand it. It is the birth from above that gives us entrance to it. But while this Kingdom is established within, it makes itself felt and visible without. Finding its subjects in us, it makes its laws be obeyed in all our doings. It takes possession of every department of activity, of every region of everyday life. These external things, are they our doings? Our relationships with others, the way we do our work, how we spend our leisure, the things we seek after in life, are they not all outward expressions of our inner being? Then if the Kingdom of God be in us, it will find expression there. As it is impossible for any great earthly dominion to be solitary, uninfluential, but is effective, is imitated, and must mold others; so it is impossible for this Kingdom of God to be side by side with worldly influences and not change, alter, reverse, transform, or some way operate on them. As little is this possible as it is possible to carry a light through a dark room and scatter no darkness, but confine the light to the flame. “Ye are the light of the world.” This is the manner of the Kingdom's increase, and it will grow until there is no room for any opposing dominion on earth. The stone becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth. All powers and dominions shall serve and obey Him. The Son of God has brought this light of life into our lives, and the sons of God shall bring it to all creation, praise the name of the Lord!

When our Lord Jesus was ready to begin His great sonship ministry on earth, He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Mk. 1:12; Mat. 4:1). What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit drives the Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted by satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the Son to be PROVEN, made STRONG, to OVERCOME in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious ministry and the agony and death of the cross. 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 a beautiful and glorious fallen angel, but that mind which savors the things of man — the carnal mind. The carnal mind is the ground where the serpent crawls. The flesh nature is the dust that he feeds upon (Gen. 3:14). The apostle James put it this way, “Everyone is tempted when he is beguiled and allured by his own desire; the desires conceive and breeds sin, while sin matures and gives birth to death” (James 1:14-15, Moffat).

The battle lay not with some mythical personage outside of the Christ. 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 emotions. There is no monster without. There are three things in this vast world which are not of the Father, and only three — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. These are the power of satan. 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 in the garden. 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.

Let us consider for a moment the third temptation of Jesus. There is great wisdom, understanding and power in the truth I now set before you. By it we comprehend the ways of the Kingdom of God. For the third temptation, the devil took Jesus up on an exceeding high mountain — to the very heights of the dominion of men — and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He saw what gave them their power and clearly perceived what made them great. He saw the fame and fortune that could be His by seizing the reins of the government of the world. And satan said to Him, “All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” When the Tempter came thus to Jesus he came as an angel of light, offering suggestions on how His messianic mission might be more quickly and effectively implemented and realized. He offered the kingdoms of the earth to Jesus if He would bow to the shrewd worldly wisdom the adversary outlined in His mind by which He could have used His sonship power to conquer the might of the Roman empire. I do not doubt for one moment that what tempted Jesus was a MASTER PLAN outlined by the carnal mind that seemed to promise success in the rapid and effectual establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Jesus is here confronted with the question: Shall I win the world through self-effort, by worldly methods, by military might, by force of power, and conquer it in order to bring it salvation? Does the end justify the means? Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon all faced a similar question. For they too did not merely have an eye to conquest. In the back of their minds, though naturally on a much lower plane than the divine and exalted level of Jesus, was the desire for welfare and peace. They would ruthlessly overrun the people for their good! They would force them to be blessed, improved, prospered and happy! Any means were justified by the end. But the vision of Jesus is as clear as sunlight. He realized that the plan was no inspiration from His Father in heaven, and was therefore earthly, sensual, and devilish. To adopt it would be to “fall down and worship” the god of this world.

It is impossible to possess the world, or to conquer it by carnal means, even for God, without loss of purity, without using guile and hateful force, without trampling men’s lives, killing, destroying, plundering, and locking up masses of men in prisons, which is equivalent to worshipping the very devil whom we intend to drive out. Matters not whether Hitler does it or whether Jesus Christ does the same thing riding out of the heavens on a white horse and with His armies from heaven ruthlessly and brutally smiting the kingdoms of the world! It is the same. There is not one iota of difference. And yet I tell you that this is exactly how millions of Christians conceive of the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth! “Boy, we’re gonna put that devil down, we’re gonna blow the wicked sinners off the face of earth, we’ll enforce the laws of God and set up the Kingdom of God in the earth.” That is precisely the mentality of multitudes of Fundamentalists, Pentecostals and Charismatics. You cannot deny it. And if they were given the opportunity to do so, they would fall down and worship the very devil they seek to destroy! The serpent would have the last laugh.

Accordingly the clear and lofty answer wells out from the holy soul of every son of God as it sprang up from the soul of that firstborn among many brethren: “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!” In other words, God’s business can only be done in God’s way and by God’s power! Here we can marvel at the loftiness of the Pattern Son. In an instant He passes through the sum total of the experiences that we encounter in innumerable succession in our journey into the fullness of God and to the throne of universal dominion: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!” That is the first law of sonship. May God make this wonderfully real to the heart of every elect son of God.

So Jesus saw through the intoxicating visions and glittering prospects which the devil conjured up before Him. He renounced worldly power — even the power that He might have used in a “spiritual way” for His purpose, the establishing of the Kingdom of God. Multitudes of Christians today have been deceived by this very temptation, as they seek political power within the institutions of this world, to further the cause of the Kingdom of God. They infiltrate the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and get all involved in political activism, political action, parades, demonstrations, marches, voter registrations, clamoring for social and/or military action by our government in the name of justice and right, falling down and worshipping the god of THIS WORLD in their weak and futile efforts by such carnal means to establish the Kingdom of God in the land! What a misguided stupidity it is. Jesus understood the true nature of all things and He knew that the very substance of His message would be altered and falsified if the child were put under the compulsion of law or

government to go back home to the Father. For then the prodigal would become a slave and the Father a tyrant.

As we consider the call of God in sonship for this significant hour, let us look unto Jesus who is our Pattern and Forerunner. When He was tempted to merge the power of the Spirit with the methods of the world in order to bring the Kingdom of God to pass in the earth, He rose up from the place where the kingdoms of the world shimmered before Him, where crowns flashed and banners rustled, and hosts of enthusiastic people were ready to acclaim Him, and quietly walked the way of poverty and suffering to the cross. He walked the road where the great and the rich of this world will despise Him, but where He is the brother of sinners, the companion of the forsaken and lonely, the sharer of the lot of all who know not where to lay their head, the comrade of the insulted and injured, to whom He reaches out with the power of divine love. He chose to walk the way of the cross and of obedience to the ways of His Father, He who could have possessed the whole world in one bold stroke. And that is why the story closes with the angels ministering unto Him.

Did He stake His life on the wrong card, this Jesus of Nazareth? Did He make a bad exchange when in the hour of temptation He preferred the ministrations of angels and the presence of the Father to the riches and honor of this world? If He had accepted the kingdoms of this world and their “glory” He would be forgotten today. He would have become a great king in history, buried in the history books of our schools. He would have become a venerated museum piece — if He had signed the pact with the devil. But because He learned obedience to the voice of the Father He has become our Elder Brother and our King, and therefore we too know that this sonship is our destiny; with the crown and the throne and priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

If there is one lesson every son of God needs to learn it is this: One must not, yea, cannot, utilize the strength or wisdom of the flesh or the ways of the world to promote and build the Kingdom of God! This is the third temptation, the final test for every son 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. If we don't reign in the Kingdom of God for another million years, we must wait in faith and patience for God to work. It is Self doing what only the Spirit can do; it is the Soul taking the lead, in the hope 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! I would rather spend my whole life doing nothing while waiting upon God, than to do everything in the strength of the flesh, becoming a devil worshipper. All that is not of the Spirit is merely the carnality of man — soulish. It has no place or reward in the Kingdom of God.

In a certain Christian college there is a speech club called Ambassador Club. During each meeting of this club there is a question and answer forum during which the “Topic Master” can ask various questions of the members relating to current events, weather, human interest and other topics of his choosing, including subjects relating to the Bible. One day the question was: In the Kingdom of God what will you do first after you receive your resurrection body and have all power? The answers were many and varied, some good and some questionable. “The first thing I will do,” clamored one freshman vigorously, “is to wipe out all the churches, destroy all of their buildings, pile all of the steeples into one big pile and burn them in sight of all the pagan people that are still alive. That will show them who is boss.” Obviously this

student didn't know much about what he was saying, because if he wiped out all of the churches he would be killing a great many people, for, after all, churches are people and not buildings.

Still another student had his mind made up as to how things should be run, and replied: "I will go into the ghettos and force all those lazy poor people on welfare and food stamps to go to work and earn their food, or else they can starve." Compassionate Son of God! Merciful Saviour! What an example of false priesthood! At least Jesus created bread and fish and wine for the poor and famished to eat! Another outstanding example of things to come in the "millennium" was voiced by a junior, who stated: "Since we will be ruling with a rod of iron, I will force all people to keep the Sabbath, and then all the rest of God's laws, and if they don't do as I say I will punish them and force them to obey me." Here, of course, was an answer born of a smattering of knowledge and an overdose of ego. Obviously not all the comments were as harsh as these, and a number were quite good and well thought out, but these comments do illustrate the attitude that many Christians have regarding the way they would rule and reign in the Kingdom of God. Just what is the attitude we should have of ruling the nations and all things? And what is the first thing you would do, precious friend of mine, should you wake up one fine morning a manifested son of God, a King-Priest in the Kingdom of the Father with all power and authority in heaven and in earth!

True peace and blessing will not come to this war-torn world by military might and power. True and lasting peace and blessing will come only by the overwhelming, transforming power of God's love through His sons of love in the Kingdom of love. The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom into which God has called His elect, is not of this world. It does not have the same rules or values. It is not governed by the same principles. Jesus Christ is its champion, but He won the victory over all that threatens peace in a way not of this world. He did not overcome His enemies with superior firepower and sophisticated weaponry. Instead, Jesus looked into the faces of those who hated Him and overcame them by the love of God. He overcame evil with good. God has conscripted His elect into the advance army of peace. He is making us emissaries even now of that perfect Kingdom. He is cleansing us from the emotions of hatred, malice, condemnation, greed, lust, selfishness, ego, pride, bitterness, and rage — all the things that lead to oppression, strife and war. We are now in training and testing as the sons of the Kingdom.

The question is just this: How is this Kingdom to be administered? Let me say again how it cannot be administered. It cannot be administered by force. Men have tried that method. They have used fire and sword to make God's Kingdom come. Peter had that spirit when he pointed to the two swords the disciples possessed. Mohammed followed this plan when he gave men the alternative either of Islam or death. In the early part of the fourth century, the monarch of the Roman Empire died, leaving the question of succession in dispute. The Roman general Constantine led his forces against his rival for the throne. Near a little river in northern Italy, at a place called the Milvian Bridge, the two armies encamped over against each other waiting for the coming day and the order to battle. Constantine, who had come into some minor contact with Christianity, that night made a vow. If he won the battle, he would become a Christian. It is said that he saw a vision in the night of a flaming cross in the sky with the Latin inscription, in hoc signo vinces ("by this sign conquer"). Constantine made a bargain with some power to join the church organization if he

won his battle. Succeeding events indicate that the bargain was made with the prince of this world, the god of this age, the spirit which blinds the minds of men that they should believe the lie. Constantine was “converted.” He was not born again.

Imagine the whispering that went around Rome. The Emperor had become a Christian! Out of the catacombs they came. Instead of being persecuted, they found themselves popular. Like a youngster among heavy drinkers, the church’s head was turned by the wine of the world. The priests of the pagan temples had been paid from the purse of the Empire, but now Caesar was a Christian and the priests of God were paid by the State. Eventually the role was reversed — the persecuted became the persecutor and the awesome power of the sword was used to compel all the priests and worshippers of Mars and Venus to come to the Kingdom of God and be baptized. They were plunged beneath water, but their hearts were unchanged. Their pagan customs and rituals were accommodated into the church and “christianized.” The church was married to the world, and flooded with unconverted religious sinners. The wanton harlot now staggered across the world scene, with whom all the kings of the earth have committed fornication to this day.

The Crusaders, spurred on by the eloquence of Peter the Hermit, committed the same blunder. The old Saxon and Gothic kings, who when they accepted Christianity themselves compelled their people to be baptized as well, followed the same mistaken method. But these people did not advance the Kingdom of God one whit. You do not make a man a member of this Kingdom by baptizing him, enrolling him among the adherents of a Church, or by calling him a Christian. A man may be saved by simple faith in Jesus, but one does not enter the Kingdom in that way. Men must have their hearts changed, their natures transformed, their allegiance turned. They must be willing to render glad obedience to their Father King before they become members of this Kingdom. If force was the method of His Kingdom then Charlemagne and the Roman Catholic Church during the Dark Ages were on the right track when they compelled men to accept Christianity and burned heretics for the salvation of their souls.

Force may increase the numbers of a sect, it cannot add one to the membership of the Kingdom. The sword may compel a man to change his name; it can never compel him to change his heart. Oh, no; it is not by the sword that God’s Kingdom will come, not by a literal sword out of the mouth of the Christ nor in the hands of the saints. To all ecclesiastical persecutors Christ says, “Put the sword up into his sheath.” Not by the sword is the Kingdom to come, but by the cross. This is the weapon we have to use in our warfare. Not the cross and the sword, as Constantine conceived it; but we are to conquer by the power of Love. For the cross means love — love at its best, love in the glory of sacrifice. The cross is the power of God. It is by the cross that men’s hearts are broken, and their affection and allegiance won.

The Captain of our salvation is not General Joshua crossing the Jordan, but Jesus the Lamb of God upon the throne. Therefore He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, not on the war-like horse, but on the peaceful ass. And therefore He will yet cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and break the battle-bow; He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. And such is the spirit too of all the sons of God! For, though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh; and therefore the weapons of our warfare are mighty before God to the pulling down

of strongholds. The only sword that the sons of the Kingdom are permitted to wield is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.

There are different kinds of government but of one thing we may be very certain — the Kingdom of God is no dictatorship. It is no tyranny. A preacher once said that Jesus will one day come back to earth and force the people to be obedient and happy. Indeed! That, undoubtedly, is how he would reign if ever he got the chance! He won't. That is not how God reigns. God reigns as a Father, not as a despot. "Our Father...Thy Kingdom come!" The nature of God is entirely gracious in all His dealings with the sons of men. That is the way of our wondrous God and Saviour. It is not by force, but through love. And in the end He will win. Love never fails. It shall be demonstrated before all principalities and powers that love will conquer every foe. In the days of His flesh the Lord Jesus could have easily consummated His Kingdom — He had the power to subdue every enemy, to vanquish every foe. Had He so willed He could have by a single word or look disintegrated the bodies of all who opposed Him so completely that not a vestige thereof would ever have been found by man! Then everything on earth would have been at His command. But would that have been HIS Kingdom? NO! Only in outward appearance — not in reality.

God is love; and love does not impose its will upon us, or enforce it against ours. Love woos and wins by a principle far higher than brute force. Should Jesus return to earth to enforce the laws of His Kingdom with carnal weapons all that could be accomplished would be the erection of larger and more secure prisons overflowing with ever-increasing masses of rebellious humanity. Force does not transform — it merely breeds contempt. Love transforms. Love changes the nature. Love wins the allegiance of the heart. Love forms an indissoluble bond. Love makes one. Love captivates the will. Love, though omnipotent, is very gentle. God reigns by infinite wisdom, power and love and the greatest of these is love. Love conquers all! And King Jesus came to earth to reveal that love and the Father's Kingdom.

The SPIRIT OF MIGHT which shall rest upon all of God's sons is not the same kind of might known by the people of this world; it is not the might of force, of marching armies, of clanging swords, of tanks and bursting bombs, for these exist only in the realm of carnal might. The might of God is spiritual might. If our eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God we will see that the nature of all our work in the Kingdom of God is spiritual. The power of the Kingdom is spiritual power, its citizens are a spiritual people, its ministry is a spiritual ministry, its authority is a spiritual authority, its dominion is a spiritual dominion, its laws are spiritual laws, its weapons are spiritual weapons, its priesthood is a spiritual priesthood, its sovereignty is a spiritual sovereignty. Many of God's precious people are no further advanced in their understanding than were the fleshly-minded Jews of Jesus' day. The work of the Kingdom is the work of rescuing men out of the power of darkness and driving out the satanic spirit that they may be gained for God. It is the work of imparting unto men the very life and Spirit of the Lord that men may be gained even more and more by God until He truly becomes "all in all". Thus shall the whole creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

Praise God for the exalted road that leads to Zion, no ravenous beast shall trod the path that the vultures eye has not seen. These are glorious days indeed for the army of God, a great people, there has not even been the like thereof unto the years of

many generations. There is a mighty stirring in the spirit as the army of the Lord musters for battle. Truly the white horse is riding triumphantly through our land, conquering every enemy within, and announcing to us that He reigns in a voice of thunder from His throne. May He reign and speak through us even as He reigns and speaks within us in this great Day of the Lord! The weapon of the army of God is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, the sharp two-edged sword of the living Word of God — a sword to smite the nations, not with the carnal force of merciless slaughter, but with the life-changing properties of TRUTH AND LIFE. The battle fought by the Christ of God is a spiritual warfare, combat between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death, between the customs and ways of this world and the principles of the Kingdom of God.

We are looking forward with great anticipation to God's Kingdom dealings with ALL NATIONS. Humanity is thirsting for these living waters from heaven! Let us not sell creation short. Arise, saints of God, and come away with the enChristed to the holy mount of God, the Kingdom of the Anointed, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Holiest of all, the throne of God in the sons of Zion. Can we not see how simple a matter it shall be for the sons of God to minister deliverance and life to a weary and suffering world? For these shall be OVERCOMERS in the fullness of Christ's victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sin, sickness, or death shall have no more claim on them. They will be EVEN AS their Lord and Master when He walked upon earth and ministered among men. And more! We can easily understand, therefore, how the glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed in power and great glory throughout the whole earth. There will not be a country, city, village or hamlet on earth that will be closed to this gospel of the Kingdom. Glory to God!

The day is nigh at hand when there will be no more "thick darkness," no more "gross darkness" resting upon the minds and hearts of earth's teeming billions. And at the close of that day, instead of growing darker, the world will have reached the high noon of its "light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord," and its sun shall never set. The Sun of Righteousness is the arising of the glory of the Lord shining in His full strength and majesty, dispelling the darkness, bringing in the day of victory, life and blessing. This Day has already dawned upon us and shone in our hearts, but creation awaits its Day. There has been a dawn for us and, blessed be God! there shall be a dawn for all creation. The peoples of our planet will not remain in the icy clutches of an ever-deepening darkness until all hope is gone, until there is nothing but total darkness and death. No, light will appear — more light than the world has ever seen — at the manifestation of the sons of Light. The illuminating rays of glory will fill the earth, your earth, my earth, their earth, until all the shadows and darkness of night have been chased away.

All the carnal thinking of man, all the delusions of this gross material realm, all the doctrines of devils, all the superstitions, myths, folklore and fairy tales of religion, all the human creeds and dogmas, all human precepts by which men are taught to fear God rather than to love Him; all political intrigues, all humanistic education and institutions, all the myriad citadels of sin and vice and crime, are to be swept away, replaced by the glorious KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND HIS TRANSFORMING GRACE. The Sun of Righteousness shall arise and arise until there is no more night anywhere in God's vast universe. No man anywhere will be able to escape the glory of God in the face of God's Christ. WE ARE THE DAWN OF IT, the firstfruits, praise

His name! “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the GLORY OF THE LORD is risen upon THEE. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but...HIS GLORY SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE. And the GENTILES (NATIONS) SHALL COME TO THY LIGHT, and kings to the brightness of THY RISING” (Isa. 60:1-3). “And the NATIONS of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it...for they shall bring the glory and honor of the NATIONS into it” (Rev. 21:24,26).

The manifestation of the sons of God shall utterly eclipse anything we have ever read in the Bible or in Church history! The River of Life has been flowing in the city of God, for truly “there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.” The river has sprung up within those elect saints who as a firstfruit have experienced the powers of the Kingdom of Heaven in the realms of the Spirit. But soon it shall empty into the mighty oceans of humanity, bringing life and blessing to a dry and parched wilderness where no water is. “Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert” (Isa. 43:19). Therefore, let us even now begin to rejoice in the NEW DAY, as the first rays of hope arise on the eastern horizon; let us arise to plant our feet on the Anointed Mount and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn! Hallelu-yah!

Chapter 15

How The Kingdom Comes

(continued)

I write today to the elect of God scattered abroad that our hearts might be prepared for the truths that concern the establishment of the Kingdom of God. How is the Kingdom of God established? Let me first say how it cannot be established. When our Lord spoke of the Kingdom of God He said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Jesus had just told the disciples where the Kingdom is and how the Kingdom does not come. Before you can ever see the Kingdom you have to know how it's not coming — because the first thing we try to do is build it by the natural. The spirit of wisdom and understanding from God must deliver us from our confusion about how the Kingdom of God comes. It cannot be established by force. It cannot be established by law. It will never be established by political action. It is impossible for it to be established by the will, efforts, or programs of men or of governments.

As we consider these thoughts, may God almighty grant that His Spirit may instruct us in the way of truth and understanding. When John the Revelator 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, beyond the superstitions, myths, folklore and fairy tales of religion, and 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. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it!

These sons shall be able to raise their voices in mighty declarations of authority. The 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 upon 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.

The Word of God comes riding upon a white horse, and the army of the sons of God follow Him, all riding upon white horses. What a scene! 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 SWIFTNESS 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 (that is human strength and human ability), because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong...they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!” Again, “Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are fleshly (strength), and not spirit.” “For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses (human strength and 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 Habakkuk 3:14-15 the prophet, reminiscing about Israel's deliverance from Egypt, extols the triumph of Yahweh, exclaiming, “You pierced with his own arrows the head of the enemy's hordes...You have trodden the sea with Your horses, beside the heap of great and surging waters.” The meaning is clear — You have trodden the sea IN YOUR DIVINE STRENGTH! Egypt had abundance of horses, swift and strong, but God had horses out of the spirit world. They represented the STRENGTH AND MIGHT OF GOD IN BATTLE. They signify the almighty POWER OF THE SPIRIT. With what simple words does the Holy Spirit teach us that the strength of the Spirit always exceeds and excels over the strength of the flesh! Thus, horses are symbols given to us that denote the nature and work of the anointing that rests upon the sons of God. Horses are figures of overcoming, invincible strength and power, signifying that wherever these horses go, WHATEVER IS IN THEIR WAY IS OVERCOME BY THEM!

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven riding on a white horse 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 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, kings and priests unto God. 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. 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 armor. They are immortal and incorruptible and cannot be hurt nor stopped.

TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

In the world there are a variety of types of government. There is the Republican form of government. A Republic is a state in which the rule is conferred by the people to a certain portion of the people, elected by the people to represent them. Our country, the United States of America, is a Republic. The sovereignty resides in our presidential, congressional and judicial representatives which we elect to represent us. Then there is Democracy. It is another form of government, which in its purest sense holds that the state should be held in the control of ALL the people. In a pure Democracy every issue would be decided by plebiscite (direct ballot vote). The United States and most other Western nations are called democracies because their representatives are freely elected by the people and many issues are also decided by plebiscite. Not all Republican governments are democratic.

Totalitarian government is where one political party suppresses all opposition. Some examples of totalitarianism are Nazism, Fascism and Communism. In the days of the famed Robin Hood (A. D. 900-1300) we find the Feudal form of government. Feudalism was a system of government by lords who owned all the land. The people worked for the lord who owned the land and their lives were completely dominated by the lord over them. These lords, in turn, were themselves ruled by a more powerful lord or king of the country. Plutocracy is another power which rules this world — the rule of the rich. In Plutocracy the wealthy class of people control the government and generally maintain their status by domination of the poor and by keeping them repressed.

And, of course, there is Monarchy. An absolute Monarchy is where the king has total authority. Many of the governments in Old Testament times were Monarchies. England originally was an absolute Monarchy whereas now it is a Constitutional Monarchy where the king or queen has limited authority by law, with the prime

minister and parliament running the government. None of these forms of government is God's form of government. God's form of government is Theocracy — the rule of God. Theocracy is the government of the Kingdom of God and holds sway over all who have been given an abundant entrance into the Kingdom. It is the rule of a loving Father-King in wisdom, knowledge, and goodness.

If one were asked to define history in a single sentence, he would be wise to say, "History is an unbroken record of the failure of human government." Almost any form of government would be perfect, if the governors possessed perfection. The tragedy of human failure is resident in the fact that no government can be more perfect than the administrators thereof, who are generally no more perfect than the people they rule, indeed, in many cases less perfect. Never at any time has there been a nation composed entirely of righteous people, not God's ancient people, Israel, and not even the New Testament Church. Even during the Exodus, when the children of Israel had witnessed mighty miracles by the hand of God, and they saw His visible presence in the pillar of cloud and fire every day, and heard His voice from the mount of the Lord, the great mass of the people were either actively or passively unrighteous. When Moses was on mount Sinai, receiving the law of Yahweh, part of the nation of Israel was actively wicked, demanding that Aaron make them an idol god, the golden calf; most of even God's own nation passively followed them into lurid licentiousness, wildly dancing in naked frenzy around their idol, and only Moses and the tribe of Levi remained faithful to Yahweh.

NOT BY DEMOCRACY

"I believe in the rule of the people, by the people, and for the people," I hear many people say. You do? No you do not. Not one person who reads these lines who is an intelligent, honest, God-fearing person believes in it. It is the most deceiving creed going. You say that you believe in the rule of the people, by the people, and for the people. You say that democracy is the most perfect form of government inspired by God and given to the founders of our nation. Let us contrast life under democracy with the atmosphere of the Kingdom of Heaven. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22). My attention was especially drawn to this passage recently and so I began studying each of those words. I looked at the first word But. And, odd as it may seem, that is a tremendous word here. I know that Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of wisdom. Often he would write one thing, only to drive home his point with a punch line that began with a conjunction of but, or therefore, or so then, in his own way of saying, "on the one hand there is this, but on the other hand..." So as we look at this passage we may ask, "If the fruits of the Spirit are these, then what is Paul saying on the other hand?"

Well, what is found "on the other hand" is listed in the previous verse. Galatians 5:19-21, is what Paul called "the works of the flesh." This is what he writes: "Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like." It is interesting to note that every one of the behaviors that Paul listed under the works of the flesh ARE LEGAL IN AMERICA TODAY! Go back and read the list again. These are all legal in America today — every single one. In fact, they are the most prominent characteristics of our society here at the end of the century! They fill our streets, our

homes, our schools, our businesses, the television, movies, magazines, books, and even the Churches.

You see, when America was founded, it was based upon something that is quite a contradiction to the principles of the Kingdom of God. It was based on freedom. Now, don't get me wrong, freedom is a very good thing. But it is, in and of itself, a contrast to righteousness. The laws of our land were established so that we could have the freedom to be able to do whatever we desire to do, go as far as we desire to go, be what we want to be, as long as it is not encroaching on another person's safety or well-being. Under freedom you have the liberty to do right, to do good, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. But under freedom you also have liberty to do wrong, to sin — lust, fornicate, hate, practice witchcraft, be an atheist, get drunk, curse, watch pornography, lie, cheat, misrepresent, worship devils, etc. The people in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, have come to understand this. It is an undeniable fact that crime of all kinds rises along with freedom. There is freedom for the fruit of the Spirit, but there is equally freedom for the works of the flesh. That is how "freedom" is!

Nobody, really, can tell us Americans, what freedom is. Is not this the land of the free? Nowhere in the world is there more freedom than we enjoy in this country, born out of a desire to be free. For freedom we live and for freedom we die; not only for ourselves, but for others as well. From countries where freedom simply does not exist, people, desiring to be free, have come to America, and even today it is clear that there is no end to the five hundred year escape to freedom. Some come for freedom to manifest the fruit of the Spirit; most come to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And something has happened along this road of freedom; not overnight, but slowly. Our desire for all the freedom and all the liberty in the world, has now — whether we admit it or not — brought us to the point where it is killing us! We have gradually turned from freedom to do good, prosper, and worship God, to freedom to do evil, with the result that we have become slaves of our own desires. We have allowed ourselves unlimited freedom in the pursuit of pleasure, the complete satisfaction of all our fleshly senses: the lust of our eyes, our feelings, our hearing, our tasting and our smelling. In the pursuit of pleasure we spend all our free time. We cannot get enough of our movies, television, magazines, parties, smoking, drinking, carousing, drugs, rock, and sex. Nobody can be allowed to spoil our pleasure! All of America's notorious ills have their root in the desire for freedom. The freedom we have in the United States is a wonderful system as long as we realize that this system is not a divine or godly system — nor is it even in the proximity of the Kingdom of God!

The kind of freedom we have in America is a spurious, deceptive, lying freedom. Men are slaves to those things they are free to do. Therefore, their freedom is bondage. The only true freedom in the universe is the freedom of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!" In Christ we are made "free from the law," because we are also "free from sin." "For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17). The hope of all creation is the liberty that is to be brought to all men at the manifestation of the sons of God. It is not the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor that heralds freedom for earth's teeming, oppressed masses. No, my brother, my sister! Rather, it is the body of Christ coming to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. It is my hope in this writing to awaken the pure minds of God's people to true understanding of freedom and liberty in the Kingdom of God. "For the earnest expectation of the

creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious LIBERTY of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19-21). There is freedom indeed! Freedom from corruption, freedom from sin, freedom from fear, freedom from lack, freedom from pain and sorrow, freedom from limitation, freedom from sickness and disease, freedom from ignorance and error, freedom from death, hell and the grave. All that and much more is entailed in the “liberty of the sons of God” in the Utopia of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Let me ask you a straight question. Are the majority of the people in your city saints or sinners? I would not say that all men in El Paso are sinners, I would not say that all men in El Paso are liars, I would not say that all men in El Paso are on some level immoral, but I do not doubt for one moment that it would be safe to say that a good working majority are! And it would not surprise me one bit if the same is true in your city, county or state. Very well, do you want that majority to rule you? Instead of that you try to get a man who is not with the majority and is better than the majority. You want him to rule you, and not the majority.

You have been told that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” is a divine form of government, given by the mind of the Lord to our founding Fathers. Where do you find that in the Bible? Nowhere. The issue is one of authority: is it from God, or from man? If God is the sovereign authority over all things, then His Word alone can govern all things. If the ultimate authority is man, then all things must serve man and bow down to man. The doctrine of “human rights” and “democracy” is the humanistic replacement for the rule of God by the Spirit. Man is regarded as sovereign — and that is humanism, pure and simple. All forms of government are needed in God’s great demonstration of human incompetence. Little as we may like some of them, let us recognize God’s wisdom even in their faults, and be thankful for the lessons that they teach. We speak of our present age of democracies as though they were something completely new. That is not so. Both Greece and Rome knew democratic and republican sway. Every form of government that political philosophers can conceive has been tried in the past — and found wanting. The evils of a democracy are perhaps fewer and easier to bear than the tyranny and suppression possible under other forms of government. Yet that man would be blinded indeed to conditions as they are, who said that democracy had given the earth a perfect government in our day and time. Americans have been fed the notion that democracy is the greatest, most superior form of government developed by man. The testimony of God is against that. The more one is ruled by God, the nobler he becomes, but the more one is ruled by man, the more base he becomes. Today, man’s condition is a complete rejection of God’s rule.

In his comments on Jesus’ healing of the demoniac boy when He had come down from the mount of Transfiguration, George Hawtin has strikingly written, “It will not be necessary for me here to endeavor to convince anyone that the world is now struggling helplessly between the fires of tribulation and the waters of judgment. Listen to the news any day at any hour and what do we hear? More violence. More killings. More break-ins. More robberies. More conspiracies. More defrauding. More wars. More terrorism. More armaments. More uprisings. More rebellions. More air crashes. More earthquakes. More tornadoes. More volcanoes, more floods, and more mud slides. More drug abuse. And an ever-increasing number of

children born either crippled in body or retarded in mind, and, worst of all, no good news anywhere. The poor, sad, distraught, demon possessed world, groaning and travailing in pain, is waiting for the sons of God to reach the glory and honor of adoption, waiting for the transfigured family of sons to say, 'Bring him to me.'

"Far away in the depths of my spirit I hear the voice of the prophet Isaiah, saying, 'And He will destroy in this mountain (the mountain of the kingdom of God) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it' (Isa. 25:7-8). Oh what a song of joy there is going to be when the sons of God say, 'Bring him unto me'! And the poor, drunken, staggering, demon possessed world will as the demoniac of Gadara be devoutly following Jesus, clothed and in his right mind" — end quote.

Let us now carry the thought of the contrast between democracy and the Kingdom of God a little further. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people is the most selfish thing in existence. Suppose I were to stand up and say, "I believe in the government of J. Preston Eby, by J. Preston Eby, and for J. Preston Eby," would I be selfish or unselfish? I would be a selfish brute. How many millions of selfish people are there in the United States? If that is a selfishness as applied to one man, then it is 265,000,000 times a bigger piece of selfishness applied to 265,000,000 people. The government of a man by himself and for himself is the most brutal, selfish thing that you can find. That is why in all our society we have so much "take" and so little "give". It contradicts the nature of God. It stands in opposition to the principles of the Kingdom of God in the sermon on the Mount. It is the antithesis of redemptive love. God rules men out of His great heart of sacrificial love. In democracy men are always out to see how much they can get. Just ask any woman who has a man of that kind for a husband. "I believe," he says to his wife, 'in the government of myself, by myself, and for myself. Now look out for yourself!' That is the kind of man he is. There is not a spark of nobility in that kind of man or in that kind of government. That is a false principle. You have been told that it is a grand principle. It is no such thing.

If you are going to have the rule of all the people you might just as well govern a family by the children, or govern a factory by the employees and apprentices. Government does not come from below, unless it comes from hell, and that government is Confusion — Babylon. It is true — you may have good government under democracy if you have all good people. You may have saintly government under democracy if you have all saintly people. If the people were all ruled by God, for God, and the Voice was the Voice of an awakened and renewed spirit within, then God would rule. But it is not so. If you have mostly careless people, you will have careless government. If you have a majority of immoral people, you will have immoral government. If you have bad people, you will have bad government. If the people are corrupt, you have corrupt government. With carnal people you get carnal government and with sinning people — that is the kind of government you will have! All democracies in the end are government of sinners, by sinners, and for sinners.

Certainly that explains in simple to understand language the present corruption in both our nation and our government. The thing that needs changing in this dark world is the sinful heart of man. Out of this dread fountain there stems all that is

wrong in human relations. God has filled this earth with every good and perfect thing that man can need. It is all good, just as He pronounced it in that long ago beginning. He has provided it in such abundance that there is more than plenty for all. It is the selfishness and lust of the hearts of the few which result in hunger, privation and want on the part of the many. There is beauty and grace in the entire creation, but the perverted heart of man twists these gifts of God into objects of lust and indulgence, violating the very purpose of creation. The builders of the New World Order each are erecting their gossamer structures upon a rotten foundation. Share the wealth, and in a few years the few will have it all back again. Reverse political trends and give power to the oppressed (as it was supposed to be under communism!) and they quickly become the oppressors! Pass laws enforcing goodness, ethics, and morality, and after a short time enforcement becomes lax and as the new generation arises they will throw off the yoke that they hate.

THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

I tell you today that I do not believe in democracy — I believe in Theocracy. And I have no hesitation in telling you that old Abe Lincoln's prediction will ultimately come to naught when he said, "The government of the people, by the people, and for the people SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THE EARTH..." Oh yes, it will! The word of God is sure: "The God of heaven shall 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 for ever" (Dan. 2:44). The Kingdom of God is a Theocracy. Do you understand what a Theocracy is? Democracy is the rule of the people. Theocracy is the rule of God. It is DIVINE GOVERNMENT. The word theocracy comes from two Greek words: THEOS, meaning God or divinity, and KRATEO, meaning to have power, to rule, to be chief or master of. It is not the rule of political bosses of any kind or degree. It is not the rule by votes. That would be the people's kingdom, not the Kingdom of God. Democracy cannot be the Kingdom of God or even a simile of the Kingdom of God, because those in the Kingdom of God are born of God, led by God and controlled by God.

Theocratic principles are at entire and positive enmity with democratic principles. In the Kingdom of God the people must not rule, or the Kingdom will go to the devil. There is no voting in the Kingdom of God. It is not a rule by military might. It is not a dictatorship. It is not parliamentarian or congressional rule. It is not an earthly monarchy. It is not the rule of the proletariat. IT IS THE RULE OF GOD. IT IS THE AUTHORITY AND ACTION OF THE HEART AND WILL AND PURPOSE OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER WHO SO LOVED THE WORLD. We who stand for Theocracy believe that the gospel that the Church has given to it is the gospel of the Kingdom of God. That which the Christ came to establish was the Kingdom of God. Christ who came as Saviour, is now reigning on high as King.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ" (Rev. 12:10). The Kingdom of God is the authority of His Christ. The God who sits upon the throne is Christ. The Theocracy has become a Christocracy. Christ Himself is reigning. I may have a Christocracy today right here within my soul. I may acknowledge the Lordship of the Christ within that He may reign in my life, in my heart, in my will, in my mind, in my nature, and then as He reigns through me, a member of the Christ-body, I become part of that Christocracy. This is such a beautiful form of government: God reigning

through His chosen. His love, power, righteousness, peace and judgments all flow through the priesthood that He has called and ordained. In the beginning when God created the first man and woman and instituted marriage, He established this form of government. It is for the home, it is for the church, and it is for the world, when the time is ripe for it. In Eden God shared His FATHERHOOD WITH MAN. When God called Abram He shared His FATHERHOOD WITH HIM and made him the father of many nations calling him Abraham (Gen. 17:5).

What makes this order so different from a democracy is that the heads are not voted in, therefore they cannot be manipulated by the voters. The difference between theocracy and dictatorship is that no man has authority in himself, it is not a carnal authority and he cannot be a boss and demand servitude. But I would have you know that “the Head of every man is Christ... and the Head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3). That is the precise order of headship in the Kingdom of God. In order for one to have and exercise the authority that belongs to the Kingdom, he must live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit. He must be submissive and obedient to his one and only Head, Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual authority, not a natural or carnal or organizational one. If one fails to walk in the Spirit and be submitted to Christ his Life, no matter how many men or pastors or apostles he may be submitted to, he can shout long and loud but the authority of the God will not be there.

The business of the sons of God is to establish the Theocracy — the rule of God in the midst of men. Only with the mind of the Spirit can we discern the rule of God. Paul speaks of it in Philippians 3:20 where he says, “For our conversation is in heaven.” The Greek word here translated “conversation” is POLITEUMA — politics! Plainly he says, “Our politics are in heaven.” Our politics are not out of the Democratic party, or the Republican party, or anybody else’s political party — our politics are right out of the realm of the Spirit and Power of God. Our politics are the RULE OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT. In all of our life and relationships we have no other politics, no other agenda, no other authority, no other source of blessing to humanity.

Since the Church is a part of the Kingdom of God it was intended to function in the Theocratic Order. You see this so powerfully in the beginning, in the book of Acts. Notice how things were done by the Holy Ghost, by Theocratic principles. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them...they...being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed” (Acts 13:2-4). “And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand upon him, that he might receive his sight. Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God” (Acts 9:10-20).

All ministry in the house of God is of divine appointment, on whatever level it may be. Only the Holy Ghost can do these things. There is no such thing in the Kingdom of God as appointment to ministry by human authority or hierarchy. Neither is there such a thing as a self-constituted ministry of a man's own choosing. None but God can make or appoint a ministry of any sort or description. Even in Old Testament times Yahweh called Moses and appointed Aaron and his sons to the priesthood; and if a stranger presumed to meddle with the functions of those so appointed, he was put to death. Such was the solemn result — the awful consequence of moving out of the order of God's theocratic order. "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God...and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (I Cor. 12:4-6). "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him" "But God hath set some in the church..." "And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers..."

This "church voting" is all nonsense. I should just as soon ask a flock of sheep to vote where the shepherd should lead them. I should just as soon expect an army to vote as to what general should lead them. What army would ever be able to fight successfully, if all its officers, captains, majors, colonels, brigadier-generals, and commander-in-chief depended upon the votes of the soldiers! I should like to know what kind of an army that would be. If I were on the other side, I should like to meet that army, because I would put it to rout the first thing. I should have no fear of an army where the soldiers elected their own officers and voted whether to go into the battle or not. If they are not pleased today, they put them down tomorrow. If the battle is going badly, they stop and take a vote whether to fight on. They would change about thirty times a month. I would know what could be done with them if I were on the other side. The devil does not give a snap for the man-made and man-run church systems of this world where your ministers have to preach to please the people, or else have the people butt them out of the pasture. Nice kind of thing that, is it not? Nice mess you have gotten yourselves into, treating ministers as if they were cooks. If they do not happen to season the doctrinal soup from the pulpit to your satisfaction, you say, "Go!" And they have to go. Nonsense!

In that harlot system which calls itself the church, they have been applying democratic principles to what is supposed to be a theocratic institution. Every honest man must admit that the Church cannot be the Church of God if it is the Church of the People. That would be the people's Church, not God's. And that is exactly what it is. It cannot be the Church of God, because those in the Church of God are born of God, called by God, led by God, positioned by God, nurtured by God, and controlled by God. In the Church of God the people must not rule, or the Church will surely go to the devil. Therefore, it has come to pass that in these church systems which have given up the rule to the people and to the devil, you have a most extraordinary condition of things. You have Theological Seminaries which take young men from the universities and schools and make ministers of them by machinery, like so many sausages from a sausage mill. The consequence is that the denomination owns him from that time on. He goes from step to step, taking everything they say, swallowing it all, thinking as they think, acting as they act, and then at last he becomes their minister.

How is he called? In many denominations it is about the same. They generally go upon the same basis that the people have the right to call the minister. Do you not know how the people call the minister? In the first place they have to think of the minister's salary. If they go about it the best way, the committee will say, "We will get a first-class talker, a charismatic man with eloquence and charm. He will attract crowds of people, fill this church, and boom the town. We cannot afford to have any but a polished man." The consequence is that they go to the wealthiest business tycoon in the church and say, "How much will you help us, Mr. Flesh-pot, to get a good minister?" He takes enough time to get the cigar out of his mouth and silently damn them, and then he begins to think. "After all, I cannot afford to let these fellows get just anyone, because I put \$50,000 into that church last year, and this town must have a man who can talk. Well, I will think about it." So he tells them he will think about it.

At last he sends off to some place where there is a promising young rising star, a fellow who is a go-getter and is talking away. He is pretty bright. Mr. Flesh-pot, who is chairman of the committee, and pays all expenses, brings the young fellow to town to hear him preach some trial sermons and see whether he is the man or not. The question then becomes a question of salary. The whole question of the call being from God is decided by the salary paid. That settles the whole thing. You do not expect it to be a call of God, if there is not more salary paid than you are now receiving. Mr. Flesh-pot, who has not a spark of spirituality or godliness in him, rules the whole thing. The committee must do as he says. As a result a man is chosen who praises society, who charms and entertains, who lives in the world, who walks after the flesh, who minds earthly things, who will not damage any of the interests of Mr. Flesh-pot or any of the other "pots" in the church, who will be very gentle with sin and every carnal thing. A meeting is called and this man is put before them, and the people vote upon it. But the "primaries" have already been held and Mr. Flesh-pot's nominee must be voted for. What is the consequence? Dumb dogs in the pulpit! I would rather break stones in the street than to be a minister of that kind. And I would rather eat pork and beans three times a day than to be dependent upon any people for a "salary" as one of Babylon's hirelings, or be voted in by the people to anything.

Now I fully realize that the conditions are not quite that extreme in many Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations where the people love to think that they are true to the Word of God and are led by the Spirit. But I have been there — and I know, and you know, that self-pleasing, pride, fleshly zeal, political manipulations, financial interests, clout of those who have money and control the purse-strings of the church, and a great number of carnal considerations are always involved where the people call the preachers and control the ministry. The ministers of Babylon are hirelings, one and all, and the people usurpers of the Holy Ghost. I have found that the rule of the people in church affairs is a curse unutterable; that the minister loses his ability to walk in the Spirit, loses his sense of being a messenger of God, loses His capacity to function in the government of God, and becomes the mere mouthpiece of some wretched committee or faction representing some miserable party that has attained supremacy in the church. They hire him as they would hire a cook, and kick him out when the cooking does not suit them.

Democracy will always produce, sooner or later, "man's man" and "man's plan" rather than "God's man" and "God's plan." This is true in all societies and on all levels

where Democracy rather than Theocracy is practiced. Democracy in the church or Democracy in the United States government did not start in the Throne Room, will never have “rights” in the Throne Room. It has nothing to do with the Kingdom of God whatsoever. You see, I am undertaking the most unfashionable kind of thing. I am undertaking to teach a democratic people to embrace Theocracy; to exchange the rule of themselves, by themselves, and for themselves with the rule of themselves by God and for God. That is the route of sonship pure and simple. All who receive the call to sonship sooner or later become thoroughly undeceived by the carnal church system and flee from it as a plague, for it has the horns of a lamb, appearing harmless and good, but it has the voice of a dragon (Rev. 13:1).

It is the mind of Christ that will order and govern the world in the Kingdom of God. Every son of God will be imbued with the mind of Christ and from those holy omniscient minds the life and light and love and authority and glory of the Lord will flow forth with a power that will encompass the earth with transforming grace and fill it to overflowing with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. With great earnestness I pray that God will open your understanding, for it is of perfect truth that I tell you that no man can ever hope to reign in the Kingdom of Christ until his will has become one with the will of the Father. Were it possible for one man to reign in the Kingdom while still possessing his own will in opposition to the will of the Father, it would mean the destruction of the Kingdom with confusion, strife and rebellion.

Sons of God, God’s Christ, are the instrument to bring the divine order of God into the lives of all men, for the Head of every man is Christ. The will of God on earth is in truth the Kingdom of God. God’s Christ shall also bring the divine order of God into society, into all activities and institutions, until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. The story I read recently of the farmer who had a visit from the Christian holds much truth for us. It seems that the farmer had a visit from a young man who constantly remarked of the beauty of the farm in this manner. “God has just blessed you so much.” Over and over again the young man could not resist praising God over the great beauty of this farm. “God has given you so much in this farm,” he would say. Being somewhat of a salty Christian, the old farmer finally spoke up concerning the zealous praise of the young Christian. He said, “Well son, it is true that God has blessed this farm. But, you should have seen it when God had it all to Himself!”

Ah, God could sovereignly and independently right every wrong and restore the whole creation to purity and soundness and beauty and incorruptibility in an instant with one sweep of His great hand, if that were His plan. But God has a better plan! He is processing a people to bring His peace, His righteousness, the beauty of His nature, His glory and His will to all men and all creatures, beginning on earth, and extending to the extremities of the unbounded heavens. God has not chosen to bring forth the magnificence of Himself in creation independently and single handedly — the sons of God are the “farmers” He is raising up to establish the harmony of His purpose and the majesty of His Kingdom throughout all His domains. The first area of land that He has given us to work over, and bring forth a crop unto righteousness, is ourselves. Today God has chosen to bring His Kingdom to pass in all the earth through us. Plant wisely, water faithfully, cultivate carefully, my brother, my sister, that there shall be an abundant harvest of salvation and righteousness unto the ends of the earth.

Jesus Christ preached the good news of the Kingdom of God. He is Himself the King of this Kingdom and the sons of God are His joint-rulers. He is the firstborn of many brethren who are kings as He is King and priests as He is Priest after the order of Melchizedek. As George Hawtin has so eloquently written, “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 of 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, 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. These are the kings, the priests, and the judges of His glorious and eternal Kingdom” — end quote.

God’s Theocratic government will yet break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, within and without. And He doesn’t need your vote! You don’t need to “believe” it to make it come to pass. It is not going to happen just because enough people “want” it to! No, it is happening and shall continue to happen in spite of all of us — the Kingdom is coming whether the world expects it or not! The world wasn’t expecting Jesus two millennia ago. The world wasn’t expecting the power of God that came at Pentecost. The world wasn’t “believing” for the apostles to appear on the scene in the power and demonstration of the Kingdom of Heaven. The world didn’t “want” the Church to arise in the midst of the earth and overthrow all the gods and temples and priesthoods of the pagans. And the world isn’t planning on the manifestation of the sons of God. As I listen to the ridiculous blather of politicians; weigh and compare the absolutely mind-boggling problems of this world against their sugar-coated promises, how THANKFUL I am that the security, prosperity, safety and protection of my family and our destiny do not depend on the feeble machinations of power-hungry men. Yes, THANK GOD for God’s Christ, for His unfailing promises, for His answers to prayer, for His healing, delivering, miracle working power, for the wisdom of His ways, the righteousness, peace and joy of His Spirit, the understanding of His mind, the undergirding of His strength, the majesty of His glory, the authority of His Word, the inner stability of His substance, the love, purity, faith and might of His nature, the quickening, transforming power of His life — THIS IS THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

I believe in the rule of J. Preston Eby by God and for God. Nothing else has any potential beyond this dismal realm of sin, death and the grave. If it had not been that God ruled me I would have gone to the devil long ago. I know just a little of my own heart, though it is abundantly true that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and the wise man wisely asked, “Who can know it?” Yet I know just a little of my own heart and I have seen enough in the little I know to realize that I would have shipwrecked on some benighted shoals of sin, shame, delusion or death

were it not for the rule of God in my life by the Spirit. This is precisely why the Kingdom of God has to be within.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is the gospel Jesus brought the world. In every parable, in every simile in which He put His gospel before His disciples and the multitudes, He spoke of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of God is the whole aim and purpose of God's great gift to humanity. I proclaim to you today, as a minister of God, as an ambassador of His Kingdom, that God's highest purpose in the earth is the establishment of the Kingdom — the Kingdom of God in every heart, the Kingdom of God in the home, the Kingdom of God in the workplace, the Kingdom of God between employers and employees, the Kingdom of God in the civic affairs of the city, the Kingdom of God in the government of the state, the Kingdom of God to rule in every nation and every land from sea to sea and from pole to pole. God has sent salvation to save us from the kingdom of men and of devils. The rule of men can never lift the world out of the abyss of hate and war and poverty and sickness and sin and sorrow and death.

The Kingdom of God has been despised and hated by every government, by the politician, and by all carnal and corrupt men and women. They all approve of a Kingdom that some day will come, but they want nothing to do with a rule of God that comes right now into their world and upsets and destroys the sovereignty of man. They always strive to separate God from government, God from business, God from education, and God from social services. They say you must not have religion in your politics, in your media, or in your business. You must let the devil rule the government. You must let the devil rule business. You must let the devil rule your pleasures. You must let the devil rule your schools. You must let the devil rule the press.

The day is coming when the devil will not rule any more in any of these places. The day is coming when there will be no more voting in America, no more elections, no more corrupt politics, no more national networks with their stars and superstar newscasters covering major conventions, no more convention halls decorated in bright colors, or delegates wearing loud-colored casual or sports attire, many with outlandish oversized hats. No more whoop-and-holler demonstrations, or thousands with balloons, like little children at play. No more political signs and placards, no more of the usual politics being played secretly from smoke-filled hotel suites away from convention halls — the jockeying for selfish advantage, political gain and coveting of power. No more polished speeches and lying orations promising everybody everything and delivering nothing.

The day is coming when the saints shall judge the earth; when the overcoming sons of God shall be given power over the nations to rule them with the iron rod of righteous dominion and transforming power; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers. Let all men know that it is the Almighty God who is the designer and architect of all the nations of the world. The time periods and localities in which nations flourish have all been pre-arranged by the will of Him who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). The truth of this cannot be made any plainer than it is by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:8: "When the Most High divided the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Paul refers to this verse in Acts 17:26-27: "And hath made of one blood ALL NATIONS of men for to

dwell on all the face of the earth, AND HATH DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, and the BOUNDS OF THEIR HABITATION; that they should seek the Lord.”

How plain it is that it was GOD who, from the beginning, set the bounds of habitation or the national boundaries of ALL NATIONS. These boundaries were established in relation to Israel and with a view to their being able to seek after the Lord. It is remarkable that the land of Palestine was originally reserved by the wisdom and goodness of the Lord for the possession of His special people and the display of the most stupendous signs and wonders. The theater was small, but wonderfully suited for the convenient observation of the whole human race — at the junction of the two continents of Asia and Africa, and almost in sight of Europe. From this spot as from a common center the reports of God’s wonderful works, of His mighty power and awesome glory, of the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience, suffering, and resurrection of His precious Son, of the wonder-filled outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the faithful disciples of Jesus were set ablaze by the life and power of their glorified Lord, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe.

Yes, God set the bounds of habitation for all nations and planted Israel at the crossroads, to the end that ALL NATIONS should seek after the Lord. Out of Israel came the Christ; out of the Christ has come the Church, His bride (Eph. 5:21-33); out of Church shall come forth the manchild, the manifested sons of God, destined to bring blessed and glorious and ultimate deliverance to the whole creation that it might be fulfilled which God promised to father Abraham: “And in thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH be blessed” (Gen. 22:18). ALL NATIONS shall be blessed! Some still don’t believe it. Some tell me that only the Church is to be blessed, or only some people in the nations are to be blessed, or that the Kingdom has nothing to do with nations — only some invisible entity in the spirit realm. What a prospect! From the very beginning God not only designed the nations of men that dwell upon the earth; He also planned and purposed to bless them — each and every one of them in their totality! This speaks not of the blessing of Israel, nor the blessing of the Church, nor of the blessing of the saints of God within the nations, nor the blessing of spiritual people in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; it is THE NATIONS THEMSELVES that must come under the gracious hand of God in blessing and quickening until every part and form and fashion thereof has been raised up into the Kingdom of God. Hallelu-yah! What a Saviour!

David, the sweet singer of Israel, intoned this hope in the spirit of prophecy: “God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among ALL NATIONS. Let the people praise Thee, O God; let ALL the people praise Thee! O let THE NATIONS be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt JUDGE THE PEOPLE righteously, and GOVERN THE NATIONS upon earth...yea, ALL KINGS shall bow down before Him: ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM” (Ps. 67:1-4; 72:11). It is obvious that all nations do not today serve the Lord, neither do all kings (rulers) fall down before Him. Communist China does not serve the Lord, neither do its rulers acknowledge Him. Iran does not serve the Lord. Iraq does not serve the Lord. Great numbers of nations do not today serve the Lord, and few of their rulers fall down before Him. But the day is surely coming when all nations shall be joined to the Lord and fulfill their obligations to Him as their Maker and Saviour. If that day never comes, then I will have to tear my Bible to pieces and the Word of God will have to be relegated to the scrap heap of ancestral

errors. But the promise is sure: "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for Thou shalt INHERIT ALL NATIONS. ALL NATIONS whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things" (Ps. 82:8; 86:9-10).

Many precious "fragments" reveal God's ultimate purpose for mankind, when "ALL the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and ALL KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS shall worship before Thee, for the kingdom is the Lord's and HE is the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:27-28). Almighty Father! "Thy Kingdom Come!"

Chapter 16

How The Kingdom Comes

(continued)

When our Lord spoke of the Kingdom of God He said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Jesus had just told His disciples where the Kingdom is and how the Kingdom does not come. Before you can ever see the Kingdom you have to know how it’s not coming — because the first thing we try to do is build it by the natural. The spirit of wisdom and understanding from God must deliver us from our confusion about how the Kingdom of God comes. It cannot be established by force. It cannot be established by law. It will never be established by any kind of political action. It is impossible for it to be established by the will, efforts, or programs of men or of governments.

NOT BY LAW

In the United States today we have the Fundamentalist and Charismatic Christian movements whose burden it is to restructure government and society in the name of the Lord, not by spiritual regeneration, but by constitutional legislation. These are sincere Christians concerned for the social problems confronting the modern world who are being beguiled and deceived into accepting the premise that by partaking in the Babylonish systems of this confused world, they will be able to effect significant changes and bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. To those on the “religious right” that seems to be envisioned as a political government that will outlaw abortion, re-institute public prayer in schools and legislate Christian morality on the whole of society. It is their conviction that God’s Word gives them a mandate to infiltrate and exercise godly control over all the political, social, educational and judicial institutions of the nation. They are convinced that the Bible gives us a divinely revealed pattern for social and political action.

But does the law of Moses give us a body of social, economic and political regulations which, when applied, will rescue our nation or any nation from its woes? If a serious problem exists in our society, can we scan the precepts of Moses for a solution? When we discover the Old Testament law to resolve a moral and social difficulty, is it an expression of the Kingdom Jesus taught to lift out the regulation as found in Moses and write it in the law books of our state? Some are claiming that this is God’s method of establishing the principles and power of the Kingdom of God in our world today.

The Church goes out and protests abortion, they demand that the law be changed. The people of God go out and protest homosexual activities, same sex marriages, and a score of other moral issues, demanding that laws be passed based on the laws of God. They have the Old Testament mentality that thinks the way to make America a godly nation is to legislate morality. Let’s force everyone to submit to our standards

of right and wrong because we have this authority from God. That's what the Pope thinks, too. And it's what the Moslem Fundamentalists and the Orthodox Jews think. It's what the Serbs think. That's what Hitler thought. They all think they have authority from God to legislate their particular standard of righteousness and enforce it as the law of the land. With every law there is a punishment for breaking that law. Thus, those who would, in the name of Christ, legislate morality also are responsible for the punishments meted out to those who break the law. They thus become "bearers of the sword" and it brings Christians right back under the Old Covenant — an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth! And they can no longer say with the merciful Jesus, "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17).

All Christians who are out protesting abortion and pressing for legislation to ban it and other evils are condemners of the world. The spirit of sonship is not in them. The priesthood of mercy has not been raised up in their hearts. The spiritual dynamic of the Kingdom of God has never been quickened in their consciousness. They would never be able to say to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." Instead, they would be carrying placards and petitioning the government for stronger laws against adultery. If they themselves did not hold stones in their hands to stone her, they would at least rejoice in the government's restrictions and be consenting to the stoning, as Saul of Tarsus consented to the stoning of Stephen. They would say, "Praise God, justice was done and a strong signal has been sent out to all our young people and would-be law breakers, that adultery is sin and punishable by death! This will put holy fear in their hearts and preserve the moral values of our nation." I do not hesitate to say that such an attitude is diametrically opposed to the spirit of sonship. It has nothing whatever to do with the Kingdom of God. It stands, in fact, in opposition to the Kingdom of God. It is a monstrous heresy and a religious delusion. It is spiritual treason.

People want to get all the pornography off the news stands. Am I in favor of pornography? Certainly not! Am I in favor of legislating it out of the land? If I am I become a minister of the law of the Old Covenant, not a minister of deliverance to creation. I tell you today, I will preach to somebody, I will proclaim the love and power of God to him, I will demonstrate the mercy and goodness of the Lord toward him, I will do everything within my power to touch that heart and change that life with the grace of Jesus Christ to experience the holiness of God, but I will not compel him by condemnation and law and punishment — that is not the way of the Kingdom of God. I am not a minister of the law, I am a priest of the Most High God. God is raising up His Kingdom from within men, not from without men. The sons of God are Ambassadors of that Kingdom that establishes righteousness in the earth by transformation, not by compulsion. Man's government is the instrument of the sword, not the sons of God. We are bound in the spirit to represent only the interests and principles of the Kingdom of God, never the interests or policies of the kingdoms of this world.

Preachers travel up and down the land with their fingers pointed at sinners, picking out a new sin, the sin of the week, to preach against. Their whole message is that the media is ungodly, the government is corrupt, the New World Order is a conspiracy, the educational system is immoral, the abortionists, homosexuals, and others must be stopped, and they breathe out threatenings, hell-fire and damnation

against the world from their perch high upon a crag on mount Sinai. That's not God's way at all! Our heavenly Father calls us to assume a posture that causes the light of God to shine upon the just and upon the unjust. The way of the Kingdom is not human government. The way of the Kingdom is not trying to get everyone to agree on a law that forbids unrighteousness and godlessness. That is the way of man's government, they can only deal with evil by restraint. But that is not God's Kingdom economy. To reign in the Kingdom the heart of the Father in heaven must be raised up within us. Sin cannot be gotten rid of externally. The whole concept of the Kingdom as taught by the preachers today is absurd.

This may surprise some of my readers, but sons of God are not called to point their fingers at the evils of society. JESUS NEVER DID! God did not call us to crusade and announce, "Abortion is evil, you should not do it. There ought to be a law!" No, I do not condone indiscriminate abortion. No, I am not for drugs and immorality and crime. But God did not call me to condemn the world — to condemn either these social evils or those who practice them. The people of God must offer a solution to sin instead of preaching against it. And our solution is not more laws. History proves that laws solve nothing. Does our "war on drugs" remove drugs from the streets and school yards of our nation? Absolutely not! Did "Prohibition" eradicate alcohol and drunkenness from America? No way! God does not need the church to tell society that adultery, hatred, lying, cheating, stealing and killing are wrong. Too much of the message of religion is lambasting sin and telling sinners how evil they are and that they are headed for hell and damnation. I can guarantee you that in their deepest heart they already know that! God needs a people who can offer the solution — the love of God and the power of God to deliver, redeem and transform is the answer. This is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

You can get rid of all pornography, you can close down all the abortion clinics, you can close up all the brothels, all the adult book stores, all the nude strip-joints, and all the hell-holes of sin, pass a million laws against sin, send out the army in the streets to enforce them, and sin will still erupt in your very midst because it is the heart that is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Outward sins are merely an effect of the inward sin of heart and nature — they are not a cause. Man does not sin because he sees sin, he sins because it's a nature to do it. The fact is, I couldn't have been anything at one time except a sinner because as long as I remained in the consciousness of Adam I would forever be in a consciousness of sinning. But once you begin to come into the consciousness of the Christ the whole concept of sinning becomes foreign to you. You become centered in a God-Christ consciousness which becomes the spirit motivating your actions, the law of life within. Christ within becomes the animating principle and power of your being unto righteousness. And this, precious friend of mine, IS THE POWER AND THE GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Let me say it again — the laws of Moses have absolutely nothing to do with the Kingdom of God! With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit on the pages of God's Word proclaim the eternal truth: "The law and the prophets were until John, but since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it" (Lk. 16:16; Mat. 11:13). According to Jesus the Kingdom involved such altogether new forces and such unparalleled blessings and realities, that all the works and provisions of former moves of God on earth paled by comparison. They were the words of God,

but not the reign of God. They were the works of God, but not the rule of God. They brought men into contact with God, but not under the dominion of God.

Times without number I have heard good people rejoicing in some “godly” piece of legislation that is before congress, or in their involvement in the anti-abortion movement, or that Christians have gained positions on the local school board, or that the ten commandments are posted in a court room or school building. But consider this, oh tradition bound man! “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” May the Spirit of God make it powerfully real to all who read these lines that the Kingdom of God is not a kingdom of law — it is the Kingdom of Grace and Truth.

Righteousness cannot be legislated. You cannot turn America or any other nation back to God with laws or any kind of governmental authority. You can put prayer back in the schools, but they will be carnal prayers that will rise no higher than the ceiling. You can outlaw this and that sin, but it will not change the hearts of men one iota. What the world needs today is not laws or police action to establish righteousness — men must experience regeneration, transformation, a new birth from above. This is only effected by SPIRITUAL POWER. The Kingdom of God can only be established in the earth by the spiritual power that changes men and makes them new creatures in Christ Jesus. “Except a man (any man) be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” is what Jesus taught. Once a man is born again, truly born again by the Spirit of God, you need no laws to enforce righteousness upon him. Once a nation turns to the Lord it will change the government — but changing the government cannot turn men to the Lord! The so-called “Christian Right” in America today has the cart before the horse. They have the whole thing backwards. Their mission will fail. They cannot and will not bring America back to God through the ballot box. I tell you as a prophet of God that political action and organization by the religious people in the United States or anywhere else will not return the nation to its Christian roots and heritage. They are barking up the wrong tree. Only the mighty saving, delivering, transforming power of God can accomplish the work.

Let me illustrate. Suppose that there are two meetings going on at opposite ends of the city. Both are led by preachers. One is engaged in spiritual ministry. The power of God is moving and men are coming to Christ, broken, weeping, contrite, repenting, calling upon the name of the Lord, their chains of sin and darkness broken, washed away by the power of God, becoming new creatures in Christ Jesus. Saints are being strengthened, the ways of the Lord are being established in hearts, the plan and purpose of God are being quickened in the consciousness of those seeking the Lord. The other preacher is heading a political movement to enlist “Christian political activists” in the project of holding demonstrations, lobbying government to put prayer back in the schools, initiate programs to get kids off of drugs, outlaw pornography, nude dancing, adult book stores, etc. Now, which of these two preachers is acting as an Ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven; which of these preachers is doing the work of the Kingdom of God; which of these two is causing the Kingdom of God to come upon men; which of these two is introducing men to the Realm of Heaven; which is reigning in some measure with Christ from His throne of heavenly power?

There should be no doubt in any spiritual mind. The soul-saving preacher is certainly moving in a dimension of the Kingdom of God even in this present “in part” realm,

whereas the politically active preacher is trying by the energy of the flesh, by the principles of the kingdoms of this world, and by the methodology of the law of Moses, to reform the carnal government of man. With the above truth gaining access and blooming in our hearts, let us prepare our hearts to now step beyond our present age to the more excellent glory of the new order which is now at hand in the Feast of Tabernacles, the third day, the Holiest of all, the manifestation of the sons of God. Let us discard the silly doctrines, methods and programs of men and evil traditions inherited from the kingdom of Babylon that we may receive of God and become His sons and daughters. The glory of this hope hastens my step. It quickens my heart. It speeds my writing. It urges me to partake completely of Him, to crown Him my Lord and Head forever.

It is my deep conviction that the time appointed of the Father for the manifestation of the sons of God is nigh at hand. Sons of God shout it loud and clear! Let the earth know her redemption draweth nigh! The King of Love is coming! Hallelu-yah! The Deliverer is coming out of Zion, the whole Christ-body is being prepared, and the time is at hand. While the religious systems “play church” and the Christians “dabble in politics” trying to save the nation and the world, the royal heralds are going forth blowing their trumpets, proclaiming the message of the Kingdom in the power of the Spirit, preparing the stage for the appearing of the KING in a vast company of the sons of God — the King in the midst of the kings! What a glorious and mighty and exultant victory lies before us!

Now don't misunderstand me. I certainly am not opposed to good and godly laws in our land, nor to Christians exerting their influence for righteousness in society or government. That is all well and good and to be commended, and I praise God for it. **JUST DON'T CALL IT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** It is not the Kingdom of God. It has nothing to do with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not good laws or religiously oriented politics in this or any other land. The Kingdom of God is “righteousness, and peace, and joy IN THE HOLY GHOST.” What is the difference? I will tell you! When Christians exert pressure on carnal institutions and impose their will and standards on unregenerated men, you have just another function of human government. It may be better human government. But it is still just human government. But, when those carnal institutions are changed because all the people in them have been transformed by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost — then **YOU HAVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD!** You have now not a legislated righteousness imposed from without, but “righteousness...in the Holy Ghost.” Ah, the former was imposed by the law of the statute books — the Old Covenant; the latter is the result of the laws written in the hearts of men by the Spirit of the living God — the New Covenant! The Kingdom of God offers the solution to both sin and death. The world needs the solution to its evils and sorrows, not another band aid. God is preparing a people to step forth upon the world scene in the all nature, wisdom, power and glory of God's Christ. **THIS IS THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

This is why I have consistently refused to become involved in movements, or organizations, in campaigns, crusades, and whatever work is dedicated to “anti” something. If I become a militant moralist to fight the degeneracy in our midst, if I work myself to death screaming against the communists, if I labor day and night warning God's people and the nation against politicians, the Illuminati, the world bankers, the Tri-lateral Commission, the United Nations, the New World Order, and

all the other conspiracy theories — will it deliver even one soul from the power of darkness and translate him into the Kingdom of God's dear Son? Will it lead to transformation and to the glorification of as much as one life rescued from the power of hell, and raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus? The answer is abundantly clear. God's purpose for His chosen ones is to become a part of THE STONE THAT IS CHRIST, which is cut out of the mountain without hands. It is a Kingdom not of this world, out of the heights and depths of God. BECOME WHAT CHRIST IS — that is the goal which He has set before us. In becoming what He is, we become a part of that MIGHTY STONE which shall smite the kingdoms of man and become A GREAT MOUNTAIN to fill the whole earth. Nothing less than that can satisfy the call of God upon our lives. There is nothing else we can do to correct the world's ills. It will not be healed through religious efforts or through political schemes. The only remaining hope for the world is for the Lord's elect to become ONE WITH HIM WHO IS THE MIGHTY STONE which shall destroy all these kingdoms and become a great mountain that fills the whole earth. And when we have sought the Lord and have given ourselves unreservedly to Him, He will speak to us as He did to Isaiah: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings (rulers, governments) to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1-3).

THE NEW MAN OF THE KINGDOM

Our world today needs the new men that Christ makes. New men are the key to everything else that must be renewed. Therefore the making of new men is the first priority of the Kingdom of God. Only by the making of new men can the Kingdom of Heaven come to earth. Our world desires better schools, a better press, better government, a better business world, a better economy, better living conditions, better social institutions, better communities. These desires are laudable, but they cannot be achieved with unchanged men. The earth and all things in it are defiled and are being devoured because man has transgressed God's laws, ordinances, and covenants. But we also know that no man can keep God's laws unless Christ dwells in him. The great truth is that the man in Christ does not keep the letter of the law, which is merely the outward husk of type and shadow, but he keeps the spirit of the law which is the inward law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This results in the living expression of the nature and character of God in all things, not a keeping of external rules and regulations which give only the appearance of godliness. Thus the righteousness of the law, and not its external forms, are fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. The answer to creation's deteriorating state is not to preach the keeping of the law; the answer lies in the living out of Christ, and in Him alone. When Christ comes to dwell in individuals, they will then keep Father's Kingdom laws of life within, and the whole creation will be preserved, touched, affected, and transformed. And unless He lives within individuals, it is a useless waste of time to urge them to keep God's laws.

At every point we are driven to the need for new men — a NEW CREATION. Through two world wars men dreamed and talked of the coming of a better world when the nations would lay down their arms and begin to build that better world. A half of a century has gone by since the last World War and it is not only the same old world, it is a much worse world. We cannot build a new world out of men with old

dispositions, old attitudes, old hearts and old natures. The new world for which all creation groans and travails can only be fulfilled by new men with renewed minds, new hearts, and a new spirit.

The outward law of God is given to reveal to us the nature of God Himself. I will use one illustration from the Ten Commandments to make the point. When God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” He is not simply trying to prevent us from enjoying the lusts of our flesh. He is telling us something about Himself — how He is. The only eternal, unchangeable, immutable, invariable, unalterable, firm, fixed, sound, solid, balanced, dependable, reliable, steady, steadfast, ethical, moral and totally trustworthy thing in the whole universe is — GOD! “Thou shalt not commit adultery” — it means that GOD HIMSELF is committed, reliable, true, dependable, faithful and trustworthy. He keeps His commitments. He keeps His covenant. He honors His word. He is faithful in all His involvements. He will not cheat on you, lie to you, deceive you, betray you, forsake you or fail you. He loves you and will take care of you, cherish you, nurture you, protect you, and cleave to you. He does not “chase skirts,” He will not abandon you for greener grass on the other side of the fence. He is not adulterous, with a roving eye and a lying, cheating heart. He is love, He is good, He is faithful, He is persevering, and His nature is constant, abiding and unchanging. THAT IS HOW HE IS! When you understand the nature of one who is not adulterous in thought, desire or action, you understand something about the character of God. And that is how He wants us, His sons, to be! His law reveals His nature. Study deeply the laws of God under the Old Covenant and you will learn the heart of God. And when His law is written in our heart, His nature — how He is — is inscribed upon the tablets (genetic code) of our Inner Son.

This great faithfulness and unchanging nature of God is revealed with divine clarity in the words of the Lord through the prophet Hosea to backsliding Israel. Israel was the wife of Yahweh, and she had played the harlot, shamefully abandoning her Husband, and had wantonly lain with all the gods of the heathen as her lovers. Yahweh had entreated her again and again to return to Him and be a faithful wife, but she paid Him no heed and persisted in her abominations. A lesser being would have put her away. A lesser person would have been hurt, wounded, devastated, and said, “To hell with her.” But not Yahweh! He pursued her into the dens of her shame, saying, “And now I will discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand” (Hos. 2:10). He spoke of chastisements, of judgments — loving corrections — He would bring upon her, but hastily added, “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness (testing, purging, purification, brokenness), and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor (trouble) for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith Yahweh, that thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband!)...and I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I shall betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. And I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know (be intimate with) YAHWEH” (Hos. 2:14-20). What a God! When His law says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” He is revealing His nature, His heart, to us that we know Him as He is, and be like Him.

What is called “nature” in man is called “instinct” in animals. For years debate has been underway amongst the modern-day scholars over whether instinct is real or not,

or whether what appears as instinct in animals is really taught or acquired characteristics. For a long time no conclusion was ever really made. Then, not too many years ago, a scholar by the name of Dr. Maurice, decided that he wanted to conclude, once and for all, the lasting debate of instinct. He went to Johannesburg, South Africa, to study the strange behavior of the Weaverbird. It is the most amazing bird! It builds an elaborate nest out of reeds from the lake where it lives. It then lines the nest with silky grass. The odd thing about this nest is that it is completely enclosed, with the exception of a hole in the bottom. This hole is how the bird enters and exits the nest. How the bird keeps its eggs from rolling out of the hole, is a mystery. Why the bird does this, no one knows. Ornithologists have long wondered.

Dr. Maurice thought that he could test the reality of instinct by taking two eggs from a weaverbird's nest in South Africa, bring them to America, and then hatch those eggs and raise the birds isolated from the others of their kind, never being exposed to this strange behavior. And that was what he did. He hatched those eggs, raised the birds, hatched the eggs from those birds and raised them, and did this until he had raised five generations of weaverbirds here in the United States of America. He then took the last generation of weaverbirds and returned them to their natural habitat in South Africa. And guess what? Those birds did an amazing thing. They went straight and built elaborate nests from the reeds by the lake, lined them with the silky grass, and tore a hole in the bottom. He proved that it was in their "nature" to do it! It's how they are. They are pre-programmed, acting out of their state of being. In just the same way the natural man functions out of the law of sin and death that dwells in his members. We think people choose to sin. We have had the mistaken notion that homosexuals are homosexual because they chose that lifestyle. Or we think that prostitutes are prostitutes because of choosing that lifestyle. But when we were born into this realm of sin and death we inherited a nature from Adam. Now I know that some deny that the carnal man is Adam, but it was by one man that sin was passed to all men, and the root of sin is found only in the Adam nature. The carnal man is ignorant and out of the way. He is a slave to sin and in bondage to death. He doesn't understand. He doesn't know why he acts as he does. He can't help himself! The only way out of that kingdom is by death and being born again into a new life in a new world. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But when men and women are born again the law of God's very own nature is transmitted by the Holy Spirit into the genetic code of the Inner Life of every son and daughter of God! "As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly."

There would never be a broken home, a heartbroken wife or husband, or deserted and destitute children if the nature of God was written in all men's hearts. There would be no bigotry, no hatred, no crime, no war, no evil or trouble anywhere on earth if the nature of God was written on all men's hearts giving them a heart in the likeness of His own and a mind as the mind of Christ. From the redeemed and transformed heart the law (nature) of God flows forth as a river of life. We still have those among us who thunder the letter of the law from Sinai's mount — but all such will change their tune if ever they stand with the Lamb of God at Calvary's hill, for there they find God removing His law from the external tables of stone to write them upon the fleshy tablets of the hearts of new born men, who no longer keep the law because they cringe in fear, but because the spirit of that law has become their nature, the law of life within them.

Can you imagine the United States Government passing one massive law that says, "WE FORBID ANYMORE CRIME OF ANY KIND." — and it worked! Impossible. Laws are on the outside; you read them; you think about them; and if you have any morality at all, you even try to obey them, at least when the patrol car is driving in your lane of traffic, or when anyone is looking who might report, expose, or punish you if you do not. Edicts of men are issued, but they cannot be imparted. You talk them, but few walk them. So laws cannot change the inner man; nor can the best of men follow the totality of any laws laid down in his behalf. That is why there is such torment and slavery under the law, for we have become aware now of what God defines as sin, yet we struggle with it nonetheless. But when the law is written in the heart no longer do men try to love God contrary to nature, but now, possessing the nature of God, love, joy, peace and righteousness flow like a river from the heart. This is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

Herein lies the important significance of the great truth Jesus proclaimed when He explained where the Kingdom is and how it does not come. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation (outward show): neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." There are still those among us who imagine that Jesus is coming back to earth with literal armies to ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER. But should the Lord come to establish His Kingdom by force it could only result in a world full of immense prisons and unprecedented numbers of executions. It would demand a tyranny surpassing that of either Hitler or Stalin.

It is my deep conviction that social issues, economic issues, moral issues and political issues can be dealt with adequately only at the level of individual conversion. When the firstborn Son of God came into the world to reveal the salvation and Kingdom of God, He did not engage directly in any social welfare work, or attack directly the social structure of the existing society. Instead He gave Himself to the task of converting, remaking, transforming, and training of twelve apparently unimportant men. These men, filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom, holiness, and power went forth converting, remaking, and transforming the lives of countless multitudes of men and women in every nation under heaven. They turned the world upside down and transformed the very moral and spiritual fabric of society from gross darkness to light and truth and holiness. And they did it by the power of the Spirit and the Word — plus nothing!

As the sons of God destined to bring deliverance to the whole creation, dare we follow in the footsteps of HIS holy wisdom? The heart of any social, economic or political problem lies in the heart of individual men and women. New social structures and systems, new laws, new judicial systems, new political systems, new economic systems, can never solve the problem so long as the heart of man remains selfish and corrupt. Only when men pass over by conversion from self-centeredness to God-centeredness can the Kingdom of God become a living reality on earth. All of our external problems — race, nationalism, war, crime, poverty, oppression, sickness, death — all of these are but the external symptoms of an internal, deep-seated disease — the sin of self-centeredness. The only strategy that will be victorious in the warfare against social and other problems is an offensive directed not against a nation, or a governmental system, but against the human heart! The point of attack is the state of being of man himself. The objective of attack is the conversion and transformation of man with the law of God written in his heart. What

incredible wisdom Jesus revealed that day when He declared the fundamental principle of the Kingdom — “Behold, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS W-I-T-H-I-N YOU!”

On far-away Patmos John the Revelator penned the record of his vision: “And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals” (Rev. 5:1). John saw the book that is written within. He saw that new covenant that God would make with the house of Israel. That’s what he saw. He perceived in spirit that which is being written within. He beheld the realm of the spirit. He saw where you find the performance of the new covenant — not in your own strength, not in your fleshly ability, not in your natural way, but by the Living Word within. He discovered that we would become living epistles, not of the letter, not of outward conformity to external laws, but of the spirit, the inward Law of Life. The reason the “word” of God has bound and killed more people spiritually than it has helped is because it has been legislated outwardly.

Men make godliness a law rather than a life. “God said!” they thunder from their pulpits high upon the craggy pinnacle of Sinai, and then lay an outward rule and observance upon the people — “Don’t wear make-up, don’t wear shorts, don’t wear jewelry, don’t cut your hair, don’t go to movies, don’t dance, don’t smoke, don’t drink, don’t remarry if divorced, be in church every time the doors open, submit, pay tithes...” and on and on the list goes...don’t, don’t, don’t, and do, do, do! And if you fail to keep their laws, rules, regulations, and requirements you will burst hell wide open, they threaten. They kill people with the letter of the Word, missing entirely the spirit, the compassion of God, the love of God, the heart of God, and the ability of God to grow men up into the stature of Christ and establish His will in each and every life. People have been forced to go to the world to find some mercy, some encouragement, some understanding, some answers and solutions, some help because they couldn’t find it in the church, the preachers had no grace, no mercy, and no wisdom from the Lord. Christian ministers of the grace of God LEGISLATING THE LAW! What an enigma! What a travesty! “But the Bible says!” you contend. You hypocrites! You don’t even know what the Bible says! You know the letter that kills! You have never perused the pages of the blessed book which GOD IS, the revelation of God in Christ Jesus — the spirit that gives life! The New Testament is not that black, leather-bound book we call the Bible. The New Testament, the true Bible, the Living Epistle of Christ is the law of His life written upon the fleshy tables of the heart.

Ray Prinzing shared the following story which clearly illustrates the truth I now write. “A certain woman who had been raised under the bondage of the law of ‘thou shalt and thou shalt not’ of a certain group, rebelled against it all and went her own way, and eventually became a slave to drink. In due time her past ‘church acquaintances’ came to her with more of their ‘thou shalt not’ to see if they could turn her away from her alcoholism. She already knew the futility of trying to quit in herself, and said to them, ‘When God writes on my heart, Thou shalt not drink, then I will not drink.’ Not long thereafter, GRACE sovereignly came to her, HE WROTE IT UPON HER HEART, and she was immediately delivered from alcohol. Christendom would impose their standard from without, HE WRITES IT WITHIN, AND IMPARTS THE ABILITY TO LIVE IT OUT! That is GRACE!”

Mankind does not need a new social order, a new political system, or a new set of laws. All mankind needs is CHRIST. Furthermore, the whole world needs a

revelation of Christ of unprecedented proportions and unparalleled intensity, power and glory. Creation needs the manifestation of the sons of God. Creation groans with unutterable longing for the full manifestation of God in His sons. Sonship is the hope of the world and all creation! It is my deepest conviction that it is through the ministry of the sons of God that all nations will clearly and powerfully hear the Voice from the throne of God proclaiming with divine, heavenly authority, "Behold, I make all things new!"

The Kingdom of God brings a mighty change within humanity — the destruction of the Adamic creation and the establishment of the Christ within. This reality was accomplished by Jesus on the cross and through His burial and resurrection, but is made experiential in each of us through the present inworking of God. In one of his inspired writings along this line Paul Mueller says, "Only God can remove this 'man' from us. This is His battle, not ours! By the Spirit, we know the Lord is now focusing on this 'man' who is the cause of the manifestation of all evil and darkness. When once we are free of this carnal nature, there will be nothing within us that can respond to the devil's evil thoughts. Then the seed that we are shall be pure seed, identical to the Christ Seed, which shall be planted among men to establish the new creation of Christ in the earth. So shall the kingdom of God be manifest with power in all the earth, and then in the universe, that God may be all in all. And when this carnal, sinful nature is eventually removed from all mankind, Satan will have no place anywhere on this earth to plant his evil ideas and see them fulfilled. He will be a defeated foe! Then the cause of all the world's problems will no longer exist, and mankind will live the Christ Life with peace, joy and victory.

"The new order of the fullness of the kingdom of God will be free of the carnal nature, which is the man of sin, the real anti-christ. And God is now beginning this new creation order with you and me. He will no longer tolerate the evil that has been promoted in the world by the Adamic man. The Lord is not only revealing the manifestations of this evil 'man,' He also is going right to the heart of the matter. The Lord will take him out of us root, stock and branches, and eventually out of all others, so that he will never again trouble the world. The true interest and purpose of the Holy Spirit of God for His elect in this hour is not the results and effects of all the evil in the world, but rather with the cause of all evil. The Spirit of God is now dealing with the cause of all unrighteousness. And all who are in harmony with His Spirit are also in full agreement with the work of the Spirit of God for this great day.

"Babylon, Assyria, Palestina, Moab, Tyrus and others are only representative nations listed in the prophetic word destined to be judged. So also are Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, the Pope, Saddam Hussein and others but mere representatives of the carnal nature in man that seeks its own, carnal will. We know that all the evil designs of the oppressive dictators of the world also will be destroyed. Evil, carnal-minded world rulers may think they will gain sufficient power to take over the world, but they are wrong. Their plans will come to naught when God destroys the carnal nature in mankind. Because we are the firstfruits of the kingdom of God, which kingdom shall break in pieces and control all other kingdoms, He must begin that work with us. What a wonderful hope! The purpose of God during the early years of Israel's history was to destroy the evil men and nations because of their sins and iniquities. But that did not eliminate the cause of all unrighteousness. As soon as one nation and its evil plans were destroyed, another more evil nation and people rose up to trouble Israel and the world. His judgments then were only superficial and outward, as nations and

peoples were destroyed by war and other disasters. But His judgments today are inward, spiritual and absolute, for God is now dealing with His elect by His Spirit to remove from us the carnal, Adamic nature. In the past, God dealt with men and nations by punishing sin outwardly. Today God is dealing with His elect by cleansing us from within.

“Now, God is getting to the heart of the matter. The judgments of this present time will not be outward, literal judgments such as war and other calamities, as most think. The judgments of the Lord upon mankind will be moral and spiritual. What good can it possibly do to focus on the results of evil when God is dealing with the root cause of all iniquity? Must we kill the popes to eliminate all iniquity? Nonsense! Or should we wipe out all the suspected anti-christs? More nonsense! We must witness an all-out attack against the root cause of all iniquity, which is the carnal nature in all of us. And the Spirit of God is beginning now to deal with this carnal nature by removing him first from His elect. We are approaching the time of the harvest of the firstfruits. God is dwelling within us as a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29) to purge us of the carnal nature. This is the ‘day’ when all enemies shall be made His footstool. When He has cleansed us of the carnal nature, He will then send His consuming, fiery presence to cleanse others, each man in his own time and order. This is our Father’s purpose in redemption and restoration now coming to fulfillment. And He is beginning this work with us.

“Evil rulers and despots rise up to become strong in military might and power. They think they have the power to take over the world, but they are mistaken. God has a plan already in effect by which He shall destroy the power of the carnal, Adamic nature that drives them, put them under His feet, and make them all subject to the dominion of His kingdom. And Father’s great plan and purpose is now beginning to take effect as He reveals the seat of all iniquity within us, and commences to destroy this evil, Adamic man. The evil rulers and despots, the new agers and other political, governmental rulers may think they will usher in a new era of peace and prosperity, but they are wrong. God’s plan is already in effect, and it does not include their carnal ambitions. He is beginning the new age of the dominion of His kingdom of peace and righteousness, and He is beginning it with you and me. It is within you and within me that His kingdom must begin. Therefore, He must remove this carnal nature from those of us who are the firstfruits, or the infrastructure, of this most glorious and righteous kingdom of God.

“Rejoice, saints of God, you have been chosen to begin the new world order of the kingdom of God! And that new kingdom order must begin with us. God must deliver us of the carnal nature, for we are the firstfruits of His kingdom, and that is what He is doing now. If you want to know what God is doing now in the earth, look to the realm of the Spirit, and not to the events of darkness in the world. Our calling is to flow with the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit and live in the Spirit! And the Spirit of the Lord is now dealing with the great cause and source of all iniquity, not merely with the many manifestations of evil.

“The kingdom of God is the expression, revelation and manifestation of all that Christ is. There is the body of Christ and there also is the Christ who is the Spirit. We are the body of Christ because we are anointed with the Spirit that Christ is. Christ is the Spirit, and He also is the Word! He is that Spirit force by whose power the earth, the heavens, and everything of it was created. It was all created by Him and for Him,

and without Him nothing was made. Christ created all things by the Word that He is. He also sustains all things, keeping the entire universe in balance by His Spirit-power. He also shall reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:16-20). This is the same Christ who anoints His many-membered remnant to make us one body in Him. He fills us with Himself, with the glory that He is, that He might fulfill His purpose to manifest the fullness of the kingdom of God in the earth.

“Furthermore, every aspect of the kingdom of God is a revelation and manifestation of Christ. Christ, who is Spirit, is the creative, sustaining and restoring power of the entire universe. When we seek Him, we are communing with Him who upholds all things by the Word of His power. Christ is the Word of revelation truth that transforms us. From the beginning of the creation, through its violent upheavals and all during the six days of man’s unrighteous dominion, to the ultimate and final consummation when all things everywhere are reconciled to God, it will be Christ all the way. By His power, the creation will progress from the chaos of man’s dominion to Christ the Alpha, then to Christ the Omega, the Christ of all fullness! From the beginning of Father’s purpose in creation to the end, when all things are restored and returned to the Father, it is Christ and His Spirit-power accomplishing it all for the glory of the Father” — end quote.

Chapter 17

How The Kingdom Comes

(continued)

In our last Study I wrote of the great truth that the Kingdom of God does not come by law or legislation — it comes by regeneration and transformation into the image and likeness of God. Some of us have surely noted in scripture that God does indeed use law to govern the unregenerate and ungodly. Paul states this as plainly as it can be stated in I Timothy 1:8-10. “Now we recognize and know that the Law is good, if any one uses it lawfully — for the purpose for which it was designed; knowing and understanding this: that the Law is not enacted for the righteous — but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinful, for the irreverent and profane, for those who strike and beat and even murder fathers and strike and beat and even murder mothers; for manslayers, for impure and immoral persons, those who abuse themselves with men, kidnapers, liars, perjurers and whatever else is opposed to wholesome teaching” (Amplified Bible).

Let it be thoroughly known and understood that the law God has ordained to govern those outside of Christ is not God’s law, but man’s law. Every nation, every state and province, every city, town and community is regulated by the law of man. Under the Old Covenant the law of God was given to only one nation out of all the nations of the world, the nation of Israel. God’s law was never given to any Gentile nation or people anywhere on earth. And that law was given to Israel only under the Old Covenant. The law given to Israel completely and forever passed away when the New Covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus. It is no longer in effect for Israel nor has it been passed on to either the New Testament Church or the Kingdom brought by Jesus. “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Lk. 16:16).

To these words of Jesus the apostle Paul adds his testimony: “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Rom. 7:4,6; 6:14; Gal. 3:10-12,24,25).

THE LAW RESTRAINS EVIL

A man who keeps his bulldog tied to a fence has no right to brag that the dog has never bitten the mailman. How could the dog bite the mailman? If the owner wants to brag about his dog, let him set the dog free; then everyone (including the mailman) will know the dog's true nature. There you have the difference between the law and the Kingdom of God. The law merely restrains evil men (like the chain on the dog) from the ability to do their evil — the Kingdom of God transforms the nature so that men become righteous. Human government is an instrument of restraint, not a fountain of love and grace. It prohibits, forbids, restricts, regulates, sets limits, restrains, and, if it is not strictly limited itself, oppresses. The instruments of governments are sheriffs, police, marshals, bailiffs, detectives, guards, and soldiers. They use pistols, shotguns, nightsticks, tear gas, handcuffs, cells with bars, machine guns, cannon, bombs, and other assorted immobilizing and death-dealing weapons. Government is the enforcer of man's laws, it is not an instrument of the Kingdom of God. In itself, this is no reproach against government. Men are given to wrongdoing, and it has been the considered judgment of the wise down through the ages that there must be a public force to maintain law and order by restraining and punishing those who do wrong. And God Himself has ordained it so!

A brother once wrote: "While I was pastor in a certain city, a man who had been a Christian for twenty years approached me after one of our services. 'I enjoyed your message,' he said with a smile, 'but I really need more hellfire-and-damnation sermons to keep me in line.' The man had been a believer for years, and yet he had not matured enough to take responsibility for himself. He wanted to be told what to do and when to do it. Is God pleased by such an attitude? Would the father of a twenty-year-old man be pleased to hear his son say, 'Dad, I need to be kept in line'?"

"As a teenager, I participated in a ministry to the inmates of the Louisiana State Penitentiary. During my visits to the prison, I became friends with an inmate who claimed to be a Christian. But each time the man was paroled he would immediately commit a crime and return to prison. One day I asked him why he couldn't stay on the outside. His answer astonished me. He said, 'I can't handle life on the outside, man. It scares me, all those decisions. No, back here they tell me when to get up, when to eat, and when to go to bed.' He had to have the restraint of law and order over his life" — end quote.

Learn this, O man, and you will understand a great truth. There are people in this world that must be ruled by law, and God has ordained it so. When God instituted His first law He said, "If you do not live by it, you shall die." You have to understand that the law of God began in that long ago beginning in the garden of Eden, for that is where the first rule was laid down and the first penalty for breaking that rule was experienced. God has still ordained that the world be ruled by law. The vast majority of men, at this time, must be ruled by law. The Lord has established in the world two orders of government, one order is for the lawless, the other is for the righteous. The order for the lawless is law, and the order for the righteous is the spirit. "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners" (I Tim. 1:9). "There is therefore now no condemnation — no adjudging guilty of wrong — for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death...for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:1-2,14, KJV & Amplified).

Evil can be dealt with only in one of two ways — it must be restrained, or it must be remedied. Human government is ordained by God for the restraint of evil. “Let every person be subject to the governing (civil) authorities. For there is no authority except from God; and those that exist do so by God’s appointment. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and arranged — in divine order. And those who resist will bring down judgment upon themselves — receiving the penalty due them. For civil authorities are not a terror to people of good conduct, but to those of bad behavior. For he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong you should dread him and be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant to execute His wrath (His punishment) on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:1-4, Amplified). Words cannot be plainer. Thank God for our judicial and law enforcement officers who restrain the wickedness and violence and injustice of the criminal elements in our society! That is precisely what God has appointed human government to do.

There are a great many people who must be governed by a strong hand without their consent. When it comes to the restraint and punishment of evil the governed lose their right to be governed with their consent. They remind me of a very clever cartoon of a little boy who disputed that point with his mother. He had been studying in school about the right of the governed under our Constitution to consent to all government above them, and it had gotten into his mind. He had stolen apples, and his mother had warned him, but it had no effect. So she was spanking him. The little man turned around and said, “Mama, I object. Our glorious Declaration of Independence says that all just government must rest upon the consent of the governed, and I do not consent!” There are a great many children who will not consent, and they have to be governed whether they consent or not. There are a great many people who will never, short of God’s salvation, consent to do right. You have to govern them with a strong hand. We all need God to rule us one way or the other.

Government speaks of ORDER. Without government there would be only chaos. Do you know the difference between a mob and an army? The difference is discipline. Order is the difference. An army is orderly. An army moves in governmental order, under submission to chains of command. An army is controlled by an inward state of being. A mob is not controlled by anything. A mob gets out of hand, burning buildings, looting, lynching. There is no order, no inward law of responsibility. There is only one way to bring a mob under control — by the law, by force. They must be subdued by tear gas and bullets and carried away in paddy wagons. They must be restrained. If there is a remedy it must come later, through different means.

It is for this very reason that wicked men are shut up in hell, reserved under chains of darkness, awaiting a day of deliverance and release. God restrains wicked men until according to His purpose He can save them. With the release of the mystery of iniquity into the Adamic race, the wickedness of man soon became great in the earth, and by Noah’s day we find that “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). God allowed man’s sin and violence to go a certain course for a certain length of time, knowing full well just how far He could allow man to express these evil inclinations, and just where to draw the line. At the appropriate moment the spirits of these wicked men were put in prison, as society today puts a criminal in prison; the flood swept them away into hell and hell restrained the Antediluvians from committing more wrath upon the earth.

But God only restrains until He can save! That is precisely why Jesus, after His death and resurrection, went to PREACH to these spirits in prison, the spirits of the men who had been disobedient in the days of Noah. To them He carried the word of reconciliation, showing not only that Christ had died for their sins, but that He was risen for their justification. If perchance our minds are numbed with the wonder of such a thought, let us consider the record of this great event from Weymouth's translation. "Christ also once for all died for sins, the innocent One for the guilty many, in order to bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit, BY WHICH HE ALSO WENT AND P-R-E-A-C-H-E-D TO THE SPIRITS THAT WERE IN PRISON, who in former times had been disobedient, when God's long-suffering patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons — eight in number — were brought safely through the water" (I Pet. 3:18-20).

Despite the crafty and deceptive efforts of some to twist and explain away the plain meaning of this passage, it reveals that Jesus, after His death and resurrection, went and preached, not to men in the flesh, but to SPIRITS in prison; not to angels, not to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob or any of the other Old Testament saints, but to those men who had been DISOBEDIENT to the preaching of Noah in the days preceding the flood! And what did He preach to these long-departed spirits? Well, I Peter 4:6 certainly answers this question! The passage is only a few verses further on from the one under consideration, and as Peter continues speaking of the same subject we are informed, "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit..." The message is clear — though these were dead so far as their flesh bodies were concerned, and lived on only in the spirit, but not in the flesh, THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED UNTO THEM that they might be judged, or dealt with, the same as men who were alive in the flesh. Please notice, precious friend of mine, it was not doom or gloom or judgment or eternal damnation that was preached to these, but THE GOSPEL, the GOOD NEWS WHICH IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION, was PREACHED even to these spirits in prison, the disobedient ones!

It is written in the plainest of plain language. But there are some people who will not understand plain speech. They do not believe that Christ went down into hell to preach the gospel to dis-embodied spirits of wicked and rebellious men; they think He went somewhere down in the heart of the earth to rescue Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the Old Testament righteous people out of a place called Paradise and take them up to heaven. He may have done that, but there is not one shred of evidence for it anywhere in the pages of God's wonderful Book. The Bible nowhere says that. He went down into the lowest hell, and He was there on business! Wherever He went He did business for God. He went there to begin His new age deliverance ministry among a group of spirits that had been imprisoned there for two thousand three hundred and fifty years. He went and preached to the disobedient in the days of Noah, who were so bad that God could not wait for them to die, and another generation to arise, but in order to re-establish some order on the earth He had to sweep them all off the earth into hell. The fact that they remained there so long indicates the depth of their wickedness. They were ignorant and rebellious and would not learn of God. They were hateful and violent and perverted and murderers, boastful and vile in the extreme, and would not obey any law of God or man. And, blessed be God! it was the Gospel that was preached to them, informing them of the death and resurrection of God's Son, who was given as a propitiation for them, and

that God had faith in the blood of His Son to deliver them from the bondage of sin and death and hell into the glorious liberty of the children of God. There is no other reason to preach the Gospel (Good News) to anyone, anywhere! He led captive a host of captives, He brought under His dominion a vast company of men who had been captives of the devil, and carried them through the gates of hell to a glorious ascension into the realms of God's Spirit (Eph. 4:8-10). Hallelu-yah!

The law is done away in Christ. For the man in Christ the only law is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus which makes us free from the law of sin and death. I said earlier that there are only two ways in the universe, in the wisdom of the Almighty, to deal with evil — it must be either restrained or it must be remedied. In Christ is found the eternal remedy. In Christ men are forgiven, cleansed, changed, transformed, and made whole by the power of His Life. But for every man outside of Christ the law remains. I say for those who do wrong, if they do not embrace God's government of grace, then the next thing to do is give them the law. This club is not administered by the sons of God, for the sons of God are not God's policemen, neither God's bailiffs nor His prison guards. Sons are not called to that ministry. I would have a real problem being a sheriff or a policeman. Jesus never administered the law, He never enforced any of its demands, nor inflicted any of its penalties. His whole administration was one of mercy, forgiveness, love and restoration. The sons of God are on the side of the remedy, not the side of restraint or punishment. I have no condemnation of those who serve in law enforcement. It is ordained by God! But sons have a different calling, a higher calling. Sons are always on the mercy and deliverance side, for that is the order of the Priesthood of Melchizedek which is the order of the Son of God. God has committed unto us the word of reconciliation and the ministry of reconciliation. But to human government God has committed the ministry of restraint. The law administration must in God's due time pass away before the all-conquering Light of Life. There will never be enough law enforcement officers to stem the present overflowing tide of evil in the world! This darkness can only be dispelled by the blazing light of God's Christ. And His light is now arising in His elect at this junction of ages to dispel the darkness. We may expect tremendous things from His bountiful hand during this new Day!

THE PRIESTHOOD OF LIFE

As we follow on to know the Lord in this new and living way, it is with confidence that the Spirit of the Most High will direct our steps and open our understanding. We are at the point in history, at the breaking of the dawn of a new age, when only God can lead us step by step into the NEW ORDER He has prepared for us. No man but Jesus has trodden this way before. Only HE can teach us the path of sonship, and direct our steps on the highway to Zion, for there are no other manifested sons to lead the way. I do not say that the words of Jesus which are contained in the four Gospels are the only words that God has ever inspired; for I believe that God inspired all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world before Christ came. I believe that He inspired apostles and prophets and teachers after He came. I believe that God still inspires men and women who walk with Him in intimacy of fellowship and vital union today. I believe that inspiration is as continuous and perpetual as God; God's inspiration will never cease. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). If I believed anything else, I should realize that I were talking in direct conflict with my own experience.

I desire to speak with perfect frankness, for I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not believe that God's elect today is bound either by the example of Jesus Christ in the flesh, or of the first twelve apostles, or of the New Testament Church. While Christ certainly left us an example, that we should follow in His steps where the great principles of sonship are concerned, if you attempt to bind me to the exact modes of Jesus Christ and to follow in His example in all things, I will not do it. Jesus the Christ was born in a stable and laid in a manger, was He not? Am I to go away and have my next baby — my wife will never have any more babies, but if she had any more babies — am I to go away and hunt for a stable in which our baby is to be born? Am I myself disqualified from manifested sonship because I was born in a bedroom in a brick house in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania? Because my Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh had no place to lay His head, am I to sleep in the open air on the mountain tops and out in the deserts, just because I want to follow the example of Jesus?

Because God by His boundless grace through many years enabled me to travel and speak in homes, halls, conference rooms and church buildings, am I going to say, "The firstborn Son spoke only on the mountain sides, and by the lakes; if the people are to hear me, they have to all come to the mountain." That is not it at all. We are to follow Christ in the same Faith, in the same Hope, in the same Love, in the same Nature, in the same Wisdom, in the same Patience, in the same Obedience, in the same Vision, in the same Relationship with the Father, in the same Power, in the same spirit of Forbearance and Mercy and Compassion for humanity, and with the same Courage in fighting sin and sorrow and death.

If you tell me that I am to follow the example of the apostles, I say No, I will not do any such thing. The apostle Paul, for instance, went away and shaved his head at Cenchrea for a vow. How undesirable it would be for me to go away and shave off the little hair that is left on my head just because I want to follow the example of Paul! The apostle Paul did a number of things I would not care to do. He rather boasted that he did not have a wife. There is no doubt that he was a widower, because he would not have been a member of the Rabbinical Council, and would never have been an official witness at the death of Stephen, consenting to that death, unless he had been a Rabbi of rank. A member of that Council must needs be a married man. I agree with some of the Bible scholars, that the apostle Paul was probably a widower at the time he wrote the epistle in which he writes about the virtues of not having a wife. But I am a married man and have no leading of God and no desire to be otherwise. Am I to follow Paul, or the Spirit?

I am not going to follow in the footsteps of Peter, because I think we may learn a few things, and keep away from doing some things that Peter did. I hold, and I teach, and I will teach, that the example of even Christ Himself is not to be wholly followed. It is not as many as are led by what Jesus did two thousand years ago, who are the sons of God; but "as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God." We are not to have enforced poverty because Jesus made Himself poor. We are not to gather around us twelve disciples because He had twelve disciples. We are not to work at getting ourselves assassinated because He was hung on a cross by a mob. If we are LED BY THE SPIRIT to offer ourselves in a martyr's death, gladly will we do so; but we shall not seek it as a means of following in Jesus' footsteps. We are not to expect to have a ministry that lasts only three and one half years, nor to ascend into heaven before our disciples just because He did. We may never spit in the dirt

and make clay to anoint a blind man's eyes. We may never go to a Convention and with whips chase out those who sell books and tapes (although I have been tempted!), as Jesus did those who sold doves and pigeons in the temple in Jerusalem. May I wax bold to add that there is not even any need to try to duplicate precisely the way the Churches were structured in the early days, or the way their ministries functioned. The order of sonship and the priesthood of Melchizedek are not concerned with orders of eldership, whether we meet in a home or in a conventional church building, how the chairs are arranged, nor even with orders of the so-called "five-fold ministry." It is not a priesthood after the flesh. It is an outflow of life after the Spirit. It does not concern itself with outward form; it breathes forth as an essence. Jesus wasn't a Son because He had twelve disciples, or preached off the bow of a boat. He was a Son because He manifested and ministered the LIFE OF THE FATHER.

In the religious systems the order, the method, the technique, the organization, the creed, the liturgy is all-important. And in the so-called "New Testament Churches" it is no different — they just have a little different system, one from two thousand years ago, they are trying to reproduce. But in the Melchizedekian Order THE ONE WAY IS THE LIFE OF THE LORD. We must live and move and have our being in the life of the Spirit. Forget the outward forms! This is why there are no patterns, no methods, no precedents of any kind established in the New Testament for the ministry of manifested sonship. Jesus never did the same thing in exactly the same way twice. When He healed blind Bartimaeus He merely spoke the word, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," and he received his sight. But when He healed the two blind men in the house He touched their eyes in addition to speaking a word. And when He healed the man born blind from birth He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and commanded him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.

So what is the best way, the right way, the sonship way to heal a blind man? No one can tell you — not even Jesus! What is the best way to preach the Gospel? No one can tell you, although the seminaries think they can! What is the best way to hold a meeting? Again no one can tell you. Jesus never had a song leader or worship director, never by singing, clapping, or worshipping "created an environment" for the Father to manifest Himself in their midst. Yet, if you were to ask me what the right way is, I would have to say that I do not know. I really do not know what is the right way to do anything. I do not know the right way to meet humanity's needs, or solve the saint's problems, or bring people into the present truth. In the Bible you cannot find THE RIGHT WAY to minister or to do the work of the Kingdom. This is because the Kingdom of God comes by the dispensation of the Spirit. It does not come by outward observation — by forms, methods, or techniques. What ever you do in the Kingdom, what ever way you use, wherever you go, it must be by the Spirit. The Spirit is never traditional, predictable, or static — He is always original, always fresh, new, and transcendental. He may never repeat what He did yesterday, or the way He did it. In these last years, wherever I have gone, I have never paid any attention to the way. Regardless of the way people meet, or don't meet, or minister, or serve the Lord, or walk with God, it does not mean anything. The real question is: Are they led by the Spirit? Is there the flow of His Life? Is there the manifestation and quickening of Himself? What is GOD doing? And HOW is HE doing it? I look to see what God IS DOING, rather than trying to introduce some "order" for God to move in.

One of the most intriguing descriptions of the unique character of the High Priesthood of Jesus is found in Hebrews 7:17 wherein it is stated, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The order of Melchizedek is an order of "King-Priests." "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God...first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that...King of Peace" (Heb. 7:1-2). There were the Levitical priests of Israel and they were of the Aaronic order. But when the Kingdom of God came through Jesus, the priesthood of Aaron was terminated and replaced with the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. Jesus is a King-Priest after the "order" of Melchizedek. Aaron was made a priest after the law of a carnal commandment, but Jesus is made priest after the power of an endless (indissoluble) life (Heb. 7:16). The order of Melchizedek is the ORDER OF LIFE.

May the Lord have mercy upon all who cherish the hope of sonship that we may be delivered from anything other than the life of this priesthood. Christ Jesus is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, which is after the power of an indissoluble life. He is the High Priest of this order, and there can be no High Priest apart from a priesthood. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that the order of Melchizedek is the order of the Son of God. Just as the firstborn Son is the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Priesthood, so are the other sons of God the body of this glorious Priesthood of Life. They are kings who reign by life and priests who minister life. Of these it is written, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). It is this dual order of King-Priest that identifies these overcoming ones as pertaining to the order of Melchizedek. We must learn this one lesson, that the Melchizedek Priesthood is known only by the OUTFLOW OF HIS LIFE. Then we will enter into the Holiest of all to abide there in His presence until we come out from His presence with the heavenly and eternal bread and wine to minister to creation's needs. The order of Melchizedek is not in any way related to so-called New Testament Church order. It is more than that, it is something of life, the order of life, the order brought forth by life, something living, vibrant, imperishable, incorruptible, immortal, celestial, divine, sovereign, transcendental. We are conscious that God is bringing something new and glorious into being. The church order has never produced one manifested son of God. God is bringing something into this earth that is far, far beyond anything we know. He is birthing a manchild, a priesthood, a kingship, a government, a brand new order. It will make right everything that has been wrong. It will make everything as God planned it to be. It will bring righteous judgment, it will bring mercy, and wisdom, and deliverance, and power and glory to creation beyond our fondest hopes and dreams or wildest imaginations. IT WILL SET CREATION FREE. The great contrast in the book of Hebrews is between the law and the order of Melchizedek. The Kingdom of God can never come by law, for law brings bondage, the consciousness of sin, and death. The Kingdom of God is the REIGN OF LIFE which brings deliverance, liberty, righteousness, peace and joy.

LAW VS. LIFE

A dear sister in Christ, Michelle Sperber, has graciously given me permission to share one of her beautiful parables which speaks so eloquently of this Kingdom order and ministry of Life. She writes: "There was once a Kingdom down by the sea by the name of Peace. It wasn't a big Kingdom, but it was a happy one; and all the people rested in the Knowledge of Good. The King whose name was Teachable Spirit was

married to Queen Tender Heart, and they had two beautiful girls, Harmony and Grace, and two boys, Trusting and Loyal.

“Every day Harmony and Grace would sing songs to the little ducks that would gather by the pool on the right side of the castle while Trusting and Loyal taught dancing lessons to the chickadees. Now when the chickadees heard the lovely songs, they were filled with so much joy that they would flap their wings so hard that they would exhaust themselves. New Vigor, Trusting’s faithful companion, would transform them when they fell to the ground, and they would be enabled to learn the dance which they yearned to do since Trusting and Loyal began teaching. The dance was called ‘Together.’ The dance received such wide acclaim that all the animals of the Kingdom desired to learn it, so before long, every animal, big and small, came to Trusting and Loyal to be taught ‘Together.’ Even the fishes of the sea were compelled to leave their habitation to learn the new dance and everyone was empowered to overcome all natural limitations.

“But in the neighboring Kingdom, the mother of Teachable Spirit, whose name was Bondage Law, ruled. There was no singing or dancing in her Kingdom — only arguments and quarrels, sadness and misery. Her Kingdom was called Tyranny. No one who heard of it would dare pass through, for armed guards with iron teeth, that could bite a man in ten pieces, prevented any from entering. Now, Bondage Law was very unhappy with her daughter-in-law, Tender Heart, and her grandchildren, Harmony and Grace, were a real disappointment to her. She plotted day and night how to change her family and most fervently, how she could kill Tender Heart.

“One day after consulting with Fear and Torment, Bondage Law visited her innocent family. She planned on overcoming Tender Heart having Fear and Torment as able task masters. When Bondage Law arrived at the castle, her son Teachable Spirit was out riding his horse, Easy Going. Fear and Torment took Easy Going by such surprise that he reared up and threw his rider to the ground. Teachable Spirit’s neck was snapped and he died instantly. When Tender Heart, who was looking over the balcony, saw all that had happened to her husband, grief overcame her; and in that moment her heart left her. It was taken away by Sorrow and was brought into the darkest room of the dungeon. A black veil was draped over the now stone heart which once was a vibrating, living one, while an invisible flashing sword prevented anyone from coming near it.

“A proclamation went out over the land that King Teachable Spirit was dead and that Queen Tender Heart’s name had been changed to No Heart. No Heart, with the insistence of her mother-in-law, Bondage Law, who was at her side continuously, changed the name of the Kingdom to War. For you see, now that Tender Heart had lost her heart and name, Bondage Law ruled both Kingdoms of Tyranny and War.

“Now on the day of the King’s death, a dove whose name was Hope was sent from the realm of the most high with the message that the Kingdom of Peace could be restored if the black veil was lifted. There was only one possibility that this could happen, for only the entrance of a king could cause the sword to cease flashing. The invisible sword would cut asunder anyone who was not a king. So the dove flew into the Kingdom of War, that had every man now against each other, looking for one who could marry the Queen. There was no one to be found, even though those were the

days that kings were such not because of what family they came from, but because of their nature. He who overcame his natural tendencies became a king.

“Hope saw that there was none on earth who fit the qualification but she remembered one in heaven whose name was Goodwill. Upon thinking of him and then calling his name, he immediately appeared. Dressed in the armor of charity, loving kindness, and meekness, he was ready to follow Hope into the neighboring land of Faith. It was in the land of Faith that an army could be prepared to do battle against the inhabitants of Tyranny. The plans were quickly made with General Integrity and Major Honor. All the overcomers were gathered together, mustered with Brave and Courage, the 100th Battalion’s squad leaders.

“They all marched under the Banner of Love, and because they had such power not a weapon was lifted against them — all enemies fled at their sight. The Hands of Glory came from the invisible realm to assist Goodwill as he boldly entered the dungeon. Goodwill rejoiced at seeing the Hands of Glory, for it was written in the Book of Books that only the Hands of Glory could remove the veil. In the twinkling of an eye, the black veil was lifted. The stone heart that had stopped its beating became a vibrating, pulsating giver of life again, immediately returning to its home in Tender Heart. A shout of victory came forth in one voice from all the inhabitants of the Kingdom. All were made whole again by this one act.

“Goodwill had compassion even on Bondage Law and because the Hands of Glory were with him, he had the power to change her name. ‘Bondage, you shall no longer be Bondage Law, but you shall be called Law of Life,’ he announced with Forgiveness, his best friend. ‘All those who need to be set free from the law of sin and death will be sent to you, Law of Life, and your Kingdom will be called Righteousness.’

“And it came to pass that one year later, King Goodwill and Love Fulfilled bore a son. It was Law of Life who inspired his name, Joy, and gave him a Kingdom. It was in the Kingdom of Joy that all three Kingdoms of Righteousness, Peace and Joy became one. An invitation was sent into all the world beckoning everyone to come to the Kingdom of Happily Ever After, and King Joy issued this one command: ‘All passports must be obtained in the Land of Faith and upon arrival to the Kingdom, this proclamation shall be heard:

‘GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST
AND ON EARTH, PEACE AND GOODWILL TOWARD MEN!
WELCOME TO ETERNAL LIFE!’
— end quote.

Let it be thoroughly known and understood by every man and woman who names the name of Christ that the only purpose of the law is to give the knowledge of sin. “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:19-20). The law imparts the knowledge of sin by contrasting the weakness of the flesh, what we are and do by human nature, with the pure and holy and righteous nature of God. The law is weak through the flesh, Paul said. Man is chained and locked in to the law of sin and death. Mankind

doesn't have to learn how to sin, that's all he knows how to do. Mankind doesn't have to learn how to die, that's all he can do — you're born and you sin, you sin and you die. No one taught you how to steal, no one taught you how to fly off the handle and say ungodly things, no one taught you how to lie, no one instructed you how to be filled with lust and passion, no one gave you lessons on how to be greedy and self-centered, no one told you at two years of age how to claim your turf and kick and scream if anyone stepped on it. You're born with it. It's part of the make-up of the natural man.

The law has never, ever, saved any man anywhere from being a sinner. If by nature you are righteous, you need no law. Law is irrelevant to the righteous man. New creatures do not need old laws. On the other hand, if you by nature are unrighteous, the law can in no way help you. All it can do is proclaim your guilt and punish you. It has no power to make you obey.

Christians are always interested in what is going on in the world. They are always trying to legislate a righteousness of God upon those who don't even know God. But I have news for you. Legislation — that is, law — does nothing more than make sin exceedingly sinful (Rom. 7:13). God is not the one who is laying law on the world in this hour. God never did lay the law on the world. He only gave the law to His people Israel, and He gave it to them to teach them what sin is. The law never did and never could take away sin. The Lord brought the law to its result, its fulfillment, its completion, its conclusion and its end in Jesus Christ. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). We must understand that when Jesus came as the firstborn among many brethren He concluded the law, He met the law's every righteous requirement by the power of divine life, and Himself became the righteousness of God, available to us now by the spirit of sonship. New creation men are partakers of the nature of Christ, they are no longer natural men under law. If you are under the law you are not a son. If you are the son of God, you are not under law.

The problem the church world has today is that they are out trying to change the behavior of unregenerated men by laying the law upon them! Most Christians glory in death. They find death and condemnation glorious. For, you see, the law, even the ten commandments that people would like to see posted in every classroom, court of law, and government building, is, according to Paul, "the ministration of death and condemnation, written and engraven in stones" (II Cor. 3:6-9). But God has no law for the world in this hour. Oh, yes, there is still the restraining law of human government, but GOD by the ministration of His Spirit has no law for mankind. "For if that which is done away (the law) was glorious, much more that which remaineth (the Spirit) is glorious" (II Cor. 3:11). God is working with His people, His elect, His chosen, His seed that He has destined before the foundation of the world to become His sons. He has delegated all responsibility for law and order to the kingdoms of this world. The only law in His Kingdom is the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus! That is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God.

The church world today is following some really strange paths, trying to lay upon the world the law that God gave Israel under the Old Covenant, which law was never, ever, given to the world, and which was even less ever given to the Church, and which is now abolished. It is a gross stupidity, it is blatant idiocy, it is an incredible absurdity to try and establish the Kingdom of God by law! You see, rather than

telling those who are getting abortions that we are working to get the law changed, we need to be preaching peace by Jesus Christ so that men will come to know the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Our business is to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and bring transforming power into men's lives. As sons of God it is not our business to legislate how much a man can drink, where he can drink it, how much a man can smoke, whether he can carry a gun, or to set penalties and punishments for any number of sins. These issues are somebody's business, they are just not OURS! Christians love to jump on these "legislative" and "political" bandwagons — but you won't find Jesus on any of them! Jesus did not come to lay the law on the world, God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Salvation — that is the business of the Kingdom of God. May all who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship say today with the firstborn Son, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" God does not send His sons into the world to tell the world what they can and cannot do, and what the penalties will be if they do or do not do it — He is bringing SAVIOURS up on mount Zion, and it is by salvation that the mount of Esau will be judged and the Kingdom shall be the Lord's (Obadiah 21). That is God's strange work.

Yet, there are brethren who insist that the Kingdom of God will be an age governed by the law of God. By this they mean laws given by Moses. At the very least they mean the Ten Commandments. Let us examine this theory. We shall suppose, for the sake of argument, that I have a friend in Central America who owns a large banana plantation. His name is Carlos. Carlos has raised bananas all of his life and has become independently wealthy with his enterprise. Now, let us further suppose that, because of our close friendship, Carlos decides that he would like to come and live near us here in El Paso, Texas. He purposes to sell his banana plantation in Guatemala and move to El Paso, where he intends to purchase a large tract of land — to put in a banana plantation! I warn my friend, "You cannot raise bananas in West Texas. We are in the middle of a desert and during the winter the night temperatures dip into the 20's. The bananas will die either from thirst or from freezing. There is no way you can have a banana plantation in West Texas!

My friend, however, is unconvinced and implacable. He has never been in a desert, nor has he ever in his life seen freezing temperatures. His entire life has been spent in Guatemala and his whole world has been bananas. He believes he can devise a way to make his project work. So he moves to El Paso lock, stock, and barrel. Soon he has purchased a large ranch nearby and the time comes for him to plant his banana trees. The trees do grow for a while, but the leaves are yellow and the plants stunted. Then, one fair October night, the final catastrophe strikes — the first fall freeze arrives in all its fury. The poor man walks out and views the devastation. His whole crop is a failure. All his toil has been for nothing. This year he will have NO BANANAS! Carlos, however, is an incurable optimist. After all, this is but one try, and perhaps next year will be different. But next year is not different; again he loses his crop and doesn't get even one banana. Now, let us suppose that Carlos plants a banana crop every year for fifteen hundred years and each year the result is the same — no bananas! Would he then, I ask, be justified in trying just one more time? The answer is obvious.

Thirty-five centuries ago at mount Sinai, amidst flaming fire and quaking earth, God gave Israel the Law. Under the leadership of faithful servants of God, the nation of

Israel at times seemed fairly enthusiastic in their effort to keep the Law and enjoy the blessings that it provided. Doubtless, in every generation there were individuals who endeavored earnestly to maintain their covenant relationship with God upon the basis of keeping the Law. But they all failed. To keep the Law was beyond the ability of any member of the fallen race! God knew this; but He wanted the Israelites to try to keep the Law, for He wished to demonstrate the need for a mighty change within their heart and nature. The Old Covenant failed, not because the law was faulty, but because of the weakness of the flesh. Israel lived as a nation under that Law for fifteen hundred years. And in those fifteen hundred long centuries not one single Israelite was ever able to perfectly keep that Law. Not one! Not one in fifteen hundred years! NO BANANAS! And now, O fools, and slow of heart to believe, you come to inform me that God will establish His Kingdom by PLACING THE WHOLE WORLD UNDER LAW! Hear it! Oh, my friends, hear it! "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God...for by the law is the knowledge of sin...for ALL HAVE SINNED, AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD" (Rom. 3:19-20,23). Have Paul and I said enough to STOP EVERY MOUTH? The Law bore absolutely no fruit in fifteen hundred years. Would God now be justified in trying it one more time in the Kingdom?

Dearly beloved brethren, only the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has the power to make mankind free from the law of sin and death. Only as men are raised from the dead by the power of the everlasting Father who raised up Christ from the dead, can any man fulfill the righteousness of the law by walking in newness of life. Let us not be so stupid as to believe that the manifested sons of God will be dispensers and enforcers of law. The terrible truth is that the law is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, that mysterious tree in the very precincts of Eden that brings naught but the knowledge of sin and death to all who reach forth their hand to partake of it. But, thank God! there is another tree, the Tree of Life.

The wonderful Tree of Life in Eden was, as is said of Christ, "in the world" but "not of the world." The life-giving fruit of this Tree was accessible to man but had absolutely nothing to do with the realm of earthiness, for it was heaven's own divine life brought into man's world and made available to him. In the Tree of Life God invited man to find Him 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, and 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 (Jn. 3:8) and shining in the image of God. As George Hawtin once pointed out, 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 man up beyond any possibility of sin, corruption and death into the incorruptible and 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 celestial things. The wisdom and power of God would be wide open to him and he would walk in the atmosphere 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.

This was the glory of the Tree of Life in Eden! Trees in scripture are often used to represent men, and the Tree of Life represents a wonderful person — one with ENDLESS LIFE, DIVINE LIFE, CELESTIAL LIFE. It is written of Melchizedek that he had neither beginning of days nor end of life, but abides a priest continually (Heb. 7:3). It states that “he liveth” (Heb. 7:8). And again it says that the order of Melchizedek is “after the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7:16). Furthermore, it is revealed that the order of Melchizedek IS THE ORDER OF THE SON OF GOD. Other scriptures confirm these mentioned, but I point these out to emphasize the fact that life is one of the chief signs of the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, it is my deep conviction that the Tree of Life in the garden of Eden represented the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, and upon the disobedience of Adam and Eve they were banished from the Garden and Cherubim with a flaming sword which turned in every direction were stationed at Eden’s gate to guard the way to the Tree of Life. In their unclean and corrupted condition they could not partake of that great Priesthood which both ensured eternal life and ministered eternal life. And thus it has been through long millenniums, the Melchizedek Priesthood has been guarded and kept secret and untouched until another Priest after the order of Melchizedek, even Jesus the Saviour, should arise and clear the way for partaking of that glorious life. Of course, there are some qualifications and requirements, even now, for partaking fully of that blessed realm. The Spirit saith, “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). Not everyone eats of it, only those who are prepared to eat of it. The promise is not of eternal life shouting and dancing up and down the streets of Glory-land, but of attaining to the power and glory of THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.

Hebrews 7:11-15 tells us that we cannot be perfected by the Levitical priesthood. In the order of Aaron there was a continual succession of priests, one dying and another taking his place. One by one they grew old and died: the eye, often filled with tears, was closed; the heart stood still; the hands crossed meekly on the breast. Aaron died on Hor, and all his successors in mystic procession followed him. The office remained, but the occupants passed. That characterized the whole system; it bore the mark of change and weakness and death. It could not effect anything that was really abiding and permanent, much less anything that was eternal. And it was all because of sin. Every High Priest of the order of Aaron had to offer sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people’s. The whole inner life of the worshipper was what the system was, subject to sin and failure and decay.

Therefore another Order of priesthood must arise. Jesus is the High Priest of this new Order. The glorious statement is made that another priest arises after the similitude of Melchizedek who is made “after the power of an endless life.” This brings us to what is implied by the word “endless.” This is the Greek word AKATALUTOS which means INDISSOLUBLE. It was in the power of an indissoluble life that Jesus was constituted a priest after the Order of Melchizedek. As the writer to the Hebrews has pointed out, on earth Jesus was not a priest. He would have needed to be of the tribe of Levi in order to be a priest during the days of His flesh on earth, because that priesthood at that time was still in force. Nor could He at that time have been a priest after the order of Melchizedek! On earth His life was dissoluble, or He could not have died for us. Now His life has become “indissoluble”; and now He cannot die. The mystery of the Melchizedekian Priesthood is the mystery of ETERNAL LIFE.

Christ Jesus Himself is the Eternal One, who abideth Priest forever. His priesthood is unchangeable, for His priesthood is an everlasting one, ever living, ever active. What a contrast to all the Levitical priests, on whose graves this epitaph may ever be inscribed: "Not suffered to continue by reason of death." How different is our High Priest, after the Order of Melchizedek! Death tried to master Him; but He could not be holden of it. "He continueth ever." "He ever liveth." "He is a priest forever." WHEREFORE HE IS ABLE TO SAVE COMPLETELY THEM THAT DRAW NEAR UNTO GOD BY HIM. Save us completely! What a thought! Full salvation — spirit, soul, and body! Nothing left untouched, untransformed. It is by virtue of His QUALITY OF LIFE that He is able to start the work of redemption and also bring it to its completeness. Because He is of an endless — indissoluble, incorruptible — life, He can bring all that He ministers unto into this same endless and incorruptible life.

Praise God, the Melchizedek Priesthood BRINGS PERFECTION. Jesus lives in the Spirit as High Priest in the power of an endless life. And Christ dwells within us in the power of an endless life. Each work He does within us He is able to do in the power of an endless life. Nothing can stand before that transforming life. What hope this evokes within us! He breathes His own life into us. He works within us AS A LIFE, as our own life, so that it is our very nature to radiate the glory and power of God. His life as our life within us is the power that must triumph over all the powers of sin and death.

What a glorious path is marked out for us! THE SONS OF GOD ARE A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD. THEIR PRIESTHOOD IS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEK. The High Priest of this Order has run on before and entered the veil into the Holiest of all. And we are running also and are entering that veil. Something marvelous, amazing and stupendous is about to happen, beloved, as we press on into God. God shall surely and truly usher us into the fullness of the Order of Melchizedek. Through His flesh we too shall enter fully the unseen and eternal realm of God and learn of its mystery. Having entered this realm, we shall deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. Therefore I say that the great Melchizedekian Priesthood Ministry will be functioning to the full when the priests of this Order have fully put on immortality and incorruption (I Cor. 15:53). This will be the great manifestation of the sons of God that all creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain" for (Rom. 8:18-25).

The Lord is in the process of bringing His overcoming remnant into THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. It is greater than the forgiveness of sins, greater than the new birth, greater than Pentecostal power. It is 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, apostolic power, and even greater than power to raise the dead. 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 which is the power of an incorruptible life, to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. A world is coming where there is no limited measure of the Spirit, no "in part" works and manifestations of power in the gift realm. There will be no need to heal the sick, cast out devils, multiply bread and fish, or raise the dead — it is an eternal realm where everlasting life will flow fully and freely to all creation. Death is not the grave or the coffin — DEATH IS THIS WHOLE REALM IN WHICH WE HAVE 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 incorruptible life. God is moving to bring His holy remnant into the fullness where Christ Jesus now dwells. No Christian alive has ever come to this. There will be a full and complete severing from the earth realm, from the carnal mind, from fleshly passions, from lack and immaturity, from the death realm with all its claims. God wants a free, heavenly, celestial people right here on earth, a body of sons totally detached from all that is earthly, limited, and temporal. It is possible to move into a resurrection realm that places us beyond time, beyond the thinking and power of the world, beyond human nature, beyond the bondage of health, security, and death itself. Is that not the greatest power God can give to mankind — to make him an eternal, spiritual being in the very glory of God? And God's order to accomplish this is very simple — Jesus Christ; then His body, the manifested sons of God; and finally all creation. Jesus ministers this power to us; we minister it to creation. THIS IS THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Chapter 18

How The Kingdom Comes

(continued)

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 15:11).

The “seventh trump” is the last trump — the conclusion of God’s great Kingdom process. The day shall surely come when the kingdoms of this world, the rulerships of this world, the government of the United States of America, the governments of Europe, the governments of Mexico and Central and South America, the governments of Asia, the governments of Africa — the kingdoms of this world, the kingdoms of all the nations in your World Atlas — ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST. They are all His now by ownership, as creations of His hand and under His sovereignty, but they are not His in a “Kingdom” relationship. There is a time in God’s great Kingdom program when that truth is proclaimed out of the heavens: “The kingdoms of this world ARE BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.” That means that whatever is true of any man who has “entered the Kingdom” will be true of all the nations of this world, including both their inhabitants and their governments.

Who is the Lord? Jesus is our Lord, for truly “God hath made this same Jesus...both LORD AND CHRIST” (Acts 2:36). Not only do the Kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, they also become the kingdoms of “His Christ”. There are two items listed here as being involved in the rulership of the whole world. The whole world is to become converted to the dominion of OUR LORD and to the dominion of HIS CHRIST — His anointed ones, His body. Christ means “the anointed.” “But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you...” (I Jn. 2:27). “HE (Jesus) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” Those who have received the anointing of the Spirit that rested upon our glorious Head and Lord, those who grow up unto maturity in Christ Jesus as the sons of God, form the corporate body of “His Christ”. Let it be thoroughly known and understood that our Christ is the Lord Jesus, whereas His Christ is His anointed body which in union with Him walks in His spirit, hears His voice, puts on His mind, is transformed into His image, stands in His nature, power and glory, and does His will upon the earth. They are the sons of God. All nations, all the kingdoms of “this world,” shall be brought under the Kingdom dominion of the Lord Jesus and His Christ. That is the immutable word of our infallible God!

Do you suppose that one fair morning some sons of God will show up in Washington, D.C., walk into the White House, the Capitol, and the Pentagon, requesting a meeting with the President, the members of Congress and the Joint Chiefs of Staff? When all are assembled the sons announce, “Gentlemen, the Lord has sent us here and we are now taking over the entire country of the United States of America in the name of

Jesus Christ. We hereby dismiss the President and his cabinet, the Congress, all the department secretaries, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and all other officials of the Federal Government. You can all go home — we are in charge as of 12 o'clock noon today.” Do you think that would fly in Washington? No — God has an altogether different plan. Our Lord Jesus Christ and His anointed body, His Christ, shall gain the government of the world by KINGDOM POWER — by the saving, delivering, transforming power of the Holy Ghost. We love America. We love China. We love Russia. We love all the nations of America, Asia, Africa and Europe and the far-flung islands of the sea. America will be a better nation when our Lord and His Christ rule it with a rod of iron. All the nations of the earth will be more blessed, prosperous, peaceful and righteous when the Kingdom of God rules in their midst. In fact, they will be totally blessed, peaceful and righteous! And that is on the agenda, my friend — that is God’s Kingdom Program in the earth!

NOT BY POLITICS

In our recent Studies on the subject of HOW THE KINGDOM COMES we have seen clearly that the Kingdom of God does not come by force, it does not come by democracy, nor does it come by law or by any other method of human government. In this Study we shall consider the great truth that the Kingdom does not come by any kind of politics. Jesus never once discussed with His disciples their relationship to the government of Israel or to that of Rome, or what kind of political system they should aim to set up as the Kingdom of God. Jesus did not institute any social reform, nor did He even suggest any political, judicial or legislative reforms. He sanctioned no dream of a renovated government, apart from personal spiritual regeneration. He did not denounce the Roman despotism. He did not interfere with existing customs and institutions. He did not directly attack governmental wrongs which certainly were rampant. He did not start a great crusade against the evils of those times. He let them alone. He did not intervene in the affairs of statecraft, because the customs, the habits of men, the laws and institutions of society are but the expression of the human heart. Put that right, and you make all things new. Get the Kingdom of God within men, and you will soon have it without. Righteous ways, righteous acts and righteous institutions will spring forth out of the hearts and lives of transformed men. That is the power and the glory of the Kingdom of God!

More than a century ago James Lewis penned these penetrating words: “The establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth is slow work. It requires not that men should be busy with the affairs of other people, but that they should come first to themselves, and mourn over the meanness of their own nature and the vanity of their own life; not that they should crusade against the evils of society, but weep bitter tears over their own sins; not that they should fussily seek to put the world right, but get put right themselves. Whether the Kingdom of God does nor does not affect these external matters, we shall presently see. But directly it does not deal with them. It deals with the individual. ‘The kingdom of God cometh not with observation’; it is hidden, internal, spiritual. It is the establishment of righteousness in the human soul. It is the subjugation of the powers of man to the mind of Christ.

“Men talk of this kingdom as mystical, unreal. Let them try it for a month! Jesus Christ aspires to a sway such as no Caesar, Emperor, or Dictator, has ever been able to command. A rule of marching armies and clanging swords can do much. That grand Roman power was mighty. It could tax men and make them pay. It could

stretch its scepter over distant provinces, and awe men into submission. It could say to one man, 'Go,' and he went, to another 'Come,' and he came. It could command the bodies, the time, the thoughts of men. It could send men to death, and even in his mortal pangs the poor gladiator must cry, 'O Caesar, dying, I salute thee!' One thing it could not do, even though it bound captives to its chariot wheels. There is a part of man's nature which coercion cannot reach; a path which the 'lion's whelps have not trod.' To that region man can retire, and say to all invading powers, 'Thus far shall you come and no further.' That is the region in which the Kingdom of Christ prevails. He will possess the heart of man. He will control the passions, and govern the will, and purify the motives, and mold the life of man. The whole nature shall be subdued to the quality of its Lord, and all the current of man's being shall turn to Him. The drunkard and drug addict shall deny his insatiable craving, the thief shall steal no more, the liar shall speak the truth, the immoral and perverted shall draw away from his lust, the slothful, lazy and opportunist shall devote himself to his work, and men shall be changed, captivated, charmed by HIS WORD. They shall prefer HIM to their chief joy!

"You will have noticed that His promises of help reach the deep, eternal cravings of the human heart. He has come, not to satisfy a craze, or gratify a whim, or minister to a passing fancy, but that men might have life. The power of the kingdom of God is the love of God in Jesus Christ. Our King comes to dwell with us, to be in us. His throne is the heart of man. It is not in word, in formularies, ordinances, creeds, laws, or governmental coercion. It is in power. It is the virtue of God in Christ Jesus which enters human weakness at the touch of faith. It is 'Christ in you.' Fling open, then, the gates of your soul. The Lord, strong and mighty — strong to deliver, mighty to save — waits to enter. Let the King of Glory in!" — end quote.

If you entertain the crude notion that reigning with Christ means sitting behind a desk over in Jerusalem with telephone at hand and television cameras running, you know nothing as you ought to know of that blessed Kingdom of God which is "not of this world" and which "comes not with outward show," but is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And I do not hesitate to tell you that when Christ comes in mighty power to bring the triumph of His Kingdom into new and vaster dimensions on this earth through the ministry of that body of sons so painstakingly and meticulously formed under His hand of dealing throughout this present age, vast multitudes of Christians will MISS HIS COMING because it will not conform to the manner, purpose or result that they imagine it should be. Like the Jews two thousand years ago, these Christians will continue on with their religious games, singing, clapping, preaching, organizing, crusading, and waiting for a second coming and a kingdom that will meet their demands and fulfill their misguided expectations. Ah, we blame the Jews for their blindness and unbelief, and of making the Word of God of none effect through their tradition, but are there not vast multitudes of the Lord's people in our own day who are doing this very thing? The Jewish nation was not ignorant of the teaching of scripture concerning His coming and Kingdom — in fact, they were good "fundamentalists", anxiously expecting His arrival — but they had drifted so far from the Holy Spirit of God, that when the day arrived they did not know it because it took the Holy Spirit to reveal it. And as the Jews of old failed to recognize the coming of the Lord and His Kingdom in their day, even so a sleeping church today fails to recognize the signs and events that herald a new and glorious and fuller manifestation of that same blessed Person!

Arthur Eedle from England shared the following in an issue of his paper THE PROPHETIC TELEGRAPH. "If the testimony of many hymns and choruses is to be believed, then Jesus is due to receive a warm welcome on His return. In American terminology, He will be given a 'ticker-tape parade.' In Britain He will be received as on a day of Royal Coronation, with flag-waving and cheering, as He descends from the clouds with thousands of angels in His train. But will 'The Crowning Day' really be like that? Does the Lord intend to come in such a manner to receive the admiration of His people? A moments reflection should be sufficient to dismiss such ideas as totally out of keeping with the Divine Character. The image is born of human typology, how we as humans behave towards Royalty and VIP's. Well, not everybody, but most of us!

"In this brief writing we shall take a look at a few very important facts, in order to present an alternative picture of what the beginning of the Kingdom of God is like. It may take some by surprise. When Adam was first created, God was enthroned in his spirit. He received all his leading and direction from God. He looked to God as his creator and his provider, his director and his inspirer. There was no thought of taking things into his own hands. At the time of the 'fall,' Adam in effect took the throne from his spirit and placed it in his soul. But God would not sit on this throne. He would only take His seat in man's SPIRIT, not in his SOUL. Hence He departed from Adam. The Divine Life left him, and he became a creature subject to death. Whilst God lived within him, he would live forever, because God is immortal. But without the presence of God in his spirit, he became subject to death.

"The soul is the seat of self-consciousness, where SELF sits on the throne. That is why God will not share the throne. The spirit is the seat of God-consciousness, and only here will He sit. After king David's lapse from right living, he cried out to God, saying, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a RIGHT SPIRIT within me' (Ps. 51:10). He never asked for his soul to be cleaned, mended, or renewed, because he knew that his sins had flowed from SELF-ENTHRONEMENT in his soul. Here is the crux of the matter. There will be no street ceremonies, no flag waving, no heralds running here and there, saying, 'It's here! Come and see!' Why? Because the Kingdom is INSIDE man, not for external observation (Lk. 17:20-21). God is looking for a re-instatement of His position in man's spirit. He says to us in effect, 'You cannot live without me. If you try to run your own life, and satisfy your own desires, it will all end in death. The only way in which you can enjoy life with me is to give me back the reins of government. My government is not oppressive, but gently and firmly persuasive, because I made you, and I alone know what is best for you.'

"All of us are born with Adam's legacy to self-rule. The throne has remained in the human soul ever since Adam sinned, and God does not live there. But each and every person who is enlightened to this fact, and who desires with a whole heart to be under God's government, can enter a new relationship with God. A right spirit is granted, and God begins to dwell there once again. This is not the end of the process, however, and it is important to see why. The majority in the evangelical world speak about two parties, the Christians and the Non-Christians. But this is an artificial distinction. To accept Christ into one's life is just a beginning, and there is a distinct possibility of God being subsequently dethroned. We have seen young people 'accept Christ' and be baptized, only to reinstate their own kingdom firmly in their souls within a short time. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. He who sows to the flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption. He who

sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:7-8). Paul said to the Galatians, 'Are you so foolish? having begun in the spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh?' (Gal. 3:3).

“God is looking for an initial commitment to Him, a ‘conversion’ experience. But He wants far more than that! He wants there to be a steadily growing Kingdom of God within. At our conversion we see the need for salvation and a state of ‘NEW MANAGEMENT’. But our hearts are very deceptive.. We have no idea just how much we still hold the reins. The Lord gradually engineers our circumstances to show us who is in control. Therefore there should be a gradual replacement, whereby self-will is exchanged for God-reliance. Jesus said that of Himself He was able to do nothing. His total reliance was on His Father and the Divine Direction He received. But don’t misunderstand. Jesus chose to go that way. He allowed His Father complete control of His life, not as a puppet, but as one who was utterly convinced of the Right Way.

“God’s sons are those who have, through many trials and testings, allowed God to take His rightful place in their spirits. They began with but a small reliance on God, but grew to allow Him something approaching total control. These are the ones whom God will ask to rule the coming world with Him, and under Him. Antichrist is said to rule in the temple of God, showing that he is God. What does this mean? It means that there are Christians who are all for God’s ways, but struggle to retain their own rulership of their lives. Satan sits enthroned in man’s flesh, in the soul of man that is not subject to God, but subject to human desire. All those who thus retain self-dominion are collectively the antichrist. Satan’s kingdom is equally inside man as God’s Kingdom. These facts need careful pondering by us all” — end quote.

YOU CANNOT BUILD THE KINGDOM!

The Kingdom is coming. “Thy kingdom come.” Only if we truly believe the Kingdom is coming can we pray that prayer. But primarily and fundamentally the Kingdom IS. “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.” The Kingdom that is, is coming. Men speak of “building” the Kingdom of God, but in the truest sense the Kingdom it not built — it is. The Kingdom grows and increases from age to age and from realm to realm, but only because it is. The essential thing to be burned into our consciousness is that the Kingdom of God IS! “The kingdom of God IS righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “The Lord reigneth!” His reign is a present reality and shall increase from age to age until all things are subdued unto Him.

Nowhere in the scriptures are we instructed that we are to “build” the Kingdom. We are told that we can “see” the Kingdom, “enter” the Kingdom, “receive” the Kingdom, “inherit” the Kingdom, and “proclaim” the Kingdom, but never build it. What is the difference? It is basic and profound. For if we are to build the Kingdom, then it is something that we bring into life, something that we produce. It is a structure that requires our effort to raise up. It is an institution that demands our ingenuity and work to establish. But the Kingdom IS. It is already in existence; it is a present reality, for it was prepared for us before the foundation of the world (Mat. 25:34). Men who go out and try to build the Kingdom always fail for they are trying to do something that cannot be done. Ah, yes, there is an increase of the Kingdom! But it

is not the increase of effort, but of life. You can build a house, but you cannot build a tree or a fruit. Things that are built are constructed by an external power; they contain no life. But things that grow are produced by an inherent internal life and you cannot build them. The increase and manifestation of the Kingdom is not one of man's doing, but something of life. That is why the Kingdom of God is within you. It is the life of the Spirit bringing forth the image and glory of God in the lives and doings of men. Jesus speaks of those who are "disciples" of the Kingdom, "stewards" of the Kingdom, "scribes" of the Kingdom, "teachers" of the Kingdom and "heralds" of the Kingdom. But there are no "builders" of the Kingdom!

Many who have seen something of the promises and glory of the Kingdom of God have found it difficult to keep their efforts in the Spirit and cooperate with God to bless men and nations with the benefits and powers of the Kingdom. The result of their misunderstanding of how the Kingdom functions has time and again manifested itself in carnal and fruitless efforts to "establish" or "build" a visible outward Kingdom. While individuals and small groups of saints in the early days of the Church made claims concerning the "establishment" of the Kingdom in their day, this idea did not take on any great proportion until the time of the Emperor Constantine. Prior to that Christians were openly persecuted by the Roman emperors and were accorded no recognition by the kingdoms of this world. The gospel was despised and rejected by an unbelieving and pagan world. This means that those who espoused the name of Christ suffered with Him because of their allegiance to His cause.

As one has written: "So far as the great body of professed Christians was concerned, this entire picture of persecution and ostracism on the part of worldly kingdoms was suddenly changed by Constantine, who himself professed conversion to Christianity. In the year 313 A.D., this emperor put his signature to a decree reading, in part, 'Henceforth in perfect and absolute freedom, each and every person who chooses to belong to the practice of the Christian religion, shall be at liberty to do so without let or hindrance in any shape or form.' How the Christians must have read the lines with astonishment when they realized the implication of this change of attitude on the part of earthly governments! Just emerging from ten years of the bitterest persecution by Diocletian, they were now free to meet and sing and pray and read their scriptures in the open sunlight, anytime, anywhere.

"And this was but the first of other favors that were shortly to come to them. The historian records that 'Constantine ordered the state funds to be used to rebuild their churches, ruined in the previous persecution; he donated land by the acre, built new churches wherever needed in the east or the west — magnificent, costly structures. Christian ministers were exempted from taxation and became officials representing the government. Even laymen were shown marked favor in political appointments. Gift was piled upon gift, and privilege upon privilege. Decrees were issued exhorting the public to abandon their 'ancient superstitions' and accept the 'truth'. Complete and expensive copies of the scriptures were furnished to Christians by the state, replacing those destroyed by former persecutors. Could or should they decline these marvelous favors bestowed upon them? Should they decline to avail themselves of the wonderful opportunity thus afforded to proclaim the gospel of the Son of God to the large audiences now forthcoming because of governmental favor toward the church? Should they refuse to rejoice because now multitudes suddenly saw the light?'

“The church had endured persecution — bitter, death-dealing persecution. Now the reverse was true and they were enjoying the favors of the state. Could they endure prosperity? What was to be their attitude toward this new development in the Christian experience? How were they to view the future? The great and sudden relief experienced by the lifting of the hand of persecution evidently had the effect that Satan desired it should, because the historical record shows that the great body of professed Christians at the time concluded that the days of waiting for the Kingdom had ended! One historical writer, in telling about this, says, ‘When they were relieved of their persecution, and came into honor after having been so long reckoned the filth of the world, the cry was straitway raised up that the Kingdom of God had come. The Millennium had begun. The emperor was the visible favorite of God, the predestined overthrower of the powers of evil (by the sword, of course!).’

“Following the last session of the Council of Nicea in the year 325, Constantine made a splendid banquet, about which the historian Eusebius, a bishop and one of the guests, has left us the following account: ‘The proceedings were sublime beyond description. The soldiers of the emperor’s bodyguard were drawn up before the door of the palace with bared swords. The men of God, over three hundred bishops, some of them bearing in their bodies the marks of the last persecution, passed by them proudly into the interior of the palace. Some sat at the same table with the emperor. One might easily believe he beheld an image of the very Kingdom of God.’

“Following this, and amidst violent, stormy internal disputes, the nominal church multiplied, for the state was still friendly and the sons of Constantine improved on their father, for they not only favored the church system, but persecuted paganism! The professed followers of the Master quickly caught the spirit, and with even more ardent zeal than was manifested by the strong arm of the state. They, like so many others who are not willing to await God’s time or God’s way for the exercise of Kingdom powers, themselves took the law into their own hands. Professed Christian mobs tore down pagan temples, shattered their idols, burnt their libraries, and slaughtered their priests. There was no restraining them, so fierce was their faith and zeal for the alleged Kingdom of God.

“But the carnal mind was still ‘the god of this world.’ While the professed church as a whole entered into these revelries in connection with the establishment of a counterfeit kingdom of the Lord, there still remained a few true followers of the Master who did not share in this viewpoint and therefore did not enter into these unchristian activities. Concerning these the historian says, ‘Some indeed during this century, were disgusted with the pride and arrogance of the clergy and aimed at spiritual simplicity and opposed the general trend; but the only fruit of their labor was that they were branded with infamy.’ Evidently this little flock of the body of Christ were branded as being anti-kingdom, even as it still is true of some today. When the devil offered the kingdoms of the world to our Lord, He declined the gift, choosing the way of the cross and the life of the Spirit, while carrying out the Father’s plans which must precede the day when all the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. But what the Son of man refused, the nominal church, centuries later, accepted, and installed a Roman bishop at the head, who, in the name of God, received the headship of the kingdoms of this world. The great religious harlot was fully born, riding upon the beast. From thenceforth it was woe unto those who dared to be anti-kingdom.

“These abortive Kingdom efforts, however, were not limited to the large body of professed Christians who finally became amalgamated into the Roman Catholic church-state system. When the Protestant movement got under way, Satan still was active both with the small and large groups of Protestantism and almost without exception these have fallen prey to this master-stroke of delusion. The Protestants, in separating from Rome, never completely passed out of the harmful shadow of the unauthorized kingdom. Many of the Protestant systems united with the state. Even today, most professed Christians confuse the present church system with the Kingdom, and when their hopes prosper or their activity is apparently blessed, and applauded by people in high places, they forthwith believe that the Kingdom of God must be here” — end quote (author unknown).

Many other groups have made their own efforts at “building the Kingdom.” Look for example at the Munzerites of the sixteenth century, who undertook to establish at Munster a theocracy or political kingdom of the saints; or the Fifth Monarchy men of the seventeenth century, who believed it was their duty to establish the Kingdom of God by force, and actually went through a form of electing at London Jesus Christ as Universal Monarch; or John Alexander Dowie who in the dawn of this century founded both the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church and the city of Zion, Illinois as a theocracy headed by himself as “Elijah the Restorer.” Dowie ruled the theocratic community strictly and organized the Theocratic party, a political party to compete with the Republican and Democratic parties for control of the nation. This party ran in the elections in both Chicago and Zion City as the representatives of the Kingdom of God on earth. At the time of his sudden stroke and paralysis he was in the process of establishing theocratic cities in various parts of the world and proposed to purchase the entire city of Jerusalem from the Turks and turn it into a theocratic Christian city, the seat of the theocratic kingdom, in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Dowie was but another in a long list of “kingdom builders” who imagined that they could “build” the Kingdom of God on earth. They missed altogether the profound and wonderful truth proclaimed by Jesus when He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Mat. 13:31-32). The Kingdom is not like a house, or an institution, or a government to be “built”; it is like a seed that is planted and by the spontaneous process of germination and growth becomes through the power of an indwelling life the expression and reign of God in the earth. It is not the work of man by force, law, or politics, but the sovereign work of God by the power of the Holy Spirit in and through yielded men.

For what purpose is God bringing us into sonship? Many will point to the scriptures and say we are being perfected and brought into the fullness of God so that we can rule and reign with Christ when He establishes His Kingdom on earth. I will not say that I disagree with this teaching except to point out that Christ has already established His Kingdom in the earth. The “man” who planted the “grain of mustard seed” which is the Kingdom in its inception was none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. But we need to be very clear as to what we have in mind when we speak of ruling and reigning with Jesus. The idea that the Kingdom will one day be established in the earth, after the pattern of the kingdoms of men, and that God’s

elect will assume outward positions of political and governmental power within its hierarchy is the same carnal-minded error that the people of Israel made when Jesus made His appearance among them. As a result they completely missed Him. How then shall we reign with Christ?

The first principle that must be very clear to us is that the power of the Kingdom of God is not political power — it is spiritual power. “If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, T-H-E-N THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME UNTO YOU” (Mat. 12:28). The Kingdom of God is that domain where God’s saving, transforming power defeats all opposition, breaks down every wall, changes all that is contrary to God’s nature, mind and will, and brings men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the Kingdom of God. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will and ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — there the Kingdom of God has come and is advancing. In the Kingdom it is no longer God ruling over you by sovereignty, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge, and will of God entering into you, becoming your very own reality. How plain it is to see that this is NOT what happened in the days of Emperor Constantine! The Kingdom of God is the power to transform. Its citizens are a holy people. Its kings and priests are all righteous, wise, and mighty through God.

What I have said before bears repeating — there is no greater truth than the truth that our Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom, our King is a spiritual King, its citizens are a spiritual people, its ministry is a spiritual ministry, its authority is a spiritual authority, its dominion is a spiritual dominion, its laws are spiritual laws, its weapons are spiritual weapons, its priesthood is a spiritual priesthood, its sovereignty is a spiritual sovereignty, its power is spiritual power, and its rulers rule only by the Spirit, praise His wonderful name! You do not “build” this Kingdom, nor do you exercise any kind of “political” power to further its cause. IT MUST BE DEMONSTRATED IN THE AUTHORITY AND MINISTERED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST. That, my friend, is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

GOD RAISES UP MEN

In any kingdom there is order. It is very important for us to know that every kingdom has order. It has a king who is the ruler and it has the government which administers all the will of the king unto its subjects. When we have been born of the Spirit into the Kingdom Realm of God, we have been born into a divine, celestial order. Someone asks, “Well, how about organization? Are we born into organization? Doesn’t the Kingdom have some type of organization?” No. We are born only into an organism, a living body, whereby we receive our identity, our life, our destiny from our heavenly Father. The Kingdom of God is a living thing. The organism is CHRIST, the image of God. To be born into the God family is to be born into the divine, heavenly order — the body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the Head of this body, the firstborn Son, the first manifested Son, joined now by that glorious company of sons who come into His image and likeness and are members of His body. The whole company of sons, Head and body, is THE CHRIST. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: SO ALSO IS CHRIST” (I Cor. 12:12). The order of sonship is the order of the

many-membered Son of God. And the order of the Son of God IS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Kingdom of God, the Government of God, is not a method, system or organization. Any thing that is “organized” is not the Kingdom of God. There is one Christian movement that calls itself “Jehovah’s Organization.” It is not. God doesn’t have any organizations. The body of Christ is not an organization, it is an organism. Organizations are systems — organisms are living things. God does not raise up or use organizations — He calls, ordains, prepares, equips, and uses MEN. God always begins His purposes with a MAN, and consummates His purposes in a PEOPLE. Under the Old Covenant the man was Moses, and the people was Israel. Under the New Covenant the man is Jesus Christ, and the people is the sons of God.

Many other men have also been involved in God’s purposes throughout the ages. When the time had come for God to have a nation as His witness in the earth, He called forth Abraham out of his homeland to go into a strange land. There he was to bear a son, and that son would bear sons and someday God’s nation would be born because God had His man — Abraham. When Israel, pressed beyond measure by Egyptian bondage, cried aloud for deliverance, God didn’t form a committee to devise a plan. He raised up a man. Pharaoh, the cruel and ruthless lord of Egypt, was mastered by Moses. At the very hour when all that Pharaoh represented was tyranny and slavery, God was creating a mighty deliverer who would captain the forces of the Lord and lead them toward the Promised Land.

Israel cried hopelessly in the wilderness, wandered aimlessly, lost faith in divine intervention, and muttered agonizingly, “We die! There is no Promised Land!” God then strengthened the heart of His man, Joshua, to march across the Jordan which separated the desolate wilderness from the promised land of plenty. At another time Ahab and Jezebel were out-manuevered by the prophet Elijah, the thundering Voice of God. Crises have always produced the grandest of prophets. David and his mighty men brought deliverance to Israel from all their enemies that had been thorns in their sides from the days of Joshua. Rome met its master in Paul. He transformed its society for the magnificent glory of Jesus Christ the Lord. From the turbulence of the Middle Ages came Martin Luther. At a moment when religious life ebbed lowest, when spiritual light had all but flickered and gone out, God brought forth John Wesley to spark into being the revival that was to impact mightily Great Britain and the world.

So it has always been in the annals of divine history — time would fail me to tell of Gideon, who routed the enemy; of Samuel and the prophets who as God’s instruments subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in battle, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. God has never judged a nation, met a crisis, delivered a people, manifested His power, accomplished His purpose, or ushered in a new age by organization. He has always matched the hour and need with MEN. When God moved to end that first wicked age of human experience He did not organize the Ante-diluvian Flood Control Association to accomplish His purpose. It was by faith that one man — Noah — “being warned of God of things not yet seen, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world” (Heb. 11:7).

No age in world history matches in crisis and potential tragedy the age in which we live. On any moral chart, on any graph of spiritual decline, on any meter of danger and peril, this age is the age horrendous. The age is catastrophic with dark predictions of terrorism, of nuclear war, atomic blasts, thermonuclear annihilation, deadly fall-out, or destruction of the earth by the sheer weight of over-population and pollution. Will God leave this age Voiceless? Will heaven fail to produce a Deliverer? He has never done so. He has always had His man. As Basil Miller once wrote, "When God has selected His man, He has ground that man and polished him through the cauldron of human need and suffering. And when the divine process was completed, the schooling finished, His lapidary stones for hewing character burnished His man to a bright hue. God freed His man from obsolescent dogma and creed, and armed him with multifold weapons of spiritual warfare. Then He lifted him forth to captain the forces of right, a thundering voice of prophetic power. In the darkest hours of human night there has always been a lighted torch in the hand of God's man."

So it is today. God has a Voice. God is preparing to blow a trumpet and rally the armies of the Lord. But this time it is not a solitary man. It is a many-membered man. It is a vast company of the sons of God. The manifestation of the sons of God is the hope of this dying age. Jesus was the seed planted at the dawn of this age as a preview of the Kingdom when Christ with His entire body of sons will appear in power and glory; and His many brethren are the harvest of that original seed to bring forth in the earth the completeness of God's Christ and the triumph of His Kingdom in all realms. The certain hope of a new age of progression into the unfoldment of God's Kingdom lies directly before us. The whole creation, that has groaned in travail and pain throughout the dark night of every dispensation from Adam, is soon to hear the joyous shout of the birth of God's new man-child for this hour. This man shall arise in the midst of the nations and will publish to all the world the glad news, "thy God reigneth!" And the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill all the earth as the waters cover the sea.

I do not hesitate to tell you that I have never been able to work under committees, organizations, systems, creeds, rules and regulations. Creeds are not broad enough, dogmas are too binding; organization, systems and rules are stifling and restrictive man-made instruments of carnality and death. Those called to the Kingdom in this hour are given an assignment, a commission from the God of heaven Himself. They are His ambassadors, representing His government. Their orders do not come from headquarters in some distant city, nor from committees, counsels, boards, or bishops. To heed the voice of men and change one iota of the assignment would be to betray the Kingdom of God. It would be an act of treason against the Kingdom of Heaven. Those called to sonship have come into contact with the Source of divine energy and power, of wisdom and knowledge, and there is no alternative but to obey the heavenly vision. Our charge is to pursue the course set before us by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, taking our place within the ranks of that vast company of saints out of all the ages in their mission of bringing the Kingdom of God to pass in all the earth.

The men who have been the molders of the world for God have all been men full of faith and the Holy Ghost. It requires no faith nor any Holy Ghost to carry on the ordinary program of the average church, for running a church these days is not unlike running a business or corporation. It is all method, system, charisma, public

relations, professional skills and program. But faith and revelation cause men to venture into the unknown and develop a reliance upon the unseen powers of God. When there are no road signs of men's traditions marking the limits of achievement, when there are no precedents, when there is nothing to go by, as far as sight is concerned, and one steps forward with nothing but the word of the Lord birthed within, depending upon God's tremendous power, this externalizes the vision and demonstrates before all men the power and glory of the Kingdom of God.

All the great movements of God in the earth have been accomplished through men God has sovereignly raised up with a vision, a message, and an anointing of authority and power. He has never used an existing organization. The proof that the anointing is upon the man and not the movement, is that in every case as soon as the man passes from the scene the movement raised up by that man dies too. It does not in every case disappear from the earth, but generally it stagnates, becomes more organized, and in most cases declines either spiritually or numerically, and eventually disintegrates or becomes something altogether different from what it was formed to be. The leaders who follow just "do not have what it takes" — they are not the man God raised up and anointed with His Spirit!

The religious systems are always exerting themselves to devise new methods, new plans, new programs, new organizations to advance the work of the church and secure enlargement and security for God's work. This method sinks the man in plan and organization — he becomes a cog in the mechanical wheel. God's plan has nothing to do with organizational structures — God's emphasis is on men. Men are God's method! "There was a man sent from God..." The church world is looking for better programs; God is looking for better men.

You never heard of a prophet, priest, or king being voted for! Prophets are very uncomfortable fellows. They have a strange way that makes them, even when very young, extremely obnoxious to slow and unprogressive persons who love to be quiet and at ease, maintaining the status quo. Prophets care for nothing but for God and His word, His ways, and His will. That is how the Kingdom of God works. God rules in and through men who are totally yielded unto His Voice and His Spirit. If God has given us a revelation of His thought, and it is perfectly clear and spiritually sound, then what we have to do is not vote about it or even talk about it, but to do it, for it is His will. Men who sit around tables "voting" about what course they should follow, obviously have not heard from God! That is not the way nor the wisdom nor the power of the Kingdom. The will of God once revealed is not open to discussion. Jesus took no vote about His Kingdom activities. He formed no committees to study anything, nor any organization to carry it out. He was led by the Spirit of God and He ordained men who would be led by the Spirit, for "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John." The dispensation that heralded and prepared the way for the Christ of God was bound up in that man John. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." "The Word was made" — not made a book, not made a doctrine, not a program, not a method, not a committee, not an organization — but "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). God came in the form of a man, "a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you" (Acts

2:22). Jesus called twelve men as His apostles and gave them — not a plan, not a blueprint, not a system, not an organization — He gave them POWER. “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...” (Acts 1:8). This vital, urgent truth is one that this age of organization and machinery knows nothing about. What the world needs today is not more machinery, not new organizations or more novel methods, but the PERFECT MAN. “Till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, the Holy Ghost flows through men; and I hesitate not to tell you that the Holy Ghost will flow most fully and perfectly through God’s PERFECT MAN, God’s NEW MAN, God’s complete CHRIST, God’s Government of Kings and Priests after the order of Melchizedek, the manifested sons of God. The Holy Spirit does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men. He does not reveal His will and His heart to boards and committees, but to men who walk intimately with God, men who qualify for the fullness of God. This is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

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

The word “kingdom” indicates the richness of the heritage of the saints. It is no petty estate, no banana republic, no happy corner in obscurity. I heard a good man say that he should be content with a cabin in the corner of Gloryland or a spot just inside the gate. I shall not be! The Lord says we shall inherit a KINGDOM. We cannot be satisfied to inherit less, because less than that would not suit our character. “He hath made us kings and priests unto God” (Rev. 5:10) and we must reign forever and ever, or be as wretched as deposed monarchs. A king without a kingdom is an unhappy and unfulfilled man. If I were a poor servant, a servant’s quarters would be a boon, for it would correspond with my condition and degree; but if I am made a son of God, an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus; if I am made a priest and a king, I must have a kingdom, or I shall not have attained to a position equal to my nature. He who makes us kings gives us a Kingdom to fit the nature which He has bestowed upon us.

Beloved, I beseech you to strive more and more after that which the Spirit of God will give you — a KINGLY HEART; do not be among those who are satisfied with the miserable nature of ordinary humanity or the childish hopes of the babes in Christ who throng to the churches which are merely nurseries for the birthing, care and educating of babes and which then stifle and threaten to suffocate the life out of these little ones with their own static creeds, lifeless traditions, and infantile programs. They eagerly look for mansions and harps and golden streets and wings and white nightgowns in that glory world above, unable to comprehend that such glittering diadems are only nursery toys to God’s true kings; true riches are ETERNAL SPIRITUAL REALITIES; the true treasury wealth looks down upon the stars. Do not sell yourself short, ye sons of the Most High! Get a kingly heart — ask

the King of kings to give it to you, and beseech of Him a royal spirit. Act royally on earth towards your Lord, and for His sake towards all men. Go about the world not as mean men in spirit and action, nor yet in false humility as paupers and beggars, but as kings and priests of a race superior to the dirt-scrappers who are on their knees, crawling in the mud after fleeting earthly riches and transitory worldly fame. What incredible loss shall be suffered by those who imagine that financial prosperity in this life is the sign of great faith, blessing and spirituality!

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

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

When you understand that God is dealing and working out His plan through ages, you have understood God's purpose aright. Is this age and the next the only ages that remain for this purpose to be fulfilled? By no means! God's purpose through His

body is “that in the ages to come He might show (put on display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). The message of this wonderful passage is just this: At this present time, in this age, God is showing (putting on display) the exceeding riches of His grace toward us through Jesus Christ. Jesus is God’s revelation of His grace and kindness to the Church gathered out of the nations. That is God’s purpose in this age. But in the ages to come WE ARE THE DISPLAY, THE REVELATION OF GOD’S GRACE AND KINDNESS UNTO CREATION. That which He has revealed to us in Jesus, and wrought in us through Jesus, will be displayed through us in ages yet to come that all creation by us may then experience His exceeding grace and kindness as we are now experiencing it in Jesus. Hallelu-yah! What a Saviour!

There are three very definite stages that transpire in God's great plan of the ages. In this age the Church is being gathered out of the nations. In the next age all the living nations shall come, and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law (authority) shall go forth of Zion (the sons of God), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the bride of Christ). And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Micah 4:2-3). All this shall take place when “the mountain (kingdom, government) of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains (strong kingdoms), and it shall be exalted above the hills (smaller kingdoms); and people shall flow unto it” (Micah 4:1). In the age and ages beyond that all creation shall be dealt with and brought into harmony and relationship with God until all things everywhere have been subdued unto Him and God becomes in glorious reality ALL IN ALL. This in a nutshell is God’s wonderful plan of the ages.

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (nations) for THINE INHERITANCE, and the uttermost parts of the earth for THY POSSESSION,” says the Messianic Psalm. Christ conquered, and He is conquering, and He is to conquer. I claim this earth for God, for He made it. I claim this earth for God, for the earth is the Lord’s. The sea is His, and He made it. His hands formed the dry land. His power pushed up every mountain, and His fingers scooped out every valley. By His wisdom all things were established. I claim everything that comes out of the bowels of the earth for God, for “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” and “all the gold and the silver is His.” I claim every man in El Paso, and in Miami, and in New York, and in Los Angeles, and in Hong Kong, and in Beijing, and in Moscow, and in Baghdad and in the whole wide world, and every man in their graves for God, for “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” and “it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves” and “He hath made all things for His pleasure.” I am not willing to wickedly cede even one thing or one person to the devil, as do some, for the Christ came to reconcile all things and He is the Saviour of all men.

I proclaim to you, as the minister of God, that the body of Christ is here in this world for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Our destiny is something more than being a little group of saved people waiting to die and go to heaven. The body of Christ IS the Kingdom of God in this world and its King-Priests must reign until all things are under His feet. Because all the earth is His, God is raising up a Kingly

Priesthood to reign in mighty spirit power over the earth, not to be little human dictators, or an external, political kingdom of laws and systems headquartered in Jerusalem or London or some where else, but with an outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, bringing the two together, that God may indwell all men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate over other men's lives, but to deal with and break the power of self-hood and rebellion and sin and the devil that men may be reconciled to God. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in compassion, mercy and love. But once the reconciliation has taken place, and Christ is enthroned in men's spirit, we deliver them up to God, even the Father, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL. That is the principle of the Kingdom. We rule only to subdue men to God — THEN GOD RULES IN THEM. That is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

Chapter 19

How The Kingdom Comes

(continued)

God rules with a great, infinite and eternal love. He gives all His ability to His sons in love. Love is the foundation of His Kingdom throughout the universe. Love is the very essence and atmosphere of the Kingdom of Heaven. His laws, proceeding from His heart, win the love of all His subjects. The scars on His brow, in His hands, on His feet, and on His back are the insignia of love and show that when He occupies the throne, love sits on the throne and presides. 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, commands their bodies by winning their hearts. So down this costly way of unreserved love Jesus came, His birth-chamber a stable, His cradle a manger, and His lot in life cast among the poor. He trod the pathway of misunderstanding, rejection and malignment, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore," the apostle says, "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

THE KINGDOM OF LOVE

The King of Love girds His people with gladness. He sows the whole earth with gladness and joy. The news which is sent from His courts lifts the heads of all men. At the mention of His name our hearts leap for joy, and the coming of His presence among us fills us with exceeding wonder. The air is filled with music. He makes the morning break over the everlasting hills with rejoicing, and causes the evening to glow with the fire of His glory. He is the King of Love within our hearts!

Our poor, lisping, faltering tongues cannot proclaim the Gospel as we would like; but we have God's word that is true for the present time, and for all the times of all the ages: "God IS LOVE!" IS — unchangeably! IS — eternally! God is love in heaven, in earth, in hell! Wherever He is He can be no less than He is. "If I make my bed in hell, Thou art there," proclaims the Psalmist. God IS LOVE — everywhere! And the great practical consequence is for you and me to respond to that God and to that love, to become filled with that love, one with that love, the embodiment and manifestation of that love to all men in all realms. That is the supreme purpose of sonship. "Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I Jn. 4:7). And those who are born of God are the sons of God — THE SONS OF LOVE!

The best and most wonderful word in the universe is Love. For God is Love. And the best and most wonderful word in the inner chamber of our heart must be — Love.

For the God who meets us there is Love. What is Love? The deep desire to give itself for the beloved. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father” (Rev. 1:5-6). “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (I Jn. 3:1). “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16). Love finds its joy in imparting all that it has, to make the loved one happy and fulfilled. And the heavenly Father, who offers to meet us in the inner chamber — let there be no doubt about this in our minds — has no other object than to flood our hearts, and the hearts of all men, with His love.

But the spirit of love is not in you till it is the spirit of your life, till you live freely, willingly, universally according to it. It knows no difference of time, place, or person; but whether it gives or forgives, bears or forbears, it is equally doing its own delightful work. 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 an opportunity to be more triumphant. The rebellion of Adam but opened up avenues for mankind to experience and know 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 thought! And what a call — what purpose and responsibility! Little wonder, then, that the whole vast creation, sold under slavery and bondage to sin, sorrow, pain and death, groans in travail for the manifestation of the SONS OF LOVE!

Those who put on the mind of Christ see all men with the eyes of love which are the eyes of God. How we see men and think and act towards them is a measure of the Kingdom in our lives. Perhaps you have heard the story of a stranger who settled in a town and asked his neighbor, “What are the people around here like?” The neighbor, a Quaker, replied quietly with a question, “What were the people like where thee came from?” The newcomer answered, “I have come from Anytown. The people there were very mean, dishonest, and unfriendly.” The Quaker answered, “I’m afraid thee will find them all here.” A third person who had overheard the conversation, joined in by remarking, “This surprises me, because I have come from the same town and I found the people there to be very kind, honest, and friendly.” And the old Quaker, turning to him, said, “Thee will find them all here, too.”

Kingdom love flows from us like the powerful waters of Niagara. It is a giving of ourselves without reservation or limitation. Kingdom love does not allow us to withhold part of ourselves — it requires us to give away ourselves completely. Kingdom love does not stop to consider the worthiness of the one about to receive it. “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the SONS OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mat. 5:44-46). Kingdom love is a “living sacrifice” that remains always upon the altar. This love is the expression of our total energies toward another without reservation, qualification, or hesitation. It is going the second mile — and the third, fourth, fifth, one hundredth and one thousandth if necessary.

Larry Hodges, in one of his SHOFAR LETTERS, has wisely asked, “Shall there be a people who will rule and reign with Christ who are not under the absolute dominion of

Love? Shall there be a people who shall open and no man shut, and shut and no man open, who are not in perfect accord with Love? Shall there be a people claiming to be Love's true representatives who have not this Love in all its perfections? Shall the rod of iron be given into the hand of any other than Love's own children, the children of the resurrection? What people shall do and speak only what they see and hear their Father doing and speaking but that people that is under the absolute dominion of Love's rule? We may speak well and write much on 'Sonship,' 'Kingdom,' and whatever else we may wish to call this kingdom, but unless we love Love, carefully guarding its beginning flame, we are become as tinkling brass or a sounding cymbal."

The omnipotent power of God is not best demonstrated in violence, throwing thunderbolts and spreading devastation, but in self-sacrificing love and goodness. It is love (not tyranny) that never faileth, and with God (love) all things are possible. God is almighty, omnipotent. That is fundamental. But it is vital that all God's elect realize that His power is not something separate from His wisdom and His love. Jesus has made it abundantly clear that the power of God is not that of force, violence, or compulsion, but the power of love which "never faileth." "I, if I be lifted up (on the cross) from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Love is all-powerful and irresistible — divine power is simply love in action. The failure to distinguish between the omnipotence of force and violence and the omnipotence of love leads to the false ideas about God and His Kingdom that are so prevalent in the church systems today. It is the infallible answer to those who impudently ask, "If God is omnipotent, why does He not stop war, sin, suffering, and all forms of evil?" The omnipotence of love is something far grander and more noble than the omnipotence of force could ever be, though it is slower in operation. But the end of love's omnipotence is sure and abiding. Love never faileth! God so loved the world, and when love's power has been played out through the progression of the ages, love will win, will conquer all. Then all men will love God, not fear Him. What a plan! What incomprehensible wisdom!

Almost a hundred years ago Joseph Fort Newton, preaching in London, said, "Not until we see God as the Father of all souls — not simply 'like a Father,' as a Psalmist said, as if it were only a symbol, an analogy, an allegory, but the actual Father of men, as revealed in the life of Jesus — do we behold the highest truth. There is made known what love really is in its utmost sweetness of sacrifice and redemption. Love is social; it cannot live alone. Heaven was never a Hermitage. In that long-ago beginning God did not say, 'Let me make,' but 'Let us make.' Humanity could not worship and adore an Infinite Egoist. Such is the deep and beautiful truth of which the Godhead is the symbol — the truth of the eternal society. Older than our religion, older than the human home and the human family, it is a vision of God through the home as a family in Himself — Elohim. Love is creation. It cannot be inactive. It must devise order, goodness, beauty, joy. God does not love the world because He made it; He made it because He is love. Here lies the secret of the strange and haunting beauty of the world, and the eternal motive behind it. Love is also providence. It cannot be content with the joy of creation, but must follow and watch over what it has made with absorbing solicitude and care. Men of old seemed to think that God made the world, set it going, and sat on the edge of it watching it. But love is never idle, much less aloof, and it must stoop to share the lot of those whom it serves.

“Alas! many in our day, to whom it is not difficult to believe in God, the Creator, find it hard to believe in His loving care. Storms desolate the earth. Pestilence and famine fill myriad graves. Youth is blighted in its bud. Forever the cup of death is pressed to the lips of love. War, pillage, cruelty, and brutality might make human life a hell. There are heartless tyrannies that endure. How can one talk of the loving care of God in face of these facts? Why did not God make a thornless world and fill it with noble men, true women, and a race just, gentle, and generous? Because He could not do it. Character cannot be created; it must be achieved. It is not a gift, but an attainment — something wrought out amid trials and tears, as Polasek has shown us in his figure of a man finding himself and freeing himself by laboriously chipping away the stone in which he is imprisoned.

“Suppose a man were to have a family created for him in an instant — a wife, a boy, a girl sitting about a table in a lovely home which he never saw before. Would it be his family? Would these children be the offspring of the love and sacrifice and pain of his wife and himself? No. He might learn to know and love them deeply, but they would not be his family because not created by his love, not nourished from his heart, and not sanctified by his thought, consideration and purpose. His wife, not having experienced the babe in the womb or the pain of childbirth, would be unable to value the children of the family as highly as she might. Omnipotence does not mean arbitrariness. What love cannot do God cannot do.

“There are methods love cannot use, acts it cannot perform, weapons it cannot employ. Divine love looks like weakness until we know what it really is, how it works, and the path it follows. The love of God is more than a mere indulgent good nature, more than an indiscriminate, mushy sentiment. It is wise, and therefore takes the long look; relentless, and therefore seemingly austere; ruling, not arbitrarily, not impatiently, but with inflexible purpose and educative discipline — permitting the prodigal to wander if he will, knowing, as he does not know, that riotous living leads to husks, and these to the coming to himself, and that to the painful and penitent return to Father’s house and to the discovery of a love that would not let him be happy in exile! Oh, the wisdom of love!

“Of love is born the hope of immortality, and the love of God is its only sure basis and token of promise. What sunshine there is in that truth! The more deeply we love wife and child and friend, the more longingly we wish for immortality. Only men who know not love, who are lonely, disappointed, broken-hearted, devastated, bitter and hopeless desire the solitude and silence of death over life. Only miserable men cherish no hope of immortality! Again I say, of love is born the hope of immortality. The more deeply we love the more surely we may know that there is One who loves our loved ones and ourselves more than we do. Men and women, lay to heart the awful and wonderful truth that God loves each of us as if there were no other in the world, and all of us as though we were one child at His knee. And it is not only His obedient children that He so loves, but the vilest sinner and the most rebellious blasphemer. ‘God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us’ (Rom. 5:8). Yea, He loves me, even me, distinctly, separately, passionately, unconditionally, eternally — how can it be! And He loves you, each of you, with a love peculiar, particular, unutterably precious — loves you unto the uttermost, and cannot be happy without your love in return! Let us not ask ourselves whether we love God or not. Let us trust His love of us, trust it in our

sorrows, our needs, our failures, our weakness, our sins, knowing that love never faileth — for God is love.

“What is this Reality which men call Christ? Perhaps we can best make it clear by asking our hearts one question: What is it that we worship? Is it mere Power? No! Power may awe us, crush us, command us, but never yet has it won the worship of the heart. Is it Knowledge? No! An infinite Intellect may invite admiration, but we do not worship Wisdom. Is it Vastness? Not so! Consider for a moment — and you will see how a cold, bare infinitude, so far from winning the love of man, strikes him dumb with terror. What, then, do we worship? Reverently let us say that, though God speak with the tongues of lightning, though He have all power so that He could remove mountains or hurl suns into space, yea, though He have all knowledge and understand all mysteries, and have not Love, we cannot worship Him. Only love can win love, and if God be not Infinite Love we cannot love Him, albeit we may cower before Him, trembling and afraid.

“Think it all through, up one side and down the other, and you will find that our ideal, our dream, our hope, that to which we pray, is no other than the Spirit that lived in Jesus, shone in His face, wrought in His works, spoke in His words, and hung upon a cross. The Spirit of Jesus in its strength, its gentleness, its august and wonderful humility, its incredible patience, its fathomless pity, its relentless love, its all-forgiving mercy, its victorious valor, its purity, its gladness — that is what is meant by God. Beyond that love it is not possible for any man to imagine anything more divine. The Spirit of Jesus is the ultimate Divine Reality so far as we can know it. Where the Spirit of Love is, there God is. Because that Love lived in Jesus in its fullness, richness, its unclouded beauty, He is the supreme revelation of what God is” — end quote. And, may I add to these beautiful words this thought — all the sons of God, who are the sons of Love, are the extension, completion and fullness of that supreme revelation of God unto creation. Hallelu-yah!

I once read the moving account of a woman seen constantly on the streets of Strasbourg in the fourteenth century, carrying a pail of water in one hand and a torch in the other. When asked what she was about, she would reply that with the pail of water she was going to put out the flames of hell and with the torch she would burn up heaven, “so that in the future men could love the dear Lord God for Himself alone and not out of fear of hell or out of craving for reward.” A man comes closest to the Kingdom of God when he truly perceives the depth of truth proclaimed by that little lady so long ago!

Is it not true that vast multitudes of Christians today serve the Lord either out of fear of hell or hope of heaven. It is the absolute truth. Anyone who dares to proclaim the beautiful truth of the restoration of all men to God and pins people right down to the word of God is immediately accused by the unthinking masses of teaching heresy, and is accused of teaching doctrines which give the sinner nothing to flee from, no reason for accepting salvation. Such thoughtlessness! These poor simple folks are merely admitting in this that they themselves have never yet had a revelation of the abounding love of God. Nor do they know and worship God FOR HIMSELF, apart from all other considerations of either torment or bliss. Should the preachers one day call a news conference and announce to the world, “Ladies and gentlemen, we have just discovered that there is no hell,” I do not doubt for one moment that a great number of so-called believers would immediately tell God to “go to hell” and

commence to live like the devil in the pleasures of sin. Those who use hell as the incentive to bring men to God are but admitting their shame in upholding a false gospel which would attempt to scare men into the Kingdom of God. It never has worked. It never will. Oh, it does indeed scare men into the "church," but it does not bring men to truly know God. Christ leads and draws through love. Sometimes love disciplines and breaks, but it does not play games by "scaring" people into God! Fear is not the instrument of God to bring men unto Himself.

Is there a hell? Yes. But hell is not what salvation is about. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). It is not written that "the wages of sin is hell." If the wages of sin is eternal torment in hell, then we must re-write the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We must make the Bible say that, if that is what God meant. We must go back to the very beginning and make the Bible say, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 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 SUFFER ETERNAL TORMENT IN HELL" (Gen. 2:16-17). We must correct the word of God so that it says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall be eternally tormented in hell" (Eze. 18:4). John 3:16 must be made to correctly read, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not be eternally tormented in hell, but spend eternity in heaven." If the wages of sin is the torments of the damned in hell, then Romans 5:12 must be made to say, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and torment in hell by sin; and so the torments of hell passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..." You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces and re-write literally hundreds and thousands of passages if you say that the wages of sin is eternal torment in hell!

"The wages of sin is death." It is not written that the wages shall be death, but the passage we have before us, penned by divine inspiration, states plainly that "the wages of sin IS death." "She that liveth in pleasure," the scriptures again says, "is dead while she liveth." "Dead in trespasses and in sins" is the way the apostle Paul expressed it. Death takes in this whole dreadful realm of sin, weakness, fear, sorrow, pain, heartache, rebellion, strife, war, sickness, torment, sadness, and trouble in which men walk without the peace and joy and transforming power of God in their lives. It is a sad and most horrible fact that there are millions and thousands of millions of people going about this earth who are the walking dead. Dead to God! Dead to virtue! Dead to truth! Dead to reality! Dead to righteousness! Dead to peace! Dead to joy! Dead to promise! Dead to hope! DEAD!

Death is the wages of sin. But the gift of God is the life of the ages. Every man is on one side or the other; either he is now reaping his wages, or renouncing sin to receive God's gift. The gift is not heaven. The gift of God is not streets of gold, gates of pearl, or walls of jasper. The gift of God is not a cabin in the corner, or a mansion over the hill top. You will have to re-write your Bible again if you say that heaven is the reward of the righteous. Is there a heaven? Yes. But heaven is not the issue in salvation. The issue is life. It was this very truth that Jesus was making clear to us when He said, "He that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The issue in Eden was a matter of life and death; the issue in salvation and redemption is likewise a matter of life and death. Heaven and hell are not the issue.

Instead of preaching a false gospel to sinners, instead of holding up before them fancied horrors which they may escape, or a celestial Disney World which they may obtain, the true gospel tells them of LIFE MORE ABUNDANT, of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of the glory of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Who wants to remain a faltering mortal, when one may be quickened and made alive in God to become the very same manner of being as the One who created the worlds? Oh, that all men might learn God's one and only everlasting Gospel, the Gospel of Life and Light and Love — and then preach it! And BE it! Love alone can draw all men to Calvary's crimson fountain. Only a Calvary love can transform a world gone mad, and revive a sleeping church obsessed with her deliriums into a thing of beauty and praise and usefulness. And anyone who is lifting up to a lost and dying world anything or any one other than Jesus and His wonderful Love is simply living a wasted life and fulfilling a spurious ministry. The Love of God must be lifted up IN US. The sons of God are the sons of Love, for GOD IS LOVE!

What consolation and understanding is inspired by the blessed knowledge that in spite of all the bluster and might exhibited by the kingdom of darkness, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! God is the King, and His power He rules over all. But, dear one, if you will examine the basis of that Kingship, the Kingship of the Lord from the beginning of the world, you will find that it rests on God's Creatorship. He is Lord of the world and men and rules and overrules in all their doings because He is their Creator with divine plan and purpose for their destiny. But God wants to be King in and by Jesus Christ — that is to say, He wants to be King by virtue not of His power, but of His love. He wants men to reverence and obey Him not because they are afraid of Him, not because they are out-witted and out-maneuvered by Him, not because they cannot help themselves, and even because He promises them a Glory World above, but because they love Him. It is reconciliation, fellowship, union, participation, oneness with man that the heart of God is after.

Let us meditate deeply upon these words: "Our Father...Thy Kingdom come." Whose Kingdom is it? Ah, it is "our Father's" Kingdom. Not the Kingdom of the Lord God of the Old Testament, not the Kingdom of Yahweh, but the Kingdom of our Father. Of our Father it is written, "God is love." "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." In other words, God so loved the world that HE BECAME A FATHER! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed up us, that we should be called the sons of God." "Who hath delivered us from the rule of darkness, and hath transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love." Oh, what words are these! The Father's Kingdom is a Kingdom of Love! It is the Kingdom of a Paternal Love! It is a Kingdom of Beloved Sons! It is a Ruling Celestial Family! Yahweh's Kingdom was a Kingdom of power. Yahweh was a God of war. But God wants to be King not because He is Creator, not because He is Sovereign and can ruthlessly control everybody and every thing. He wants to be King because He is FATHER. He desires men to be obedient to Him, not because He has omnipotent power and can do anything He wants and have His way with men, but under the sweet constraint of love. God has been King by His position as Creator since the world began; God was King in Israel by the omnipotence of His hand; but now He will become King by the position of Father. It is for this Kingdom that sons are instructed to pray — for the event in which all men everywhere shall realize what God's Fatherhood means, for the circumstances in which men's hearts shall be so touched by God's love to them in Jesus Christ, that out of the response of their own hearts they shall return from the

far country to Father's house and out of a pure and genuine affection will render Him a willing and glad obedience.

The message which beams from the cross of Christ 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." 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 is 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 throughout all generations and ages. 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, He loved His enemies, the man who betrayed Him, the man who denied Him, the mob that cried, "Crucify Him!" and 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. This is the first mark of sonship.

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." 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! He thrusts them out into all the sorrows, tragedies, troubles, sicknesses, pains, strife, hatred, rebellion and death of this world. Jesus said, "As the Father hath 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, sacrifice is asking too much." 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 truth might well be illustrated by the children's story of the sun and the wind. In the little make-believe story, the sun and the wind discussed which of them was the strongest. The wind said that he could prove that he was the strongest by blowing the coat off of 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 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 kindness is stronger than fury and force!

Love never fails. Sons don't say, "I've had enough!" Perhaps you've said it too. Maybe you're a parent and you've told your kids that you've "had enough." Perhaps you're a teacher, and today was one of those days when you sent a student out of the classroom because you'd "had enough." Or perhaps your spouse has betrayed you once too often; you've "had enough" and this can't go on. Or perhaps one of your workers showed up late once too often, and you had to let him go. Or perhaps your neighbor had another wild party late into the night, playing his loud music, disturbing your sleep, so you called the police or "gave him a piece of your mind." You'd "had enough" and couldn't take it anymore. Love, however, divine love, can never say, "I've had enough!" If God had had enough, the United States of America wouldn't be here today, and neither would you or I.

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (I Jn. 4:12). Where is God? The question is as old as humanity. And people's answers range all the way from "God is everywhere and in everything" to "God is nowhere and in nothing." In fact, the question can be shortened and made even more significant: Is God? The beloved apostle John gives us an "object lesson" to demonstrate the reality and the presence and power of God, saying, "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us." John is saying, "Do you want to know where God is? Do you want to see God? Do you want the whole wide world to see God so that they can know that He exists? Then, with divine love, love each other and all men and the whole world will see and discover God in it." If we love with that wonderful, God-initiated, self-giving, unconditional love, people will say, "So that's where God is! So that's how we know that God is!" It's an object lesson that makes God impossible to miss! Creation will respond as the Roman soldier at the foot of the cross responded to the love of Jesus, "Truly these are the sons of God!"

Divine love does not only love the lovely, divine love does not only love the brethren, but every man. Divine love suffers long not only with our loved ones, our wife or sweetheart, our parents and our children, but also with our offensive neighbors, our difficult associates, the stupid, hateful, slothful, disobedient, wayward, rebellious, unlovely, and our persecutors. Love suffers long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy; is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. Love is not conceited, arrogant, or inflated with pride; it is not rude, and does not act unbecomingly. Love does not insist on its own rights or its

own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or complaining or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it — pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances and it sweetly endures everything. Love never fails — never fades out, becomes obsolete, never is destroyed by anything, and never comes to an end. THIS IS THE POWER AND THE GLORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

DO VIOLENCE TO NO MAN

“And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man...” (Lk. 3:14). Love will affect every attitude and action toward men on both the personal and corporate level. I have no hesitation in telling you that I have been a “conscientious objector” to war all my life because from a small child I could never believe that the spirit of warfare with its hatred, killing, and violence is compatible with the love of God or the spirit of sonship.

Oh, yes, we have our excuses and a thousand reasons are given to go forth and kill and maim and destroy by warfare. “The government requires me to do it,” we say. That’s reminiscent of that other time-honored cop-out, “The devil made me do it!” “I must defend my country and our liberties,” we explain, “we have an obligation to our families, our communities, and our nation to defend ourselves.” So we wield the sword, fire machine guns, and bomb villages and cities into oblivion, blasting thousands, yea, millions of innocent men, women and children out of this world, and call on God to bless! What strange beings we Christians are who profess to follow in the footsteps of Him who said, “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Lk. 9:56). I tell you today that no son of God is sent into this world to destroy men’s lives, but every son of God is sent into the world to save them. No son of God, no brother of Jesus, is sent into this world to destroy even one life, but to become a saviour for all men.

War is not a matter of one soldier against one soldier. It is now a war of guns and bombs and germs and chemicals and land-mines against soldiers and mothers and children and babes. Any way to intimidate the foe! Scare and blast loved ones out of the fox holes into hell or heaven — that is the way to win. We little realize the awful depths into which the spirit of warfare carries us. As one wrote of a certain war: “I had to aim carefully at the straw roof and only succeeded at the third shot. The wretches who were inside, seeing their roof burning, jumped out and ran off like mad...surrounded by a circle of fire about five thousand people came to a sticky end. It was like hell, the smoke rose to incredible heights, and the flames reddened the setting sun.”

War is still ruling our world and it is not spiritual; it is carnal, political, and devilish. As ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven we pledge allegiance to a higher Kingdom than any of the kingdoms of this world. We cannot fight carnal warfare because we are ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador is a representative of another country or person and he is not subject to the political laws of the country where he abides. The King whom we represent has commissioned us to “love our enemies,” to “bless and curse not,” and “see that none render evil for evil to any man.” We are to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with all lowliness and meekness, with

longsuffering.” “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” How directly opposed are these to the rules of war! Under the Old Covenant Yahweh required that His people Israel should go to war and fight and kill, but that covenant has been done away and we are under the New Covenant whereby the law (nature) of God is written upon our hearts, and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God.

Well has Philip Mauro written, “War is an instrument of the god of this world. War stems from greed and political intrigue. Preparing the soldier for war is a godless procedure. Hate is drilled into him. He is taught every trick there is to kill. This must be so for war is a dirty business. War differs from ordinary murders only in that it is on an enormous scale. Every invention and contrivance that men can devise, every deception and stratagem to which they can resort, every cruelty and atrocity which they can perpetuate, are elements of warfare. Hence it is not merely a questionable proceeding — not merely a thing which it is perhaps better to avoid — war is the thing of all things that is farthest removed from the spirit and work of Christ. It is the work of the devil to destroy. War is the great all-inclusive, sum total of everything that is devilish. When General Sherman tersely said, ‘War is hell,’ he uttered a truth. Heaven is peace. Hell is war. Let us look the ugly fact squarely in the face, that the man who enlists (or is drafted) commits himself in advance to the perpetration of every unnamable atrocity that war is held to justify. He repudiates his individual responsibility to God and man, and pledges himself blindly, by an oath and under penalty of death, to obey the commands of his officers, whatever they may be and to whatever work they may send him. If we then are to go forth and kill our fellowmen, whose lives shall we take? Shall we slay the unsaved, to whom we owe the gospel of Christ? If not those, then are we to slay our fellow saints to whom we owe our love and service? War and the gospel are as far apart as the east is from the west, as far as hell is from heaven...” — end quote.

If fighting and killing on carnal battlefields is right for the sons of God, then the Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, the priesthood of grace, mercy, love and salvation is wrong; if the gospel of love, even for our enemies, is right, then war is wrong. Jesus showed us clearly that the life of sonship is completely independent of every earthly tradition, custom, and requirement. The life of sonship belongs to the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven which we are to seek first of all. Jesus came to preach the Kingdom. That was His gospel. That was His one and only purpose. There lay His one and only allegiance. All the things that were spoken in the sermon on the mount pertain to the Kingdom which we are entering. Just as the law of Moses given at Sinai was the Constitution of the government and nation of Israel, so the sermon on the mount is the Constitution of the Kingdom of God. All the blessed truths set forth in the sermon on the mount are to be fulfilled in us “that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:45). These are the principles that govern the lives of God’s sons and all who live and walk in the Kingdom, just as surely as the law of Moses governed the dispensation of the law. The Kingdom is the realm of sonship. It is the realm of the will of God. It is the realm of the nature of God. It is the realm of the mind of Christ.

The principles of the Kingdom of God are set forth with divine clarity in the sermon on the mount, where the spirit of sonship is revealed. While living here on earth, our Lord was extremely kind. He picked up little children and blessed them. He healed

all who were suffering with pain. While relatives were weeping over dead loved ones, he raised four of them to life again. The Saviour of ALL men said to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more." His KINDNESS made an evangelist out of that immoral woman at Jacob's well. Because Jesus really loved the weak, helpless creatures whom He had created, He wept over them, prayed for them and taught them continually. Can you imagine for one moment that Jesus, even if commanded by the government of Israel, would have taken up the sword and slain thousands of Romans to liberate His people from the cruel, pagan yoke of Rome? Think of it! Even when Peter cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest, in defense of the Son of God, Jesus stooped and picked up the severed ear and healed it back on the man. He then turned to Peter and reproachfully said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." If you can believe for one moment that Jesus, drafted or not, would have gone out to slay men in defense of His country, then you may also justify the sons of God in this hour fighting and killing in defense of their homeland. The issue is really just that simple. "What would Jesus do?"

Except for those religious Pharisees, Jesus never spoke one cross word to the unconverted masses, Israelite, Roman, or otherwise. He was very tender and kind in all His dealings with men. His approach to them was very gentle, delicate, and considerate. Surely, then, we are safer in His hands than anywhere else! The things He has in store for every one of us are far greater than we could plan for ourselves. He will do us only good, and never evil. Does God expect His other sons to be different than His Firstborn? Jesus has taught us, "But love your enemies, and do good...and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be THE SONS OF THE HIGHEST; for HE IS KIND UNTO THE UNTHANKFUL AND TO THE EVIL, BE YE THEREFORE MERCIFUL, AS YOUR FATHER also is merciful." In this instance Jesus plainly says that if we desire to be the SONS OF THE HIGHEST, we must be merciful as He is merciful. THE HIGHEST IS MERCIFUL TO ALL.

The question follows: Why should the Highest be merciful to the evil and the unthankful? The answer is clear — that the evil one and the unthankful one may come to know the mercy and goodness of God! They would never know that mercy in any other way. If Jesus teaches us we are to be kind to those who mis-use us, reproach us, attack us, curse us, and make themselves our enemies, then what kind of a God and Father would He be, whose words Jesus taught us, who would HATE HIS ENEMIES and cast them into merciless eternal hell to burn forever? If such a thing were to be, then God would require us to be better than Himself! Jesus teaches us that we are to be merciful and kind, to bless and do good to all who are enemies. Do we then have a Father whose nature is entirely opposite to ours? Impossible! The sons of God are sent, as was the Son, to reveal the nature of our Father to all.

If we see a God that loves only those that love Him, or who defends Himself, and attacks His enemies, banishing them to eternal damnation, torturing endlessly those that curse Him, meting out eternal vengeance upon those that hate Him, and shutting up all mercy from those who persecute Him, then we have a God who establishes His Kingdom in the same spirit, and along the same lines, and by the same methods as the kingdoms of this world. But we are commanded to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to those that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us — THAT WE MAY BE THE SONS OF OUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends

rain on the just and on the unjust...BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT (Mat. 5:38-48).

Sons of God are instructed to love their enemies and not to resist evil (Mat. 5:39). In so doing they proclaim the nature and principles of the Kingdom of God which is the nature of unconditional redemptive love. We are not to fight with our enemies, either personal or national — even if they attack us. God is not preparing His sons to be warriors carrying carnal weapons to establish His Kingdom on earth. The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, for they are spiritual weapons of faith and power and love. There is abundant historical evidence that the early Christians considered themselves citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, ambassadors of the spirit of Jesus, and as such refused to be conscripted into the military service of the Roman government. They objected to war as carnal, political, and immoral.

God is raising up in the earth a Kingdom of Priests — as SAVIOURS shall they come up on mount Zion! It is impossible to love all men while hating some men. And in the “war machine” of the nations it is impossible to go into battle with the “right frame of mind” unless your superiors have instilled in you a sense of outrage, anger, hostility, and hatred toward the enemy. It is not possible to be in preparation to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption while going out in the world’s war machine to savagely blow men to bits for whom Christ died. The irony of war is that there are in most cases soldiers who are Christians on both sides. These men, saved, perhaps baptized in the Holy Spirit, members of the body of Christ, who are to love and care for one another, and esteem one another, as Christ does us; and who supposedly are endued with a divine and heavenly love for all men, march out on the battlefield of carnal warfare at the command of their worldly governments and unregenerated politicians — and BLOW ONE ANOTHER’S BRAINS OUT! Brother shoots brother, and brother bombs brother — each sometimes in the name of Christ! Ponder the fact. In international wars over the past 2,000 years, professing Christians have killed professing Christians by the millions! I do not hesitate to tell you that it is one of the most ridiculous contradictions in the world.

In that blessed day when the mountain of the house of the Lord is established in the tops of the mountains it shall come to pass that “many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:1-4). The spirit of that blessed day must first be perfected in those who are destined to rule with the Lamb from mount Zion; the swords and spears in our own hearts must be turned into acts of mercy and blessing to all men of all nations now.

When men come to mount Zion they turn their weapons of destruction into instruments of blessing for their neighbors. The characteristic of the holy mountain is the Lamb — sacrificial, redeeming love. The only sword carried by the Lamb is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Sons who stand with the Lamb on mount Zion have surrendered their right to be the aggressor, the destroyer with the sword. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These have the mind of the Lamb, the spirit of the Lamb, the nature of the Lamb. They are

rendered defenseless before their enemies, armed only with the power of redemptive love. They can no longer fight any man or any nation with words or attitudes or actions of murderous rage, let alone with weapons that maim, kill and destroy. They come under the rule of the spirit of the defenseless Lamb who is the Saviour of the world. The sons of God belong to a spiritual Constitution. Their foes are spiritual, for they wrestle not against flesh and blood. Their armor is the armor of God and their sword is the sword of the Spirit.

I am reminded of the story of a missionary who was trying to explain Christian living to the chief of a primitive and warlike tribe. The chief was very old, and he listened patiently. "I do not understand," the old man said at last. "You tell me that I must not take my neighbor's wife or his ivory or his oxen." "That's right," said the missionary. "And I must not dance the war dance and then ambush my enemy on the trail and kill him." "Absolutely right," replied the missionary. "But I cannot do any of these things anymore," the old chief said regretfully. "I am too old. To be old and to be Christian — they are the same thing!" We may be amused at the old chief's logic, but the solution is plain. He did not do those things because he could not — we do not do them because we will not!

It is time to evaluate our Kingdom walk. The ascended Christ stands at the doorway and bids us set our eyes toward the world above and listen for His voice. We came from that higher world, we are sent as ambassadors of that higher world; let us seek first the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us think, listen and watch for those things of the higher world. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Do not fill your minds with the things of this dark and dying age. Conspiracies, government actions, politics, foreign policy, taxation, terrorism, all are topics of great interest and fleshly appeal, but they are all related to the world of darkness and not that of the higher world of the Kingdom. They are all earthly things that Barabbas would involve himself and others in.

I first learned this beautiful truth from a good and holy man, my natural father. It was his earnest conviction that Jesus taught that a child of God and citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven is required by the Holy Spirit to walk out the principles of the Kingdom in the totality of life. He believed in what he termed "non-resistance" and saw the basis for this principle in the sermon of the mount and in the words of Paul: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath...therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-21).

Under the law we have a right to harm someone who has harmed us. It is fair and just to retaliate when someone attacks us. The walking out of these Old Covenant principles range from sibling pinches to international war. If someone takes advantage of me, I have the right to take advantage of them. If someone files a lawsuit against me, I have the right to file a counter suit. If someone swindles me in an agreement, I have the right to swindle him back. In every case it is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. If a nation launches missiles against us, we have a right to send missiles back. "You have heard that all of this has been said," Jesus declared, "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU!" Ah, now we are on Kingdom territory! And what is the higher law of the Kingdom that Jesus brought? "Resist not evil...don't retaliate...don't

sue anyone...if they take your car let them have your truck also...if they force you into a bad situation, fulfill what they require and more!"

My father lived by these principles. On more than one occasion he was attacked by men who had sworn to kill him because of the gospel. They came at him with bricks and two-by-fours and brute physical strength, and my father was a small man. He fearlessly stood his ground and spoke only the words, "I love you!" Their arms stopped in mid air and they dropped their weapons. On one occasion the scene was less dramatic, but the Holy Ghost was on my mother. As she spoke in tongues and turned the car around, my father was able to jump in and make his escape. He would never resist evil, never retaliate, never manifest any fear, antagonism, anger or animosity. And he was never injured! God was powerfully with him at all times.

In the 1940's my father joined himself to one of the Pentecostal denominations. When he was being examined for ordination to the ministry in this denomination he told the brethren, "There is something I must let you know. I am a conscientious objector. I do not believe a Christian has any right in the spirit of Jesus to resist any evil or go to war to fight against any enemy of our country." He explained in detail his views on this matter. The brethren said to him, "But, brother Eby, what if a thief or rapist entered your house at night with the intent to rob you, or to molest your wife and children, or even to kill you — what would you — what would you do?" He answered, "I would call on God and God would congeal him in the doorway and he would be unable to do us any harm. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they are mighty through God." "But," the brethren pressed, "what if everyone believed as you do? What if no one would join the armed forces to defend our country? What if our enemies attacked us — what would we do?" My father responded, "My dear brethren, if everyone in this country believed as I do, there would be so much of the power of God in this nation that our enemies would not be able to attack us!" "Well, brother Eby," the brethren said, "we don't agree, but we do admire your faith." They ordained him. My father was a small man, only five feet, one and a half inches tall, but he was a man of courage, fearlessness, conviction, and a man of faith and power with God. He lived, breathed, and walked out what he perceived as true in God. And it worked! God was with him. He was an example of the power of the grace and love of God to overcome all evil with good. That, precious friend of mine, is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God!

Lorain and I have two sons and one daughter. We are blessed that all of them are walking with the Lord and with us in this Kingdom word. I tell you today that we are willing to see any or all of them offered up for our Lord Jesus Christ. We are willing to see them suffer privation, ill health, persecution, pain, or even death for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom, should the Father lead them in such paths. Lorain and I have made great sacrifices (though we did not consider them as such!) through the years in order to fulfill the call of God in our lives. And we are now willing with joy to have our children suffer that and even greater things in the walk of this Kingdom. We would not hinder one of them from following the Lord to any of the far-flung mission fields of the world — even to give their lives there for the gospel. We would be willing to see them die for Jesus — but we are NOT willing to see them die on any battlefield of any nation of this world. We are not willing to see them carrying guns or driving tanks or flying bombers to take the lives of men for whom Christ died. We are not willing to see them blowing to bits men to whom we have been called to bring the Kingdom of Life and Light and Love. I am willing to see my sons and my daughter

pay whatever price necessary to deliver creation from the bondage of sin, sorrow and death — but I am not willing to see them, at the whims of carnal politicians, blow men away into hell and judgment. The sons of God must be preeminently the SONS OF LOVE. You cannot love and maim and kill at the same time. The very thought is an absurdity, a horrible blasphemy. “For God so loved the world...” And so will all who are called to sonship! That is the power and the glory of the Kingdom of God!

Chapter 20

Entering The Kingdom

In an earlier article of this series I wrote concerning the difference between *seeing* and *entering* the Kingdom of God. Permit me to rehearse those thoughts for a moment before proceeding further into the supernal glories that lie before us upon our entrance into the full inheritance that belongs to each and every son of God in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of God means different things to different people, according to their understanding. This is only natural, because of the many figures under which the idea was presented by Jesus, and also because people are at different stages in their progress along the way to the Kingdom, which means that they have attained different degrees of growth as children of God in the family of God. What a familiar topic the new birth is! How many thousands of sermons have been preached about it! But how many have perceived the true *purpose* of the new birth? Jesus said that one must be born again in order to “see” or “enter” the *Kingdom of God*. The reality He presented was the Kingdom! The purpose of the new birth is not to get us into the church or to some far-off heaven somewhere. The purpose of the new birth is to enable us to enter the Kingdom. I fear very few who fill the pews of the churches today have this conception of the new birth — that thereby God has infused into us His very own divine life so that we may be able to partake of His Kingdom.

Here we find Jesus laying down the preliminary requirement for an understanding of the Kingdom, as well as entrance into the Kingdom. When men come into the world, they are born outside of the Kingdom of God, and they cannot see into it. They may go round and round it, and examine it from the outside, and pass an opinion on it. But they are no judges. They are not seeing what they are speaking about. For that which is born of spirit is *spirit*, and that which is born of flesh is *flesh*; and flesh cannot see into the realm of spirit. Fleshly men can only give an uninformed and unenlightened criticism about something spiritual that they can neither see nor understand. Therefore the critical value of a natural man’s opinion on spiritual matters is nothing. His opinion is simply ludicrous — he is talking about a thing that he has never had experience with. If I am to partake and participate in the Kingdom of God, then I need to possess a life other than the life I have by nature. I must be born again into a *higher realm*. I must receive the life of God, the life of the Kingdom, for not unless I possess His life can I begin to enter into and explore and experience the realities and powers of His Kingdom.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3). Everyone with spiritual understanding knows that the words “see” and “know” are identical in their spiritual meaning. When I tell a friend something he did not see before, and I am trying to get him to see it, all at once there passes over his face the illumination that indicates understanding. He says, “Preston, I see it.” What does he mean? He does not mean that he sees anything with the eye of flesh. He means

that he “understands” or “knows” it. How many times a day do you say, “I see!” So Jesus is telling us that apart from the new birth a man cannot understand, comprehend, or know the Kingdom of God. It is better to know the Kingdom of God by the spirit than to see with physical eyes any “age” or “external government” that might be *called* the Kingdom of God. Here is the mighty power of the New Creation: it sees what others cannot see! It sees, amid the thousand things natural men see and are guided by, something infinitely greater and more real— it SEES GOD. No wonder it leads a man to think and act differently from other men. On everything it looks at, the bright light of eternity is shining. The depths it perceives are infinite. The heights it beholds are immeasurable. The truth it understands is without flaw or error and is eternal.

Seek to walk in the light of HIS countenance. Seeing the INVISIBLE will make it easy to forsake this world and do the will of God! The heavens are shut up from the natural man. He cannot see eternal things. He hears only the lower sounds of earth. But *you* see beyond all this into the very heart of God, into the depths of His great plans and purposes, and the “whys” and “wherefores” of all things since the creation of the world and unto the consummation of all ages. You see the Kingdom of God! Far away in the depths of my spirit the perfumed breezes of the Kingdom of Heaven sweep over my being until my very soul weeps for joy and laughs for gladness. I write to you today of a realm of reality that is wonderfully real, solid, awesome. Jesus Christ intends for us to actually enter into the Kingdom of God here and now, and to begin exploring it in its height and depth and length and breadth. “Get thee out of thy country...unto a land that I will show thee,” the Lord commanded Abraham. Just as on any earthly adventure, we must be willing to be surprised. And we will be, for “eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard,” what God has prepared for us.

To “enter into” the Kingdom is, as we should readily understand, more than to “see” it. Moses stood on the heights of mount Nebo and *saw* the Promised Land, but he never got into it. God kept him on the other side of Jordan, although he was the leader of God’s people, because of his disobedience. In this realm of *entering* the Kingdom we discover the Kingdom realm as a *gift*. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to *give* you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32). God is a giving God. Because He *is love*, He would have to be a giving God. “For God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16). “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven *give* good things to them that ask Him?” (Mat. 7:11). “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the *gift* of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). To His footstep followers today the Lord says, “Fear not, little flock, who already has the gift of eternal life; fear not, little flock, who already has bountiful gifts from the hand of the Father; fear not, little flock, who already has possession of the gift of the Spirit of God. It is now the Father’s good pleasure to give you more yet than you have. It is the Father’s good pleasure to GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM!”

The Kingdom of God is not being offered here to the world. It is not being promised to the natural man. It is not being proffered to the religious people in the church systems. Here it is being promised to the “little flock” who are already earnest and steadfast followers after all that God has. “My sheep know my voice,” Jesus said, “and a stranger they will not follow.” You are a sheep of His pasture if you are following hard after God, if you are following on to know the Lord; and it is to you that

He gives the Kingdom. The picture here is of the shepherd leading his flock out of the sheepfold down the dusty road until he suddenly comes to a gate. The shepherd goes up to the gate, unlatches it, swings it open, and leads the entire flock into a lush green pasture. The sheep enter and begin to graze and enjoy the fresh green field which has not been trampled down by the heavy feet of other flocks. Jesus says, "It is my good pleasure to lead you down all the dusty roads of spiritual experience until I bring you to the secluded, reserved, select, appointed green field of God's Kingdom."

At this point the Kingdom of God is a gift. The offer of the Kingdom is not predicated upon any self-effort or any good work or religious exercise. You cannot buy it. Nothing you have can be traded for it. All the education, position, fame or fortune you can amass will not gain you admission. The offer is made, the call goes out, but God will not force the flock into that Kingdom. If this Kingdom is entered it must be entered by a heart desire that will make us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The earnest, effectual desire of our hearts as followers of God's Christ will bring us into this Kingdom that God is giving to His flock. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray as John taught his disciples to pray, the very first petition that He taught them was, "Thy kingdom come!" They were to ask the Father with a sincere desire and a deep and intense yearning in their heart to let the Kingdom be made available to His flock for entrance. This characterizes the people who receive it. Let not the careless and unconcerned think that they shall have any part in the Kingdom of God and of Christ. Those to whom the Kingdom has no value will miss it just as did the Pharisees and scribes in Jesus' day. They rejected the Kingdom when it was offered, and it can still be rejected today.

Jesus plainly taught His disciples and the scribes and Pharisees that He had brought the Kingdom of God to them. He spoke to them of its beauty and glory, of its principles and powers, of its ways and potentials. But the Jews continued to reject it. Therefore, Jesus told them that because they counted themselves unworthy of the Kingdom of God, God was going to take it from them, that is, they would not be permitted to enter into it, and God would give it to a nation, even a people, "worthy of it." He would give it to a company called His "little flock," the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke many parables about the acceptance or rejection of the Kingdom of Heaven. One such parable was about the man who went out into a field and began to plow. Half way down the furrow it became very hard. He gave up the task and returned home. Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62). If you are of the little flock you have put your hand to the plow. You have already begun to plow a furrow for God straight towards the Kingdom. Have you grown weary and looked back to decide that the carnal house of religion and religious systems is easier and more secure than the field of the Kingdom of God? Has the pressing of your way into the Kingdom seemed so hard you have compromised with the imperfection of the *church realm* and rejected the Gift of God?

In my years of ministry I have had occasion to reflect upon this saying of our Lord. Some people come to the hard work of pressing into the Kingdom only under painful duress. Once the price of entrance becomes clear to them, they drop the plow and turn back to the beggarly elements of religion, joining themselves again to the programs and activities of a church system in a lesser realm. They are not yet ready for the Kingdom. They refuse to enter into the Kingdom. In contrast are those who

find themselves *unable* to leave the Kingdom walk. They are drawn irresistibly to the transforming and creative process going on within them, and thoroughly understand that there is nothing in the church systems of man for them anymore. Nothing could entice them — not blessings, nor programs, nor fellowship, nor activities, nor personalities, nor needs, nor preachers — to turn from their quest of the Kingdom. **THEY HAVE REACHED THE POINT OF NO RETURN.** No looking back! The hook is in their jaw. They can do nothing else, so help them God.

If we are the elect of God in this hour, there is a call within us, and deep calleth unto deep. I tell you, my beloved, there is something within me, an inner compulsion, and I know that I have set my face as a flint and cannot turn to the right hand or the left from my journey into God's fullness. I can't go back to the world — the world has nothing to offer me; it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. I can't go back to religion — religion holds nothing for me anymore; it is an abomination. I can't even go back to Pentecost, back to the Holy Place — for the veil has been rent and I have tasted of the powers of the world to come. There is no turning back because my heart has turned to the Lord. As the apostle says, "When it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away...and we all, with unveiled 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. 3:16-18). For some in this hour the veil has been rent and we have found an entrance to behold the transcendent glories of that land that lies before us. By the blood of Jesus we have been granted the opportunity to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes, when the pressures and processings come, when the dealings of God are deep and heavy upon us, when the going is especially painful or difficult and saints complain of its demanding nature, I ask, "Could you stop this inward work if you wanted to? Could you find an exit and escape the demands of His purposes in your life?" The answer comes back, "No — I have no choice but to fellow on to know the Lord." For these precious souls the glory and honor of the Kingdom of God is close at hand, and there is no longer any question of dropping the plow and turning back.

One more and more comes to know what it means to walk in the Kingdom as he follows on into deeper and deeper measures of God's dealings and further separations unto His purposes. As we become ONE WITH GOD the world does not understand what has happened; but they know that a separation has taken place between us and them that is more than bodily separation. Although we are living and moving among them, and they see us at our earthly tasks and daily living, they realize that we have mounted up beyond them and their understanding. In this connection a brother in Christ some time ago sent us these meaningful words: "Yes, this is an holy calling — and it involves much separation, often from our friends, religious realms, and everything and everybody that would hinder the upward climb into the hill of the Lord, that we might stand in His holy place. The flesh will cringe at the *aloneness* of the walk. The mind will question as to why it must be so. But the spirit within will continue to draw us onward without the camp, bearing His reproach, while we are loosed from so many hindrances and infirmities. **IT IS A DAY OF REVELATION** — and little did we know what things were hindering our spiritual progress until suddenly we found that God was stripping something from us, and though we wept at the time, and would have retained it if we could, nevertheless being yielded to the will of God, we relinquished our grasp, and found to our

amazement that we received a new measure of freedom. And how many things we hold so dear, but they are actually a weight upon us, rather than a help.”

Many times it is most grievous and perplexing to those who do not know the Lord, as well as to those Christians bound in the religious systems, who cannot understand the workings and separating processes of the Spirit of God, to have one who is near and dear to them in the flesh, separated from them in the Spirit. Though the body with its personality is still in the home, office, or business, it is as though the loved one were not there. In such cases, how often do they who are watching the lives of those who are entering hard into the Kingdom realm of God, entreat them that they will return; that they will again be unto them as they once were. When an apprehended one has entered into this experience, he has counted all things but loss, and suffered the loss of all things, that he might WIN CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM. Truly, HIS DRAWING leaves us no choice but to FOLLOW ON that we might KNOW HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality! “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Mat. 10:37-38)

As we follow on to enter into the righteousness, power and glory of the Kingdom of God, earth and friends and religious things fade away in the exceeding brightness of our vision of God’s great purpose in us. Our eyes are fixed with a steadfast gaze upon Him who has gone before us, opening up the way into the fuller glory that lies BEYOND THE VEIL. Those apprehended to be conformed to the image of the Son of God and to share the glory and authority of His Kingdom, have been caught away in the Spirit and set in the ranks of the chariots of the Lord, even among the company of the overcomers who shall come forth in the name of the Lord to rule and reign and conquer and bless until all things have been subjected unto God. The purpose of the *Church* is to form the body of Christ; the purpose of the *Kingdom* is to restore all things, in heaven and in earth, to God.

I mentioned earlier that the purpose of the new birth is to give us the life of God which is the life of the Kingdom of Heaven. As this life is perfected and raised up in us, the Kingdom of God is established within us by life and as life. There are very special dealings of God within each of us in relation to the development of that life. Our elder brother, Jesus, put it this way: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn. 15:1-2). Every branch that **beareth fruit** — **Hepurges** it! The purpose of purging, or pruning, is to effect a concentration of the life. When all the branches of the vine are permitted to grow unrestricted there is a resulting debilitating or weakening of the life. It is like diluting a chemical — the more water you add, the weaker it becomes. The nourishment and vitality of the vine are sapped by all the multitudinous branches, shoots and tendrils, and utilized to keep them alive and bearing abundance of foliage rather than being channeled into producing fruit. Thus, with the excess branches and shoots cut away, the life becomes more concentrated and stronger in those remaining, and the clusters of grapes become more rich and full. In like manner it is necessary that our natural tendencies, actions and desires, with all carnal religious activities and exercises, must be cut away, that the virtues and powers of our Lord be wrought and manifested in us. When Jesus speaks of “bearing fruit” He is not talking about “winning souls”; rather, He is speaking of the formation within our lives

of **the fruit of the Spirit** which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. All these are the underlying nature of the sons of God who reign in the Kingdom of Heaven!

It has been my experience that God not only prunes away the sins of the flesh and the emotions and tendencies of the soul, but a great deal of religiousness — religious activities and those involved in them— as well. There was a time years ago when we made the circuit, speaking for the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship and various organizations and movements within the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms. Our desire was pure — to share the present truth of sonship and the Kingdom of God — to inspire and bless and challenge any and all possible to the deeper life of the Christ within. Here and there we found an elect few who had ears to hear, but for the most part it became evident that we were “spinning our wheels.” Then, one day it dawned on me! Our word was not producing **fruit** in those places. Oh, they were delighted to have brother Eby come by and share his testimony, even minister a revelatory word, and prophesy over some people, with the laying on of hands, momentarily satiating the intense craving in a few hearts for a richer diet of spiritual fare. But after I left, nothing changed! There was no fruit. There was no heightened vision, no going *on* in God, no raising up of the Kingdom of Heaven within. These merely took the word we ministered, diluted it with their own shallow church program, and used it to further their own kingdom on a lower plane. Ah, they enjoyed drawing life from us so long as it didn’t require them to bear Kingdom fruit! As long as our ministry could be *used* to increase their branches and put on many beautiful leaves — the manifestation of life without fruit — we were welcome in their midst. But what they were doing was “sapping” the life out of us to enhance and embellish and strengthen their own babylonish system! Suddenly the voice of the Spirit thundered authoritatively in my ear, “Enough!” And the celestial husbandman did a pruning work. He pruned from my life a RELIGIOUS REALM that will draw life but will not bear fruit of that life. God does, indeed, prune people from us! “Every branch *in me* that beareth not fruit He TAKETH AWAY: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” The doom of the unfruitful is: They are TAKEN AWAY. There are multitudes today who loudly profess to be in Christ who yet do not bear fruit of the Christ life. Though they are branches of Christ, and His life in them produces abundance of foliage, God will cut off their life-supply that they may be seen to be dry ones.

Those called to this high calling, who shall rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom in this great Day of the Lord, are being separated from all that binds them to a lower order, that they may enter into the fullness of His life. Many people find it a lot easier to be *one* with the babylonish religious systems, where the crowds are, than to become separated to go out **beyond**, leading the way for others to follow. How I rejoice that God is now calling a people — sons of the Kingdom — separated ones — to a realm beyond the norm or religious activity, beyond the programs and promotions, beyond the sensationalism and hand-clapping, beyond the revivals and conventions and seminars, into the new and seemingly strange paths of HIS LEADING. The prunings are not easy, friends and loved ones and brethren do not readily understand, especially the preachers and organizations set upon holding you within their pews and coffers. I do not doubt for one moment that many of these programs are being used of God on some level, in spite of the worldly methods and fleshly techniques, to touch many lives with salvation, healings, and blessings. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for His blessing on every plane where He

chooses to work, but when the call comes to leave behind the outer court of salvation and the holy place of the baptism in the Spirit in order to ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, those called to be kings and priests unto God come aside to prepare for the glory soon to be revealed, to make ready for the next great move of God in the earth!

The message is clear — there are things that others can do, but which you cannot do, when you begin to *enter* into the Kingdom. Religion today has become big business. It is one of the biggest and most lucrative businesses in the whole world. More than one preacher, supposing that *gain* is *godliness*, has become a millionaire over the past few decades, not because he was anointed by God, but because he was a TERRIFIC PROMOTER. Through clever speech and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive they have beguiled innocent people, pretending that they were the great power of God. By craftiness they obtain the names of tens of thousands of the Lord's precious people to whom they monthly send their high-pressure pleas for financial help to further grandiose programs which are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, grasping and greedy mind. Untold millions of dollars have been extracted from innocent, humble saints to build huge cathedrals, church buildings, office complexes, radio and television networks, outreaches, and missionary programs that are more of a curse than a blessing. Some time ago David Wilkerson was asked, "What do you think about American religious broadcasting, especially Christian television?" His reply: "They should shut it down. Turn off all the cameras. Release all these men from all the pressures we have put them under. They should be stripped from their heroic robes, all of their glamour, and be taken outside from all the lights. Then they should go back to the 'mountain' and be broken before God. Let God bring them back, as He chooses, in a purified form. It's all become flesh, absolute flesh..." And though some will be offended by my words, I do believe that those who truly hunger and thirst to *enter the Kingdom* will hear, believe, and obey when I say that those who *feed* upon those polluted tables are no better than the preachers that spread the tables! If you want to hear the voice of the King of kings in this hour, *turn off the so-called Christian television*, and fall upon your knees in holy brokenness before God until you receive a word directly out of the heavens.

We have passed through a time of great darkness. But thank God, the first rays of light of a new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not awakened. They know not of the dawn. And the Word describes them and their shepherds in very uncomplimentary terms. The heads of the churches are called "the drunkards of Ephraim" (Isa. 28:1-4). Then in Isaiah 29:9-11 we are told, "they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your heads...hath He covered. And all vision hath become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed." And when these drunken shepherds spread tables for their flocks, instead of those tables being loaded with good wholesome spiritual food, the prophet says, "ALL tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is NO PLACE CLEAN" (Isa. 28:8).

But we who are of the Day, who are not lovers of the drunkenness of religious teachings and promotions, nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. "We are

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

Do you know that one reason God’s children do not hunger and thirst after righteousness and follow on to apprehend the Kingdom of God, 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 the Kingdom in one grand leap; but if they have this experience granted them, it is only when they have taken the first steps of enlightenment, understanding, cleansing, pruning, judgment, obedience, and overcoming. Ah, the way of entering the Kingdom *is by steps!*

There is a passage in Daniel 7:18 that says, “But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” Here it says that we shall *take* the Kingdom, and sometimes we think this means that we are to take the Kingdom by exercising the authority; but before we can do that, the Kingdom must first be given to us, we must be able to enter into it, strong enough to possess it, and worthy to inherit it. If we try to take it before the authority is given to us, we are usurpers, not inheritors, and are guilty of spiritual treason. If I tell you that I intend to give you my car, but you come and take it before I give it to you, you are a thief. If you worked for a large business concern and the president of the company mentioned that he had intentions of making you vice-president; if you took over the vice-presidency before he actually gave it to you, you would be a usurper — and probably would be fired! Although God has promised us the Kingdom, and is leading us into it step by step, we still do not have all the authority, power, or glory of the Kingdom. Sometimes we try to exercise authority that we don’t have and it doesn’t work. Some may be offended at me for saying this, but if you are honest, you will have to admit that it is so. When we really have the authority, when it has been given to us, and we have laid hold upon it, it will work, not just sometimes, but all the time. Either we have it or we don’t, and if we have it it will never fail. May God in His great

mercy forgive us if we are trying to usurp something we haven't yet possessed. I don't want to be a usurper — I want to be an inheritor! My deepest desire is to be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God.

OBSTACLES TO ENTERING THE KINGDOM

A new movement can always benefit from having a few rich and famous converts. So it must have been exciting when the rich young ruler approached Jesus to talk about his possible involvement in the Kingdom. No doubt Judas already had his pledge envelopes out, and I can just hear Simon Peter exclaiming, "Wow, this guy is future board-member material!" At the beginning of His ministry Jesus had said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal" (Mat. 6:19-20). On another occasion He said, "How hardly shall they that have riches *enter* into the kingdom of God!" The record states that the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again, and said unto them, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to *enter* into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to *enter* into the kingdom of God" (Mk. 10:23-25).

Don't misunderstand — Jesus was not opposed to money. His mind of omniscient wisdom understood the eternal truth that a person could hold on to wealth all the days of his life, but the only true and eternal treasures, which are in the Kingdom of Heaven, could only be obtained by doing the will of the Father in heaven. The will of the Father is Kingdom business, and it yields Kingdom dividends in the realm of the spirit. So be careful, Jesus warned. Don't get involved in the wrong treasure hunt. He knew that people get obsessed with *earthly things*. After a while little else matters to them, or, as Jesus put it, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It is true that Jesus says merely that it is *hard* for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom — hard, but *not impossible!* Wealth tends to make a man self-sufficient and independent of God and arrogant and presumptuous towards others in that he learns that money will purchase him any special privilege he wants. He becomes trapped in a mesh of values where everything has a cash-value attached to it. "No man can serve two masters," Jesus said, "you cannot serve God and mammon (money)."

It is so very difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom because the Kingdom of Heaven is THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT. The Kingdom operates within the economy of **spirit**, not the methods and systems of the flesh. To enter into the Kingdom a person must allow God to perfect the spiritual dimensions of his personality. The perfecting of the spiritual life requires the utmost attention and the expenditure of much time and energy. The heart and the determination must be turned from the things and circumstances of earth and placed in heaven. Material wealth, with its attending demands and responsibilities, also requires the utmost attention and expenditure of prime time and energy. Therefore, either the spiritual life of the Kingdom must prevail and the pursuit of material gain must yield, or else the pursuit of material things must prevail and the development of the spiritual life of the Kingdom must suffer. NO man can serve both of these masters at the same time. The wealthy person often finds most of his pleasures and resources in the material realm. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven is, for the rich, very, very difficult. To make the seeking of the Kingdom the prime consideration of each day is virtually

impossible. That is why the Lord counseled the rich young ruler to sell his many possessions, give the proceeds to the poor, and to “take up your cross and *follow me.*”

Just recently I came across this article. Hear what it says. “In 1928, a group of the world’s most successful financiers met at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. The following were present: the president of the largest utility company; the greatest wheat speculator; the president of the New York Stock Exchange; a member of the President’s Cabinet; the greatest ‘bear’ on Wall Street; the president of the Bank of International Settlements; and the head of the world’s greatest monopoly. Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than there was in the United States Treasury. And for years, newspapers and magazines had been printing their stories, and urging the youth of the nation to follow their examples. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THIS IS WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THESE MEN: The president of the largest independent steel company, Charles Schwab, lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life and died broke. The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cutten, died abroad, insolvent. The president of the New York Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, served a term in Sing Sing Prison. The member of the President’s Cabinet, Albert Fall, was pardoned from prison, so he could die at home. The greatest ‘bear’ on Wall Street, Jesse Livermore, committed suicide. The President of the Bank of International Settlements, Leon Fraser, committed suicide. The head of the world’s greatest monopoly, Ivar Drueger, committed suicide. All of these men had learned how to make money, but not one of them had learned how to *live.*” And, may I add, not one of them had laid up even one copper cent of treasure in *the heavenlies!*

Our Lord’s only concern for the rich young ruler was that this ruler seek for those things that were truly valuable, the *priceless treasures* of the mind of Christ, the *eternal wealth* of the will of the Father, and the *imperishable riches* of the nature and power of God. Still this disciple-candidate was unable to act on what he heard. The Bible says he was sorrowful. Think about that! The dictionary defines *sorrowful* as, “full of sorrow, disappointment, regret, grief.” Why was the young man sorrowful? Ah, the record states, “For he had great possessions.” By the spirit of wisdom and understanding from God we can see how undiscerning and unwise he was!

Yet, among the Lord’s people I have heard it said that if we really focus our energies on the Kingdom, we will become **rich**. Or another way of saying it is that **prosperity** is a sign of God’s blessing. The more affluent a brother or sister in Christ is, the more they must be seeking the Kingdom or applying the principles of the Kingdom. The reasoning goes like this: God has promised that He will bless His children if they are faithful to Him and have faith. Since kings live in extravagant palaces, sons of God have the right to live luxuriously to demonstrate that they are indeed the “King’s Kids” — members of God’s Royal Court. Children of a king should dress and eat in royal fashion. They should have the best jobs, live in the finest homes, drive the most expensive cars, and enjoy all the amenities of life. Just follow Jesus, we are told, and we will be successful in almost everything. Just walk in the Spirit and we will rise to the top of the ladder. Have faith in God and we will win more beauty contests, hit more home runs, make more sales, and receive more awards!

My beloved brethren, does this not *contradict* the words of our Elder Brother and Forerunner that a rich man can *hardly enter* into the Kingdom of God? Have these

reprobates in the modern “prosperity message” never read the inspired admonition of our beloved brother Paul, “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of 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.* For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith 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 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.** Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called...” (I Tim. 6:3-12).

Oh, would to God that all who name the name of Christ would learn what it means when Jesus says, “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these *things* shall be added unto you.” As we move from “things” to seek the reality of Christ’s Kingdom we discover that our goal in life is not to make money or accumulate things. If that is our goal, then we need to set our priorities straight. You see, in the world *within*, that world which *you are*, that world where *Christ dwells*, that inner world where the Kingdom of God *is found*, there is no money and there are no things. There is no need for money and there is no need for things. The only need for money and things is in the world on the outside. But if we go out and try to seek that which is on the outside, then we have left the Kingdom. If we love the world, the love of the Kingdom is not in us. The Kingdom of God is within you. The world of the Kingdom is that inner world of the spirit. There are two dimensions of “you” — the outer you and the inner you. Paul refers to these as the “outward man” and the “inward man”. “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Cor. 4:16). The outward man is the visible, tangible and fleshly life of you. The inward man is the invisible man of spirit. The former is of earth, natural, carnal, and mortal; the latter is of heaven, divine, spiritual and immortal. The former is the first Adam, the latter is the last Adam —Christ.

Within that inward man is the power of all things. The law of the Kingdom is that he who makes the Kingdom of God and the righteousness of God his first and chief concern will have all earthly necessities supplied *in the overflow*. Care for God’s essentials, and God Himself will care for your incidentals. First seek the bread of heaven, the water of life, the robe of righteousness, and the peace, joy and power of the Kingdom, and the Lord of the Kingdom will see to it that you shall not lack earthly bread, water, raiment, or any good thing.

All our choices in the outer world should serve to extend, express and demonstrate the reality of what we are in the inner world. When we choose a job or any activity, we don’t choose on the basis of its value in the outer world, we choose that which will serve as an expression of the inner man. That’s where peace is. That’s where joy is. That’s where righteousness is. That’s where the power of God resides. That’s where the only fulfillment is. Because that is where the Kingdom is, that’s where life is, that’s where reality is, that’s where the true riches are, that’s where heaven is! So

many people work on their jobs just to make money, to pay bills and put food on the table. They don't really *like* the job, and are miserable. That is what the outer world calls "making a living". But making a living is *more* than making money, for all the men in that outer world are *dying*, and what they are actually doing is **MAKING A DEATH!** Their emphasis is on laying up store for old age, making out the will, and seeing that the funeral is paid for. That is not *life!* The Lord of the Kingdom has taught us the truth of the Kingdom in this sublime word of wisdom: "A man's life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lk. 12:15). To make a living means, first and foremost, to **LIVE!** It's making what you are **live!** It denotes quality of life, and the only life of quality is the inward man — Christ. You will know true joy, peace and power when your inward man lives through your outward man, your inner world is expressed and revealed through your outer world. Matters not what you do outwardly, where you live, what your vocation is, what your responsibilities are — when your inward life is dominant all outer things are affected, transformed, swallowed up. As sons of God we are not victims of either money, things, or circumstances. These are not able to take away our peace. They are unable to rob us of our joy. They cannot take our life. The Christ within is our reality, our stability, our substance, our all. And that is what we are seeking. We are seeking incorruptible and immortal realities and powers. We are seeking the Kingdom of God. And that is why a rich man can *hardly enter* into the Kingdom!

While I have written of the perilous danger to those who pursue the wealth of *this world*, there is an abomination more dreadful than this right within the ministry of that which professes to be the Church. There is no shortage of men and women seeking gold and glory in the name of the Lord. The land is overflowing with them, those seeking their own gain and each staking his own claim. Within the past decade or so, two of the most famous international television pulpiteers have been exposed and their vast financial holdings have been publicized. They had millions of dollars invested in their personal homes and property while they begged and pled for money from the widows and the poor. They lived sumptuously while multitudes of those who supported their grandiose programs were living as paupers. And things have not changed one whit. Where are those who are true ministers of God and blessers of creation rather than those who gather money? Where are those who are building God's Kingdom rather than their own? Where are those who truly feed the sheep? Where are those who are not lifted up with pride? Where are those who are not puffed up with their own importance? Where are those who do not exalt themselves? Where is the preacher who doesn't seek to ingratiate himself to the one with the expensive clothes and the luxury automobile?

Where is the weeping before the altar? Where are those who refrain from using the world's methods to conduct God's business? Where are those who do not charge for the gospel, even if it is only a price on their tapes or books? Where are those who do not have a ministry for sale? Where are those who have not taken unto themselves the gold and the glory? Where are those who are not displaying *flesh* in their man-made schemes and promotions? Where are those of a broken and contrite spirit? Where are those with the meekness and purity of the Lamb? Where are those who have not brought the spirit of the world into their midst? Where are those who do not put their picture on every page of their magazine and their name on everything they do? Where is the beauty and glory of the message of the Kingdom of God without the Hollywood extravaganza and showmanship? Where is the worship in the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth, rather than *musical entertainment*? Where are those

who approach God with reverence and godly fear and do not treat the sacred things as though they were part of a carnival? Where are those who have laid hold of God? Where are the humble? Where are the pure in heart? Where are those who are being conformed to the image of the Son? Where are those who are putting on the mind of Christ? Where are the prayer warriors and the intercessors? Where are those who love and treat the poor, the elderly, the senile, the maimed, the feeble minded, the illiterate, the sick, the homeless, the diseased, the widow and the orphan, and those in prison as their own flesh, yea, as the Lamb of God Himself? Where are those who proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom without the slightest motive of financial reward? WHERE ARE GOD'S TRUE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE HOUR? Of this you can be certain — these will not be found within the halls of the harlot religious systems, nor will you see them on the Christian television networks. You will find them only among God's faithful remnant that has heard the Spirit's call to come out of that great city Babylon and, forsaking all, have gone unto Him, without the Camp, bearing His reproach, separated unto Him alone.

No one can deny that religion today is BIG BUSINESS. Some of the best known "born again" Hollywood personalities, should you inquire about engaging them to give their testimony at a meeting, will send their business manager over with a contract guaranteeing them several thousands of dollars for their forty-five minute appearance; and if there is no contract, there is no "ministry". This is not ministry — it is BIG BUSINESS. And the Judge standeth at the door. The local Christian Bookstore has become quite a showcase for what is called "Christian bric-a-brac". They are crammed full of every imaginable trinket, plaque, statue, poster, and artifact that they can sell with a religious flavor. Christian music albums now cost \$8.00 to \$12.00 apiece. The country is swarming with those who call themselves Christian speakers, musicians, bands and singers who CHARGE an admission fee to their seminars and concerts. Verily, I say unto you, the ticket prices are an abomination and a stench in the nostrils of a holy God and a spike in the hand of our dear Saviour who freely and sacrificially gave His all for us and to us. There is no Biblical or scriptural foundation or precedent whatsoever for SELLING THE WORD OF GOD — be it a Bible, a music album, a sermon, book, tape, trinket, concert, seminar or any other thing. It was just such abominations that led the firstborn Son of God to enter the temple in Jerusalem and, weaving a whip of cords, violently drive the money changers and those who bought and sold sacrifices from His Father's house. Methinks it is TEMPLE-CLEANSING TIME AGAIN!

The only person who can enter the Kingdom realm of God is the one who elects to come on God's terms and in God's way. The word of God reveals hindrances to entrance into the Kingdom. Another obstacle to entering into the Kingdom is the noxious weed of fleshly religion. When Jesus spoke to the self-righteous Pharisees and the blind, mis-guided chief priests and elders of the Jews, He delivered to them this stinging rebuke. "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots *go into* the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye *shut up* the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither *go in* yourselves, neither suffer ye them that *are entering to go in*" (Mat. 21:31-32; 23:13).

The damning sin of the Pharisees was that they made godliness a **law** rather than a **life**. “Moses said!” they thundered from their station high upon the craggy pinnacle of Sinai, and proceeded to lay upon the people the heavy burden of 613 commandments that must be meticulously kept according to the elaborate and extrapolated interpretations of the rabbis. I must point out that *self-righteous religion* is as old as the garden of Eden. In the mists of that heaven blest paradise, when the first woman and man stretched forth their inquisitive hands and furtively took of the forbidden fruit of the knowledge of *good and evil*, the eyes of them both were mysteriously opened to discover their own *nakedness*. To be naked means to have ones *flesh exposed*. Only the knowledge of good and evil could have caused them to realize that their flesh was exposed, and that knowledge never came to them as long as they walked in **life**. It was, in fact, a forbidden knowledge. There were only two trees — the tree of **life** and the tree of **law** — the **knowledge of good and evil**. God’s purpose for man is that he live in life, not after law. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth (life) came by Jesus Christ.

By means of the law “the eyes of them both were opened,” but, alas! to what a sight! When they departed from walking in life it was only to discover their own nakedness. They opened their eyes upon their own condition, which was “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17). By the law is the *knowledge of sin*, the scripture teaches us. Suddenly “they *knew* that they were naked” — they knew that their flesh, their *fleshly nature*, was now revealed, bare and exposed — sad fruit of the tree of knowledge. No sooner does a man discover his nakedness than this knowledge gives rise to the impulse to make an effort to COVER the nakedness. Thus, in the case of Adam and Eve, the discovery of their nakedness was immediately followed by an effort of their own to cover it — “they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7).

This is the first record we have of man’s attempt to remedy, by his own device, his condition, but this was not the single act of Adam in the Garden, it is truly the act of each of us, yes, OUR VERY OWN! The Spirit must make it very real to your heart, dear reader, that Adam’s effort to cover his nakedness was not a mere physical act, not even a moral act, it was a RELIGIOUS ACT. Our spiritual understanding of what transpired in that Eden of long ago will afford us wonderful instruction as to the character of human RELIGIOUSNESS in all ages. In the first place, we see, not only in Adam’s case, but in every case, that man’s effort to remedy his flesh nature **is based upon the sense of his nakedness**. He is shocked and shamed by his own sense of nakedness, so that all the “works” that follow are the result of this consciousness. This can never avail! For just as it was GOD who clothed man with **life** before his disobedience, now it must be GOD who clothes the man in his state of nakedness.

And this, let every man know, is just the difference between the walk in the Spirit of God and human religiousness. When you “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and “walk in the Spirit” you are wonderfully clothed thereby as you eat of the tree of His Life. There was no sense of nakedness so long as they lived by the tree of life. And though it is a great and deep mystery, what happened to Adam happens to us. What he was we have been. His experience is our experience. Ah, child of God, may the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God give enlightenment to your mind that you may comprehend of a truth that what happened to Adam in the Garden IS EVEN NOW HAPPENING TO EACH OF US. Every man from Adam to this day has been

naked — his fleshly nature has been exposed — and, at some time, in some manner, has been busily engaged in weaving together his very own fig-leaf apron to try and cover his nakedness. No one wants to appear as what he is, even though he is a thief, an adulterer, a murderer, a liar, or a religious hypocrite. In an effort to appear other than he is he sews together very wide leaves of the fig tree, to gloss over his true condition; that is, he tries every device he can, including multiplied religious works, rules, regulations, dress codes, good deeds, and a thousand others, to gloss over his true condition. Much fleshliness is still exposed, but the more gross manifestations are partially and temporarily concealed by his apron of fig-leaf works. But all the garments a man may devise to hide his nakedness become mere “spider’s webs” when the blazing light of God’s presence and glory shines upon them. Fig-leaf righteousness is so shallow, limited to outward observances, religious exercises, ceremonies, rituals, appearances, works, regulations, do this, don’t do that, go here, don’t go there, eat this, don’t eat that, drink this, don’t drink that, which make a show of righteousness in the flesh but leave the nature unchanged, the mind untransformed, and the will of the Father undone.

The miracle of what God has done through Jesus Christ ravishes my heart. I am enthralled beyond measure that by faith He has clothed me with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. The first thing God does is to strip away all the artificial, man-made coverings, and presents His own glorious covering, the slain Lamb. “For Adam also and for his wife the Lord God made long coats (tunics) of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21, Amplified). We would be hard pressed to understand the deep mystery of these “skins” with which the Lord clothed the sorrowing pair were it not that the scripture informs us that at that **precise point in history** GOD SLEW A LAMB FOR OUR COVERING. Christ, the Lamb of God, was “foreordained *before* the foundation (disruption) of the world” (I Pet. 1:20), and He is “the Lamb slain *from* the foundation (disruption) of the world” (Rev. 13:8). And that Lamb is the atonement (Hebrew: covering) of God for us, typified by all the Old Testament atonement sacrifices, and He is our only *robe of righteousness*. Interesting that the Lamb was slain not merely for the *sinning* man and woman, and not only for the *naked* man and woman, but for the man and woman CLOTHED IN FIG LEAVES! The “skins” of covering from the Lamb were given to replace the fig leaves of man’s self-effort, and not only was the man himself brought to the cross, but all his self-made religion of works as well! Ah, yes, the cross shall deal not only with sin and nakedness, it shall deal as well with our **fig-leaves!**

How vain have been our strivings about externals and our insistence upon carnal technicalities that we in ignorance deemed so very important! How often the spirit within me has been grieved as I have listened to brethren wasting their time contending over baptisms, communion, foot washing, meats and drinks, holy days, dress codes, long hair, short hair, women preachers, prayer veils, and petty doctrines of every kind, and when they were through with their pietistic wrangling, they had accomplished nothing but to prove that they knew everything about the **dead letter** of the Word and absolutely nothing about the **mind of Christ** or the **life-giving Spirit!** Men do not need any external ordinances, ceremonies, rituals or regulations. They need CHRIST AS LIFE! It was not the gospel, but the Old Covenant “which stood in meats and drinks, and divers washings (baptisms), and carnal ordinances, imposed on them *until* the time of reformation (change). But Christ *being come* an high priest of *good things to come*, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (not anything you can produce externally)...” (Heb. 9:10-11).

Fig leaves! Fig leaves! Fig leaves! Cursed covering of man's own devising! And any man with eyes to see can see the flesh shining brazenly through it in spite of all the intricate design and superficial appearance of life. Oh! how men try to conceal the corrupt flesh underneath, and indeed they may partially hide it from men, but the fig-leaf apron can never screen a man from the eye of God. But, blessed be the name of the Lord, God has reserved to Himself a people who is completely different, a people who is wholly HIS, a people who dwells in the light which Christ Himself is, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, sanctified by His Spirit, obedient to their heavenly Father, and clothed in the GARMENTS OF LIFE, even the righteousness of God's Lamb by the Spirit of resurrection from the dead. There is no doubt in my mind that this is the people that shall be granted an ABUNDANT ENTRANCE into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Chapter 21

Possessing The Kingdom

Canaan — what volumes the name speaks to us! Many are the songs written about Canaan Land, yet the masses of believers entertain the mistaken notion that Canaan is a type of heaven — that bright glory world above with streets of gold, walls of jasper and gates of pearl. This cannot be, because the great mark of Canaan was that the land had to be *conquered* and that God gave such glorious victories over enemies. There is warfare in Canaan. There are giants in Canaan. There are hoards of enemies in Canaan. The battles in Canaan make the experience in the wilderness look like a Sunday School picnic. The possession of Canaan was for victory and through victory. The children of Israel crossed the Red Sea to *escape* the enemy. They crossed the Jordan to *conquer* the enemy! Canaan speaks to us of the realm of the Kingdom of God. If we are going to possess the Kingdom, we are going to have to fight for it. The powers that are there will contest every foot of it; as soon as we start to possess our inheritance in God, we will come face to face with them, and we will find they are not easily defeated. We are no threat to them until we begin our march to possess our inheritance.

Multitudes of Christians are settled upon their lees — they are satisfied with knowing the joy of sins forgiven and hope to make heaven their home at last. There is no desire in their hearts to attain to anything of value in the Kingdom of God or to any position of responsibility and usefulness. It is said of Israel, “They despised the pleasant land” (Ps. 106:24). Canaan was a land of fruitfulness, of heights and depths and beauty and glory and power, a type of the Kingdom of God; but some of the people thought it would cost them a great deal to possess it, and they would rather go without it. I have read of certain Spaniards that lived where there was a great store of fish, but they were so lazy they would not exert themselves to catch them, but begged of their neighbors. Such sinful sloth is upon the masses of Christians that fill the pews of the church systems in this hour, and though the Kingdom of Heaven be offered them, yet they will not yield to the leadings and dealings of the Holy Spirit to possess it. They have only some faint wishes or desires. “The soul of the sluggard wisheth, and hath nothing” (Prov. 13:4). Men could be content to have the Kingdom of Heaven if it would drop as a ripe fig into their mouths, but they have no desire to pursue it, and their unsanctified hearts would abuse, misuse, prostitute and profane it were it given into their hands. We cannot have the world without labor, or any success or position or rank or responsibility or recognition without applying ourselves, and do we think to have the Kingdom of Heaven without *paying the price*?

Paul shows us how God’s people under the Old Covenant, ransomed by grace, and set upon a course of divine privilege and opportunity, were called to win the prize of their calling, and missed it. They were delivered out of the hand of their enemies by the blood of the Lamb. They were visibly under God’s protecting wing, and led out of Egypt by a mighty hand. They were set under the cloud of Yahweh’s presence. All were led out of Egypt by a door miraculously opened, and miraculously shut.

Pharaoh's claims upon them were forever cut off by the Red Sea. They had bread sent down from heaven as their daily supply. They had water given them by grace, out of the rock smitten by the rod of law and judgment. The water, after once bursting out of the rock known of old as Jacob's Pillar, continually followed Israel in their wanderings through the desert (I Cor. 10:4).

Israel then was led as one family by God's appointed leader, and all were blessed alike and all promised alike. Must they not, therefore, all alike receive God's approval? Far from it! "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (I Cor. 10:5). The whole body of Israel received the same great privileges, and were set at the same starting line. But did all win the goal? Nay, they became "castaways," or were disapproved of God. God was not well pleased with Israel. Their privileges did not so place them under grace, as to put them beyond responsibility, and the call to obedience. The Lord displayed His disapproval of them, for they never gained the prize of their calling. What was that calling? An entry into the land that flowed with milk and honey! The possession of all the riches, beauty, resources, expansiveness, fruitfulness and power of the land! That was the object set before God's rescued ones. "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land *unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey*" (Ex. 3:8). They were His people ransomed by blood, numbered by hundreds of thousands, and yet out of the delivered out of Egypt by grace — only *two* entered the land of promise, when it became a question of their believing God, obeying God, and possessing their possession! Among the number of the excluded were Moses the servant, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. God was not "*well pleased.*" The proof was visible enough; they never entered the good land.

When God told the children of Israel to go into the land of Canaan, He said, "I have *given* it to you." In a little while He added this striking admonition, "Go in to *possess* it." These were potential terms. In the divine and sovereign council of heaven God had already *deeded* the land to them, but they were not qualified yet to possess it. The land was full of giants, and walled cities, and fierce armies, which required a struggle for its possession. "We must through *much tribulation* enter into the kingdom of God," our beloved brother Paul has told us. The simple meaning of the word "tribulation" in the Greek is **pressure**. Ray Prinzing has mentioned how we are pressured on every side, but as birth pangs it is pressing us into His Kingdom, pressing us out of self's aspirations, pressing us into the plan and purpose of God. Through intense pressure, great distress, much trouble and suffering, strenuous effort and fierce warfare we enter the Kingdom — this realm of spiritual reality, fullness, glory and power. The Kingdom is obtained through much pressure and steadfast discipline.

When Israel came to the end of their wilderness journey and arrived at the Jordan River, it was a time of new beginnings. The old generation of disobedience and rebellion passed away in the wilderness. And now a new generation camped at the Jordan, and was preparing to cross over into their promised land of Canaan. It was the end of one era and the beginning of a new day for the nation. Joshua would now lead the new generation of the people of Israel across the Jordan and conquer and possess and inherit the glorious land given to them by God. Wonderful things were to take place when Israel set foot in their promised land. Although Israel would face great and strong enemies when they entered Canaan, the Lord promised that He

would drive out all those enemies from before them. He further said, "Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon" (Deut. 11:23-25).

The covenant of the old Land of Canaan is *our example* to prepare us to enter the new and greater "land" of the Kingdom of God on earth. These words of Paul Mueller are so very significant for us all at this present time. "The Psalmist said, 'The righteous shall **inherit the land**, and dwell therein for ever' (Ps. 37:29). Not only shall the saints inherit the earth, but they shall inherit the land. This land is a special place reserved for the elect. It is the place that corresponds in type to Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, the place of David's throne. It is the glorious realm of spiritual Zion, the "land" that corresponds to the Holiest of all in the tabernacle or house of the Lord. That place, or land, is a land of the incorruptible and immortal glory of the presence of the Lord. From that "land" the saints shall rule and reign with Christ in incorruptible bodies, with incorruptible minds, the mind of Christ.

"O that the wonderful spirit of revelation would enlighten us to the grandeur of these promises of God! The wisdom and understanding of the Spirit is being given to us. We are growing up to know the hope of our calling, and to see the glories that are reserved for us in the realm of Spirit. Only as we are enlightened by the spirit of revelation can we possibly comprehend the marvelous truth of **our inheritance in Christ**. When we fully understand that Christ is our inheritance, the things of earth will indeed grow dim. The world and all things of it will lose its attraction, and we will run with patience the race that is set before us. Our glorious, risen Christ has already set down the footprints, the steps, into the glory that is reserved for us. He has pre-destined our walk unto His fullness. He has set aside an inheritance for us that makes the things of this world look like the paltry dust and ashes that it is. Compared to the splendor of the incorruptible and immortal Christ of glory, all else is corruption. He has reserved Himself for us! He has set aside the Holiest of all, the place of His greater presence, for the holy remnant who are now growing up into Him. What an inheritance! The steps to that glory are there. Walk in the Spirit and the way will be made clear" — end quote.

Consider, precious saint of God, how vast and rich the land is! The land is unsearchably great, unlimitedly rich. The dimensions of the land are the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth of the Kingdom of God. The land is all the riches and the glory of Christ Himself. Many saints have no desire to attain experientially to the fullness of Christ Himself. They are more interested in a mansion over the hilltop, or a cabin in the corner of glory-land, or some such foolishness. The land is peace, joy, righteousness, incorruptible life, wisdom, knowledge, power, dominion and glory. All this is ours as children of God, but only as we *grow up into Christ* and *put on Christ* do we become mature and arrive in the position to assume this responsibility of possessing our possessions. We are talking about the *full stature* of Christ within ourselves, not gold bath tubs in heaven. By a mature understanding and a divine faith we see the way to enter the land and take possession of all the riches and glory of full sonship to God.

Why have we not, then, fully possessed our land? The thing that kept Israel out of their land was a heart of *unbelief*. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 4:1-2; 3:19). You remember how those that spied out the land of Canaan brought back an evil report. On the one hand they said that the land was exceptionally good, but on the other hand they said that it was impossible to enter. The people were giants, they said, and the cities fortified and great. They asserted that Israel could never conquer the land, and if they tried they would be utterly defeated and devoured.

Ah, how often that wily devil of unbelief speaks the very same things within us! He says, “Don’t talk about overcoming every enemy. Don’t talk about walking in the *nature of God*. Don’t talk about coming to *perfection* — nobody can be perfect in this world. Don’t talk about *conquering death* — everybody dies until the rapture. Don’t talk about being *manifested sons* of God — it is enough to join a good church, pay our tithes and be faithful Christians. Don’t talk about becoming *exactly like Christ* — nobody can measure up to Him. Don’t talk about putting on the *mind of Christ*. Don’t talk about *ruling and reigning* with Christ — it might go to your head. Don’t talk about being *kings and priests* after the Order of Melchizedek — that is too high for you. All of these things are good and wonderful. But it is absolutely impossible for you to possess them.”

I do not doubt that even while some have been reading this message that devil of *unbelief* has whispered such things in your ear! “You cannot possess the land, you cannot attain to the high calling of sonship, you will never stand among the manifested sons of God because you are weak, you are now old and feeble; you can’t preach or teach the Word; you are beset by physical ailments and disease, silly of you to think of overcoming sin and death; you have already failed so many times to please your heavenly Father; God never answers your prayers, anyhow; you have no church or fellowship, no one to encourage and strengthen you; you have too many problems and hang-ups; you are young and inexperienced, others have walked in this truth for years; your own home is out of order, you are bedeviled by a carnal, opposing spouse and unruly, rebellious children; don’t ever think you can enter the good land of the Kingdom — it is far beyond your ability. You can never make it!” The little devil of unbelief lurking within the carnal mind in each of us is just waiting for the opportunity to inject his deadly venom and deliver to us the evil report — “You are not able to go up and possess your inheritance!” **Never believe him!**

“The inhabitants are giants,” he will tell you. “and the cities have walls that chariots run upon. You will be defeated and you know it. You will go by way of the grave at last. You will miss the unveiling of the Kingdom glory in the earth, you will not be a member of God’s overcoming, conquering army.” *All this is an evil heart of unbelief*. It is a heart occupied by the evil one; so it is called an evil heart. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, saith the Lord! We must ask the Lord to deliver us from the evil heart. We must take our stand with Joshua and Caleb and proclaim by the faith of the Son of God within us that WE ARE ABLE TO GO UP AND TAKE THE LAND! We must have faith in the power of His resurrection within ourselves. The mighty power of God within us is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think, above all that we dream or imagine. God will do the

work as we follow on in patience, faith and obedience, even as He did for Israel of old. “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” That is the confession of the heart of faith born of God. The Lord has *promised* it, but we must *possess* it. He has *given* it, but we must *experience* it. It is our portion, but we must take it. The fullness of the Kingdom is not presently our possession, but HE will cause us to take it, HE will enable us to possess it. Our heavenly Joshua, Christ Himself in us, is taking the lead in His army; He will go before us; He will fight the battle for us. All we need is such a vision. Joshua received such a vision, and thereby the faith and assurance that God was with him. And armed only with that faith, trust, and obedience **he possessed the land!**

The generation in the wilderness consented to the spying out of the land — no doubt they really enjoyed the grapes and the figs and the pomegranates the spies brought back — but they refused to enter in and *possess* the land. It is all right, this same unbelieving generation tells us today, to be baptized in the Spirit, speak in tongues, heal the sick, prophesy, be slain in the Spirit and do some miracles — these things are all right. They relish the *firstfruits* of the Spirit that the spies bring back, the little sample of the richness of the land, but they do not want to hear about Christ appearing in glory in the saints, or the manifestation of the sons of God. And as for people conquering death and by-passing the grave — that is definitely not for God’s people today. True, God has it for us, it is part of our inheritance, but we dare not try to lay hold upon it *today*. That will take place, *automatically*, at the “rapture”, or in the first resurrection “at the last day” — not *now*. We cannot possess the land — the walls are too high, the giants too tall, and the people too strong. The armies of the enemies have iron chariots. How utterly ridiculous to suppose that we can overcome such obstacles!

Oh yes, you can be filled with the Spirit, teach a Sunday School class, move in the gifts, get into prosperity — but you cannot be conformed to the image of the Son, defeat Satan, conquer sin and death, and ascend the throne of God to rule and reign with Christ over the nations and all things. You can sneak in and seize a cluster or two of grapes from the valley of Eschol, but it is positively absurd to try and *take* the whole valley of Eschol! You can get some healing for your body, you can receive an occasional word of wisdom or knowledge, you can get deliverance from habits and demons, and overcome everyday weaknesses and sins — but you cannot have the mind of Christ *replace* the carnal mind, you cannot be perfect, you cannot put on the nature and character of God until you are sinless, you cannot put on incorruption and immortality, you cannot be caught away in the Spirit as were Philip and Elijah, you cannot rule and reign in the Kingdom, you cannot be a manifested son of God — *today*. We don’t mind tasting the grapes of Eschol, but **DON’T EVEN THINK ABOUT MARCHING IN TO CONQUER THE WHOLE LAND!**

It should be obvious to any thinking person that this is the mind-set of just about all Christians today and the teaching of all the preachers and churches. Of course, many churches don’t even want their people to taste the firstfruits! The whole issue revolves around this question: Are we going to settle for the “earnest” of our inheritance, the “down payment” of the Spirit, or, are we going to arise from the dust and rocks of this great and terrible wilderness and follow our Joshua across the Jordan to lay hold upon, and enter into, and possess fully, **ALL THE GLORIOUS INHERITANCE OF THE LAND GOD HAS GIVEN US?** Together we can praise God that there is arising a new generation that has heard the trumpet call. Moses the

servant of God is dead, the old-order ministry is passing away, and a people is gathering in preparation to follow their heavenly Joshua into the fullness of the glory and power of the Kingdom of God. *And there shall be a glorious victory!* For God has promised the land is ours if only we can hear His voice and obey. There are only two real enemies — fear and unbelief. But God has promised, “Be strong and of a good courage...I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee...”

THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE

When our blessed Lord came teaching the Kingdom of God throughout the province of Galilee, He made it abundantly clear that possessing the Kingdom is not an easy thing. It is not so difficult to see the Kingdom, as Moses saw the promised land from the heights of mount Nebo, but to possess the Kingdom takes a *definite effort*. Jesus spoke of this when He told the Pharisees, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man *presseth* into it” (Lk. 16:16). It is doubtful if any of those who heard these words had the remotest idea of the effort involved in *possessing* the Kingdom. Let me put it this way. It takes an added effort after you have already put forth an effort! Like a sprinting race, it is that final thrust at the end where the contender puts forth all of his complete energy. He will press forth with all the strength he can muster to win the race. In like manner it takes running, pressing, and even *violence* in one’s effort to take the Kingdom.

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the *violent take it by force*” (Mat. 11:12). Some say that this is a negative statement, that Jesus is not talking about the necessity of taking the Kingdom by violent effort, but that in the hour when the Kingdom was announced many carnal people sought by the violence of carnal effort to seize the Kingdom for their own ends. These words of Jesus in Matthew are, however, a sequel to the words written by Luke. Matthew says that since the days of John the Baptist, the Kingdom of God suffers violence — and the violent take it by *force*. Luke says that since John the Baptist the Kingdom is preached, and men *press* into it. Each of the Gospel writers expresses in his own words the thought given by Jesus. The backdrop to this is the conquest of the land of Canaan, the Old Testament type of our possessing our inheritance in Christ. No one can dispute that when Israel went in to possess their inheritance that the land of Canaan *suffered violence*. Ah, yes! they *pressed* their way into the land and *violently* took it *by force*. That is the picture the Holy Spirit has drawn of what it means to **take the Kingdom!**

These words — suffers, violence, violent and force — are all related words with much the same meaning. They picture vital energy and activity used in forcing or crowding oneself *into* something. To interpret these words of Jesus one needs to know the location of the Kingdom of Heaven. Violence can only happen where an adversary is located. Surely, up in God’s eternal heaven, there is *no violence*, as Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth *as it is in heaven.*” Today we know that the Kingdom of God is **within you** (Lk. 17:20-21). Can we not see by this that the Kingdom of Heaven can suffer violence only within the life of the believer where both the Spirit of God and the spirit of the adversary function, where the spirit and the flesh indeed war with one another, where the mind of Christ and the carnal mind both exert themselves to control. I am sure that Jesus is not referring here to armies or physical violence. The violence He is talking about is violence that is done to SELF — the fleshly nature, the carnal mind, the human will — which wars against

the life of God and prevents one from entering into the Kingdom. Sometimes we must be violent in our own land, with our self, with obstacles within and without, in order to possess the promised Kingdom.

Never forget, beloved, that it is possible to enter and possess the Kingdom of God while we live upon this earth right now. To possess the Kingdom within ourselves is going to take a mighty effort. The spirit of this world, the spirit of your own natural mind, resists you. The Greek word that is used for “presseth into it” is a strong word. It is the word that is used for storming a city and forcing an entry. It could be translated, “Everyone forces his way into it.” One writer, commenting on this verse, said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is not for the well-meaning but for the desperate.” In a violent sense we must fight our way through every adversary and possess the land of Christ within our world. In this way we take the Kingdom of God by force — violently. Possessing the Kingdom is no Sunday School picnic. It means resistance, opposition, contention, struggle, confrontation, engagement, assault, attack, conflict, fighting, battle — WARFARE! I can assure you, precious friend of mine, no one ever *drifted* into the Kingdom, no one ever *stumbled* into the Kingdom, and no one ever possessed the Kingdom by *accident* or *unawares*. To possess the Kingdom is something that demands effort and which takes everything of mind and heart and spirit that a man can muster. To possess the Kingdom requires a victory and a triumph and a conquest. We must struggle and battle our way in, just as the Allies did in Europe in the second World War. All this is very difficult, and the natural thing to say is that we can never do that by ourselves. Nor can we! But the King who leads the battle is right within us to enable us to do the things which by ourselves we could never have done.

Another possible rendering of the Greek in this passage would denote not so much “to force an entrance” as into a besieged city, but to “seize hold of” and carry off as plunder. It suggests the picture of a prize just coming within reach, which the bolder spirits immediately capture, without waiting for a signal. This would make the passage read: “The law and the prophets were until John; since then, the Kingdom of Heaven is taken forcibly, and the violent drag it towards them.” The thought here is that the coming of John the Baptist marked the beginning of a new era. In former times the Kingdom had been merely prophesied and foreshadowed; now it had come so near that men could hasten their possession of it by a strong and mighty effort. They were no longer to wait passively for the Kingdom (God will bring it in His time), but hasten it by their own faith and action. Its powers were already manifesting themselves in the mighty works of the firstborn Son of God, and the nature of its new righteousness was powerfully proclaimed by Jesus. The great Day had drawn so near that a strong and united faith might break down the remaining barriers. Men might “take the Kingdom by force” — might “drag it towards them,” and see its full realization in their day!

Jesus believed that the Kingdom could be apprehended by any who had the vision and the faith. To that end the work which He laid on His disciples was not that of passive waiting, but that of actively **seeking** the Kingdom. By hungering and thirsting after it, by lifting their hearts to it with earnest desire and invincible faith, they were to hasten the day of its coming forth. The blessed firstborn Son of God Himself became the example and prototype of an all-conquering faith, revealing by His nature and His mighty works, by His authority and dominion over all things, by His death and triumphant resurrection, the accessibility of the Kingdom to every son of God. He

taught men to cry out to God, “THY KINGDOM COME! THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN!” And this is **the message** for those who have received the call to sonship in this significant hour at the end of the age. We are now in the days when decisions are being made and portentous events are in the offering. Some people are making conscious decisions by proclaiming, “I will follow the Kingdom and I will pursue it like a dog pursues a fox.” When a hound chases a fox, he never gives up. He may lose sight of the fox, but he still has its scent. Even though we may not have the Kingdom in sight, we will not give up either because we know by faith that the Kingdom will come to pass in a people that presses violently into it — but, blessed be God, we have the *scent* and we will follow on!

The marginal reading of one Old Version is even stronger — “the Kingdom of Heaven is gotten by force and they that thrust men.” You cannot win a good place in God’s Kingdom without a fight. I tell you I shall employ FORCE to possess the Kingdom. It will not be the force of bullets. It will not be the force of guns. It will not be the force of numbers. It will not be the force of personality. It will not be the force of organization and promotion. I ask God to give me the mightiest force of all — the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. Holy ones are looking down upon us and they are saying, “Rise up, and take the Kingdom!” A great cloud of witnesses from all the centuries and all the ages is looking down upon us from the battlements of that unseen realm of spirit as the final battles of God’s sons are fought for the possession of the Kingdom territory of God. The last contest for the dominion of this earth is heating up. The supremacy of God’s Kingdom over every other kingdom and power is now to be asserted, without earthly weapons of war, but with the spiritual weapons of prayer, faith and the power of God.

By the army of God the claims of the Kingdom of God are to be *enforced*; for all that is within us, and all the world, must bow to the supremacy of God’s Christ and the will of the Father in heaven. The weapons of the Spirit are infinitely more potent than all the guns that ever were fired, than all the battles that ever were fought, than all the bloody fields that ever were won; for the Holy Spirit’s conquests are made without any of the weapons of men. They are made by a power greater than these. The Kingdom of God is gotten by *violence* — by taking sin, sickness, sorrow, pain and death by the throat, and saying, “You shall not rule this earth! Nor shall you rule this earth that *I am!* I am the Lord’s! The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof!” That is the only way the Kingdom of Heaven will ever be won — by violence, by those who know how to thrust men with the sword of the Spirit, a two-edged sword that is sharper than steel.

The kind of faith God is looking for in His sons is **tenacious faith** — the faith that embraces the promise and will not let it go. That is how Jacob became Israel — “I will not let you go until you bless me.” This is a warfare. The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force. I have never received anything from God beyond mere merciful blessings that came easy. It has taken asking, seeking, knocking, and pressing violently through until the victory is secured. Babies can’t get violent. But even they can cry until you act! Children aren’t sent out to war. The immature do not possess the Kingdom. The spiritually lazy do not become sons of God. Salvation is free. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, with all of His gifts, is free. And that is where all the *children* of God stop. But nothing beyond that is free. Everything else in God *costs*. And the Kingdom of God will **cost everything you have**.

In order to gain this Kingdom we must *aim high*. There is an interesting passage of scripture in Judges 3:31. “And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.” One brother, in commenting on this verse, said, “Not failure, but low aim is the crime! This has been the opinion of all the people who have greatly influenced this world, but it has not been the opinion of those who have not. Is it yours? It was certainly the opinion of Shamgar.”

It is probable that many who read these lines have never heard of Shamgar. Except for the one verse quoted above, there is no other mention of him in the whole Bible, but that one single verse speaks volumes! Shamgar was a most remarkable man, and a type of all those who refuse to be hindered from possessing the Kingdom. Shamgar must be understood in the light of his time. In those days the Philistines had conquered Israel and were oppressing them ruthlessly. They had disarmed the entire population of Israel, systematically confiscating all the swords and weapons of war and removed them from the land of Israel. Then to make sure that Israel did not organize any resistance to their tyranny, they also deported all the blacksmiths so that not only did they not have weapons, but they lacked the skill and ability to produce them. The people were despondent and felt absolutely hopeless in the face of their oppression. They had lost faith in themselves, but had also lost faith in Yahweh. The situation, indeed, seemed beyond remedy! What could they do? The Philistines were a strong and numerous people with powerful weapons of war and a well trained army.

Enter a man named Shamgar. Shamgar was not a king, nor a general, nor a sergeant. He was not even a private. There is no record of him ever having been in the army or having any military training or experience. Shamgar was a farmer, a very good farmer, no doubt, but only a farmer. He broke a yoke of oxen and used these oxen to plow his fields. At that time this required great boldness and tenacity because when crops were planted, and after much investment and toil, the harvest finally arrived — then the Philistines would sweep down and carry away the crops. The whole land lay in desolation, the roads were overgrown with grass and weeds, the villages were ghost towns, because the people were hiding in the walled cities where they had at least a modicum of safety. The land was helpless before the Philistines.

Shamgar was not satisfied to accept this state of affairs and so he went out, plowed his fields with his oxen, and planted his crops. When harvest time arrived six hundred Philistines armed with flashing swords swept down upon this *one* farmer. The only weapon at Shamgar’s disposal was an ox goad. An ox goad was usually made from the limb of an oak tree. It would be from eight to ten feet long with the bark stripped off and a sharp iron point affixed to the tip. It was used to jab the ox when he tried to get out of the furrow. On the other end of the goad was a flattened piece of metal that was sharpened for the purpose of scraping the dirt off the plow as it collected. Not a very sophisticated weapon of war! But it was all Shamgar had in addition to his fierce determination, his seething resolve, and his violent passion. This situation would not stand! One thing Shamgar was efficient in — the use of an ox goad. In the hands of a man who had handled one from his youth, it could become quite lethal. So when these six hundred Philistines swept down upon Shamgar, he decided that he had had enough; and that he was going to do something about it.

Excuses would have come easy. There was only one farmer with an ox goad and there were six hundred soldiers with gleaming swords. What could any man do without a sword? There was no way to resist such a formidable foe. The best thing to do would be to hide and just let them have the crops. But that kind of reasoning was not to be found in Shamgar's heart. Shamgar had a deep and profound faith in God. He also had a compassionate concern for his people, and for his own dignity as an Israelite and a child of God. Armed with this resolve, he determined to take a stand at whatever the cost. He stood in his field and as the Philistines came upon him, he grabbed that ox goad and began to swing it! There must have been some astonished Philistines. And the battle that ensued became the battle of all battles in the annals of military history. There were skulls cracking all over the place. That mighty oak limb with its iron tip on one end and its flat iron on the other was whirling like the propellers of a helicopter. They must have thought that they had come upon a hornet's nest because they were getting it from all sides. No one could even get close enough to Shamgar to thrust him with a sword! They were jabbed and cut and pounded on. When the dust settled there were six hundred dead Philistines scattered through the fields. Then there is that remarkable little phrase that says it all: "He also delivered Israel." What a warrior Shamgar was! What a mighty man of God! His popularity soared so high that the people made him a Judge. He was the third Judge that delivered and ruled the people of Israel.

From this farmer in ancient Israel there rings through the centuries and millenniums a message for each of God's elect in this vital hour at the end of the age. The first lesson has to do with the crime of *low aim*. Most Christians never really try to accomplish anything significant in the Kingdom of God because they never really set any high goals. They are satisfied to set their goals low or to set no goals at all and then they generally hit them very accurately. It does not take too much aim to hit the target when there is no target. The target of most Christians is to die and go to heaven. That is not a hard one to miss! It takes no vision, revelation, purpose or *violence* to die and go to heaven! That has nothing whatever to do with the Kingdom. Being filled with all the fullness of God, conformed to the image of the Son, putting on the mind of Christ, laying hold upon manifested sonship, overcoming death, delivering creation from the bondage of corruption, and bringing in the Kingdom — ah, those are goals that challenge! Those are goals that have the power to change the world and alter the course of history. **Kingdom goals!** If you have no Kingdom goals in your life you will never possess the Kingdom. Jesus never preached about dying and going to heaven. He said, "**Seek ye first THE KINGDOM OF GOD!**" It pains me to say it, but I am certain that many in this hour intellectualize the wonderful truths of sonship and the Kingdom of God, but their hearts are not set on those goals; they have another set of goals that are unnamed, undefined, but very real which control their affections and thus, their lives.

One of the tragedies of life is that many people live their whole lives without ever finding out what they were here for. If they had only known what they were supposed to do they might have done it. But like the faithless Israelites of old, they just wander in the wilderness for forty years. They wander through thirty, sixty, eighty years of life never really knowing where they came from or where they are going. They never see what the purpose of God is in their lives. They have no sense of divine destiny. Like the animals, they eke out a meager existence in their little insignificant and meaningless world of **earthly things** and **carnal pursuits**. They never breathe the rarefied air of the heavenlies, or catch a glimpse of the heights of Zion, or taste the

powers of the Kingdom of God. It reminds me of a baseball player wandering around inning after inning, and after the ninth inning, finally finding out what the game was all about. If he had only known! That is the way with the church world today. They don't know what the game is all about! They have no idea whatever of what is really going on. But those who have heard the sounding of the trumpet, and received the call to sonship and the Kingdom, are expecting great and mighty things from God! And wonderful and glorious things are happening in their lives in God's *today*!

Shamgar had a goal. Shamgar had a vision. Shamgar had a hope. Shamgar had a purpose. Shamgar was stirred to radical action, to violent movement. Shamgar's goal was to get free from bondage and to free his people from bondage. It was a high and noble and lofty goal. It was not just an idea in his mind. It was not just an intellectual belief or a theological position. I suppose that every Israelite in Israel secretly nursed the same goal. But Shamgar set his affections upon that goal. Shamgar sought first that goal. It became a burning passion in his heart. Shamgar found the wisdom of God as to how to attain that goal. In spite of all the obstacles and limitations, he trusted God that somehow He would use him to bring that goal to pass. He was going to take a stand and he was going to do it *now*. He would *press* his way in, and take the victory *by force*. He would act *violently*. And he did it! He delivered himself and his people, and they made him a Judge in Israel. He was just a lowly farmer, and all alone, but they elevated him to the head of the nation. This man who had never done anything but goad an ox became the leader of God's nation on earth. Why? Because he would not take "No" for an answer! And by the grace of God he did it! Advancement is from above. And God blessed him.

These words of brother Paul Mueller are so very pertinent here. "The great issue now before the sons of God has to do with our entrance into the Kingdom of God. This is not a question of our salvation, but of our approach to the throne realm of God's Kingdom where we will eventually rule and reign with Him, making all the blessings and benefits of His dominion available to others. We believe that it is of paramount importance for all sons of God to be vitally concerned with our entrance into that Kingdom realm, thereby making our calling and election sure. Jesus spoke to the people and admonished them: 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able' (Lk. 13:24). Since the Lord has revealed the value and importance of entering into His rest, the word *strive* has not been in our vocabulary. However, when searching the true meaning from the original, we find this word comes from a Greek word meaning *to struggle*. Strong's Concordance gives three examples of this word: (1) to compete for a prize, (2) to contend with an adversary, (3) to endeavor to accomplish something. With this understanding, we can better comprehend its use and application in our lives. The root word from the original Greek is AGON and indicates a place of assembly where a contest is being held. Therefore, we might picture ourselves as sons of God struggling to compete for a prize, contending with our adversary, and endeavoring to accomplish something within the great arena of the universe where we are being observed by the whole creation. Because we are aware that all creation is anxiously awaiting that attainment unto full sonship, and that their full release and deliverance depends upon the manifestation thereof, we will *strive* in the Spirit, not after the flesh, that we might attain to that prize of **the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**" — end quote.

This *striving*, this *pressing*, this *violence*, means that the myths that spiritual warfare is gentlemanly, that you enter and possess and inherit the land essentially unscathed, that it costs relatively little, that all you have to do is *believe* and *confess*, that violent men no longer need to take the Kingdom by force — these myths must forever end. The hour is late, the day of unveiling is at hand. Only an unreserved commitment, only an indestructible faith, only a radical thrust will birth this manchild of the ages and herald the dawn of that blessed age when the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, and all peoples and all nations shall come and walk in the light of the Lord, and there shall be no more curse anywhere forever. Sons of God — let us arise with courage and boldness and give ourselves to the task!

Chapter 22

Inheriting The Kingdom

“In whom we also have obtained AN INHERITANCE, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:11).

Having read these words from our beloved brother Paul, three questions only concern us. What is this inheritance? To whom does it belong? How do we obtain it? In order to answer the first of these questions, we are naturally concerned whether the inheritance is worth possessing. If we should be promised an inheritance of a million dollars, I am sure there are few of us who would not become considerably excited. Our interest would be stirred. Our hope would be aroused. If there were conditions laid down which must be fulfilled before we could inherit, we would look carefully at those conditions. We would not risk the loss of our inheritance through indifference or willful disobedience.

Stop to think what a million dollars could do for you if you had it! It could do much, but there is just as much, and more, that it could not do. The power of money to do good and to give happiness is strictly limited. To mention just a few things that it cannot do: It cannot give you an untroubled conscience or peace of mind. If you are sick it can buy you the best medical care, but it cannot guarantee to make or keep you well. Does it give security? After a fashion, yes; yet, those who have it anxiously wonder how long they can keep it, or they may blow it all in just a few months. A thousand hands are outstretched to grab it, by fair means or foul. The ways in which it may be lost or destroyed are too numerous to mention. Nor can it stave off death or prolong life. Its enjoyment is limited strictly to this present world, which is passing away, and it is the matter of only a few years. Such is every human inheritance. We do not despise it for its limited present value. We would simply look at it dispassionately in its true light, in order that we might appreciate the more the words of the hymn writer,

We Christians should ever consider
What Christ hath so gloriously taught;
For He who hath made us His children
Would have us retain in our thought
How little things earthly do merit,
Lest we who the Kingdom inherit,
The heavenly prize leave unsought.

“Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified and made us fit to share the portion which is *the inheritance* of the saints in the Light. The Father has delivered us and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into *the kingdom* of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:12-13, Amplified). This beautiful passage sets forth the great truth that as saints God is preparing us to

receive that which the Spirit identifies as “the INHERITANCE of the saints.” What is the inheritance which is ours as children of God? Do you *really* know? Of course most Christians have always *heard* that the grand purpose of our salvation is that we might escape hell and make heaven our home when we die. And most believers have simply accepted this concept *without question*. But have you ever stopped to prove it for yourself? Did you ever look into the promises of God to see whether it *really does* say that “heaven” is the inheritance of the saints?

We have surely read these inspired words of instruction: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an *inheritance* incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven* for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (I Pet. 1:3-5). Let me draw your earnest attention to seven wonderful truths revealed in these words of the apostle. (1) We have been, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, begotten again unto a *living hope*. (2) This living hope is the hope of an *inheritance*. (3) This inheritance is *incorruptible*. (4) This incorruptible inheritance is *reserved in heaven* — the invisible realm of the Spirit — *for us*. (5) Until we fully receive our inheritance we are *kept* by the power of God unto the inheritance — preserved so that we can appropriate it. (6) The inheritance is salvation — *full and complete*. (7) This full salvation is *ready* for us — already prepared for us and appointed to us — and shall be revealed *in the last time*.

Blind to the true nature of our inheritance and the plan by which God is bringing His elect into it, many of the Lord’s people make ignorant and unscriptural statements regarding it. For instance, speaking of a departed saint who has passed from this life, they say, “He has gone to his reward.” Where does the Bible say such a thing? Nothing could be farther from the truth! It is not *death* that qualifies one to receive his inheritance, but rather, the raising up of one’s entire being INTO THE RESURRECTION LIFE OF CHRIST. The hope is a *living, quickening* hope. It is secured for us by the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. This living hope has been given to us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And “heaven” is NOT the inheritance. The inheritance is merely “reserved” in heaven for us. That is, it is reserved, laid up, retained, earmarked, allocated and proportioned in the realm of the Spirit for us. It is available and accessible **in the Spirit**. It is *there for us*. Let us say that you have \$50,000.00 and all of it is in a checking account at First National Bank. The money is all yours — but it is kept, held, reserved, retained, earmarked, allocated and proportioned for you in the bank — until you write a check on it. The check is a claim on the account and by that claim you gain what is “reserved in the bank” for you. You don’t have to live in the bank or even go to the bank in order to spend the money. And you don’t have to go to some far-off heaven somewhere in order to receive or live out of your inheritance in the Kingdom of God. *Faith* is our claim upon the inheritance “reserved in heaven — the realm of the Spirit” *for us*! It is not paid at our *death*, for it is Jesus who died to give it to us, but is paid upon our *claim*.

Furthermore, the inheritance is reserved for us, ready to be *revealed*, that is, *paid*, “in the last time.” Make no mistake about it — the “last time” is not a date on the calendar! That is where so many “end-time” teachers go wrong. They think the last time is a date, so they are always trying to figure out the date, setting dates for the

coming of the Lord, the beginning of the great tribulation, the dawn of the millennium, or the manifestation of the sons of God. I do not doubt for one moment that our present age is rapidly drawing to a close, perhaps the new age has already dawned, but that is not the issue here. The Kingdom of God is not an age. The Day of the Lord is not an age. The last time is not a date on the calendar. The last time relates to the people of God entering into and possessing their inheritance! The last time is the *finish*, the *completion*, the *consummation* of our experience in God. It is when we have grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. It is when we have fully put on the mind of Christ. It is when we have gone *on* to perfection. It is when we have attained unto a perfect man. It is when we have been filled with all the fullness of God. It is when Christ has been raised up within us in all the glory and fullness of Himself. It is when we have spiritually developed into a *mature* faith, hope, and love. It is the third day, the third feast, and the illumination, life, and authority of the Most Holy Place. It is a time, not on the clock, but in the development of Christ in us. It is not the end of the age that brings the manifestation of the sons of God — it is the manifestation of the sons of God that brings the end of the age. Therefore let us take heart as saints of God, for growth in Christ is far more accessible to each of us than the unknown dawning of a chronological age! The truth and fullness of the wonder of it all only begins to dawn upon our ransomed souls when the spirit of revelation shines with penetrating power upon the eyes of our understanding enabling us to see into the magnificent working of the divine and heavenly scheme.

HEIRS OF GOD

An heirship always implies an inheritance. If we are made heirs of God, we become partakers in the inheritance left us at the death of the Testator. It comes with the divine sonship, and is ours because our Lord died. In the epistle to the Hebrews, we read of the method whereby the inheritance of the Lord was secured for us. “How much more (than animal sacrifices) shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He (Jesus) is the mediator of the new testament (covenant, will), that by means of (His) death...they which are called might receive the promise of eternal INHERITANCE” (Heb. 9:14-15).

Notice how the writer tells us that through His death, Christ became the mediator of the *New Covenant*. And those who are called into this new covenant relationship as sons of God, are given the promise of eternal *inheritance*. The writer goes on to say, “For where a testament (will) is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator (the one who made the will)” (Heb. 9:16). Nothing is more certain than this! A will is worth nothing until the person who made the will has died. This is how our eternal inheritance has come to us. The Lord Jesus loved us — and He died! Now our inheritance has been made sure. Thank God, that there might be no question about our inheritance, that none could rob us of it, that we might be *assured* of receiving it, Christ arose from the dead to become the *executor* of His own estate! I have read accounts where an executor squandered an estate and the heirs were cheated out of their rightful inheritance. This cannot possibly happen to the sons of God for Jesus Christ ever liveth to make sure the inheritance goes to the RIGHTFUL HEIRS.

But there is a truth deeper and more wonderful than this. As the ocean includes the seas, the bays, the straits, which, though known by separate names, are parts of its

majestic and all-embracing fullness, so is there a dimension of HIS INHERITANCE that encompasses all that is ours in Christ. In the law of the Old Testament priesthood, “the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I AM THY PART, and THINE INHERITANCE, among the children of Israel” (Num. 18:20). It was a very satisfactory arrangement for the pious priest. He could not own any land in Israel. But he could well dispense with the oliveyards and vineyards, the cornfields and homesteads of Canaan, if he might have GOD HIMSELF as the strength of his heart, the source of his supply, and his portion forever. And the Psalmist eagerly caught at the thought, gladly surrendering all portion in this life, if only he might be “satisfied” with God (Ps. 17:15). “The LORD is the portion of MINE INHERITANCE and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot. Yea, I have a goodly heritage” (Ps. 17:5-6).

Ah, **our inheritance is God Himself!** That is the inheritance of the kings and priests of the Kingdom of God. Not golden harps. Not golden streets. Not walls of jasper or pearly gates. Not a cabin in the corner or a mansion over the hilltop. Not wings and a white nightgown with which to flit about over the Elysium hills of glory. There is something deeper, more inward and rapturous — the possession of God. HEIRS OF G-O-D! Not merely heirs of the *things of God*, but heirs of God Himself. Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! Heirs of all the communicable glories of the divine nature and power. To **know Him**, to explore His being, to live on His fullness, to discover new tracts and continents in the “terra incognita” of Godhead, to see His glory, to be changed into His image, to receive His authority and power, to be filled with His wisdom and knowledge — *this* is “the heritage of the servants of the Lord.” Glory to God!

Beloved, you and I have been given an inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has left us a title deed to His very own wisdom, righteousness, nature, glory and power. Of course, Jesus lived in absolute poverty while on this earth; He owned no land, no vast estate, no great herds of cattle, no store of gold or precious stones, no account in the bank. But He willed to us riches greater than the diamond mines of South Africa, greater than the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, greater than the gross national product of the United States. Jesus gave us an inheritance that makes us far richer than a Rockefeller, Bill Gates, or any Middle Eastern oil sheik. It is the inheritance of all the riches of His very own life and glory! Once you understand the value of this inheritance you will count everything else in your life and in this world as mere rubbish. You will seek after it with all your mind, strength and heart, and be a glad and willing heir to His legacy. The most important thing we can seek God for in this life is the *value* of our inheritance in Christ— and it’s waiting to be *claimed!*

INHERITING THE KINGDOM

We are learning what it means to be a son of God, realizing God’s great plan and purposes involved. One of the most important rights of sonship is that of inheritance. Heirship depends entirely upon our relationship with God. When we were born again, born of God, we became children of God and consequently heirs of the Almighty Father. This is an aspect of the great and wonderful purpose of God in redemption. Inheritance is also concerned with law and nationality — one inherits in the country of his parentage and according to the laws of that land. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that in order to enter the Kingdom of God human beings have to be **born again** — of the **Spirit**. The Kingdom of God is the realm or land of our inheritance, and that

great land is entered into by birth. It is there in the land of the Kingdom of God that we are able to see, enter, possess and inherit Christ as our All-in-all.

Having been separated and set apart for the Father's work in His Kingdom, we are then given our inheritance, which is the Kingdom of God. That is the condition of the will — the full inheritance is given only upon our reaching *maturity*. Upon reaching spiritual maturity the Kingdom of God is our rightful inheritance. Then the Lord says unto us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34). When Father set forth His plans and purposes in the beginning, He determined to give His Kingdom to His sons when the time was ripe for it. According to the Amplified Bible, we are to receive the Kingdom of God **as our own!** And that is exactly what it means to "inherit" the Kingdom! After we have learned all the lessons of our walk in Christ, after we have endured our share of the sufferings of Christ, we are then fully qualified to receive our rightful inheritance in the Kingdom of God. We shall then have no worldly or personal kingdoms of man. We shall own no other kingdom but the Kingdom of God, which becomes our very own.

How little does the wailing infant, over whose cradle hangs the photograph of his father's vast estate, understand of the inheritance to which he has been born! The old homestead, the far-spread lands, the immense business enterprises, the enormous investments, the accumulated wealth, the prestige of fame and prosperity and power — all these things are his; but years must pass ere they can be truly realized or appreciated. And how little do most earnest and zealous and saintly children of God conceive of that inheritance which is ours so soon as we become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. As a matter of right all God's nature and power and glory and wisdom and dominion is ours the moment we are born into His family; as a vast tract of land, filled with woods and rivers and oil wells, belongs to the heir at the moment of birth. But, as a matter of fact, we shall never occupy all until we have grown up into the maturity of Christ. His *gifts* are for His children, but His *inheritance* is reserved for His full-grown sons. We are urged, therefore, by the apostle Paul, to press forward from the gift-realm into the inheritance-realm! "Therefore it is said...He bestowed gifts on men. His intention was the perfecting and full equipping of the saints, that they should do the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body, that it might develop until we all attain...at really mature manhood — the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection — the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, and the completeness found in Him" (Eph. 4:8,12-13). Together we can praise God that He has brought us **to that day!**

Here is a scene with which we are all familiar. The car is humming along the road. Suddenly there's a sputter, a fruitless pumping of the gas pedal and then a full halt. You're out of gas! Hundreds of thousands of motorists have that experience each year, and I must confess that it has happened to me a few times, too. The problem is not technological. The basic problem is usually human error — either a failure to plan ahead or heedless attention to an obviously depleted gas level. That failure to plan ahead is common. Although the motorist is aware of the distance to be traveled and of the gas performance of his car, he sets out without adequate fuel. Closed gas stations or long distances of remote highway on which there are no service stations spell trouble. Simple preparation would have averted the dilemma, but after some inconvenience the destination will likely be reached. The Kingdom of God is another

journey that might not end up where we would like it to. Unfortunately many Christians are content to drift aimlessly with no thought of whether they are prepared for the journey of journeys. Often they are prepared for the wrong journey, and therefore miss the Kingdom. They are getting ready to fly away to heaven instead of preparing to *inherit the Kingdom of God!*

There are four classes of people in relation to the Kingdom of God today. There are those who *see* the Kingdom. Then there are those who *enter* the Kingdom. After that there are some who *press in to possess* the Kingdom. And finally there is a people that *inherits* the Kingdom. It is one thing to see the Kingdom, but quite another thing to inherit the Kingdom. To see the Kingdom is *vision*. To enter the Kingdom is *exploration*. To possess the Kingdom is *appropriation*. And to inherit the Kingdom is to *fully and permanently utilize and exercise all of its riches, abundance, position, responsibilities and powers*.

Those who inherit the Kingdom are the ones who sit with Jesus upon His throne and rule with Him; those who only enter the Kingdom enjoy its blessings and benefits and they serve Him, not reign with Him. They are citizens and subjects of the Kingdom, not kings and priests. Those who enter the Kingdom will be a great multitude, as John the Revelator saw them... “After this (the sealing of the 144,000) 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 cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. Therefore they are *before the throne* of God, and *serve* Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for the Lamb which is *in the midst of the throne* shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7:9-10,15-17).

It should not be difficult to understand that those who sit with Christ *in His throne* occupy an altogether different position than those who merely enter the Kingdom and *serve* Him *before the throne*. “To him that overcometh shall I grant to sit with me *in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father *in His throne*” (Rev. 3:21). “Thou hast made us unto our God *kings and priests*: and we shall *reign* on the earth” (Rev. 5:10). Those who inherit the Kingdom and reign with Christ upon His throne are a select and chosen people, especially prepared for this position, a small number in comparison with the “great multitude” serving Him before His throne. The requirements for those who inherit the Kingdom are much higher than for the ones merely entering the Kingdom and partaking of its wondrous blessings and bounteous benefits.

Some who read these lines are familiar with the visions of Annie of Argentina. In one of her visions she recounts, “While I was with Him in the wonder and glory of His invisible world, He showed me His own entering into the possession which He gives them. He explained that there were two distinct times of tremendous importance in which there could be an entering into one’s possession. Now, before the storm or later, after the storm. Those who entered their possession before the storm became His elect ones, with a far superior place and development. In them the perfect will of God was brought forth. Occupying a place very near to Him, they became the instruments of God in His workings. Those who entered their possession after the

storm were perfected upon a definitely inferior plane.” I believe the “storm” represents God’s dealings in *judgment*. Those who now gladly submit to all of Father’s dealings and chastisements upon His sons become qualified to occupy a place of intimacy with Him and share His glorious throne. Those who, though His children, must be dealt with in judgment in order to bring His will into their lives, occupy a lesser place in His Kingdom, a place of serving rather than reigning.

The Kingdom of God is something we *inherit*. Jesus Christ of Nazareth has already *inherited* the Kingdom of His Father and now sits upon His Father’s throne. And, like a multibillionaire Father, He has written His *will*, designating each one of us as potential *inheritors* of His vast, unlimited estates — called the **Kingdom of God!** Paul says that we are *heirs* of God, and *joint-heirs* with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Yes, *heirs* — not yet *inheritors*! All creation is waiting with eager anticipation for the heirs to *become* inheritors, for all shall be delivered and blessed in the overflow of their glory and power.

Paul Mueller has written, “Obviously, there is a difference between **entering** the new land and **inheriting** it. As soon as Israel entered their promised land of Canaan, they were to appoint judges ‘*in all thy gates*’ (Deut. 16:18). If their judges rendered righteous judgment and observed many other principles of righteousness and obedience to the law and word of the Lord, Israel would then *inherit* the promised land of Canaan. This truth applies to this new land of the Kingdom of God on earth as well as to the old land of Canaan. In entering our promised land of the Kingdom of God on earth now, we are beginning to experience a new and different set of tests and trials that qualify us to LIVE IN and INHERIT this land of promise. Jesus explained the high calling of His disciples, which was to inherit the Kingdom of God and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. He said to them, ‘Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations (testings). And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ In speaking to His disciples as He did, Jesus fully recognized the trials and testings they had gone through with Him. Jesus said because those disciples remained with Him all through their adversities and trials — being literally put to the proof through those difficult times — they would inherit the Kingdom. This establishes a pattern for us also. The early disciples were appointed to the Kingdom as a result of the tests and trials they endured and by being obedient to the work of the Spirit within them. Even so do we inherit the fullness of the Kingdom of God by being tested and tried. We are entering the Kingdom ‘through much tribulation’ (Acts 14:22). If our testings are increasing, it is because Father is pressing us into the fullness of His Kingdom with greater haste and intensity. Because we are proven by experience to be true, faithful and righteous, we shall eat and drink of Him at His table in His Kingdom. We shall also sit with Him on His spiritual throne to judge the world in truth and in righteousness” — end quote.

That the hope of honor and glory may be fastened firmly in our spiritual minds let us examine more closely this principle of *inheritance*. When a titled person dies, the heirs inherit all that is his: the family crest, the property, the land, the fortune, or possibly even a great mass of debts. What I am saying is that sons and heirs inherit everything pertaining to the title of their father. Even in life all children inherit genetically something from their father, such as his nature, life, love, care, and daily provision. But how much of his *wealth* they will each receive, a wise father will

determine by their individual capacities for profiting by possessions. He will not bequeath a mansion to a son who loves only nature and prefers to live in a shack on the creek bank, nor will he leave a million dollars to one who has no appreciation of the value of money and would squander it all in a short time. And he most certainly will not give the family business into the hands of an irresponsible, reckless, and lazy son who has never prepared himself for assuming such responsibilities.

This practical principle also operates with the Lord in the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven, for Jesus has taught us that “The kingdom of heaven is as a man who was about to take a long journey, and he called his servants together and entrusted them with his property. To one he gave five talents (probably about \$5,000), to another two, to another one; to each in proportion to his own personal ability. Then he departed and left the country. He who received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he gained five talents more. And likewise he who had received the two talents; he also gained two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came and brought him five more, saying, Master, you entrusted to me five talents; see, here I have gained five talents more. His master said to him, Well done, you upright, honorable, admirable and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy — the delight, the blessedness — which your master enjoys. And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, Master, you entrusted two talents to me; here I have gained two talents more. His master said to him, Well done, you upright, honorable, admirable and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy — the delight, the blessedness — which your master enjoys.

“He who had received one talent also came forward, saying, Master, I knew you to be a harsh and hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you had not winnowed the grain; so I was fearful, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is your own. But his master answered him, You wicked and lazy and idle servant! Did you indeed know that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather grain where I have not winnowed? Then you should have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I could have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he will be furnished richly so that he will have abundance. And throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness (a realm of loss outside the Kingdom); there shall be weeping and grinding of teeth (in sorrow at being denied the power and glory of the Kingdom)” (Mat. 25:14-30).

Christians as a whole have very faulty ideas concerning ruling and reigning with Christ, and the structure and administration of the Kingdom in general. They imagine that by sheer **grace** they will be caught up into heavenly realms of power and glory. But the Spirit of God teaches us clearly that “*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son*” (Rev. 21:7). The whole passage (Rev. 21) mentions three classes in relation to the Kingdom — first, the unconverted, who have their part in the lake of fire — the purging, purifying fires of

purposeful, redemptive judgment; second, saved peoples with God dwelling among them, *children* of God who have an entrance into the Kingdom to receive of its blessings and benefits; third, *heirs* and *sons inheriting all things*.

George Wylie once gave the following illustration which beautifully makes the point. He said, "In entering the Kingdom you are just being there, you have a place in the Kingdom, you are a subject of the Kingdom: but to inherit it is something else. This might help you to understand it better. I live in Canada, and am a Canadian subject. Many times I cross the border between here and the U.S.A. When I cross the border I have entered the United States, but I am just a visitor there, I am not even a citizen of that country; but I have entered it when I left Canada and crossed the border. As I travel around the U.S.A. I meet many people who are citizens of the land; they belong there, but I am a foreigner, nevertheless I have entered that country and enjoy its hospitality. But if in some way I *inherited* the country, I could go to the White House and say to the President, 'Now Mr. President, you kindly get out of here, I am taking over this nation, for I have inherited it.' So you see there is a great difference between entering a place and inheriting it.

"When one enters the Kingdom of God, he is there, he is a citizen, a subject of that country. But when one inherits it, he is not just a subject of the Kingdom, he is the owner, the controller, the authority, the power, the government! This is something greater than merely entering into the Kingdom and enjoying the blessings and rights of citizenship. The qualifications for entering the Kingdom and those for inheriting the Kingdom are altogether different" — end quote.

That this great honor and glory to which Christ is now bringing us through many trials, testings, and sufferings, is predicated upon our **overcoming** in them, cannot be disputed in the light of what He further states in chapters two and three of the book of the Revelation. Oh, let us give earnest heed to these tremendous statements! "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; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26-27). "To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). "He that overcometh shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be my *son*" (Rev. 21:7). It is the *son* who is the *heir* of the heavenly glories — not simply any *child* of God you may meet on the street or in a church meeting. Let not carnal, self-willed, immature Christians imagine for one moment that it will be given to them to reign with Christ without first having shed their carnal minds and put on the righteousness, knowledge, wisdom, obedience, and maturity of the Son of God.

God only commits Kingdom authority and power to those sons who have reached the spiritual stature of maturity. The scriptures refer to this as the "adoption". Paul speaks of this adoption when he says, "Having predestinated us unto the ADOPTION OF SONS by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5). To understand the various New Testament references to adoption, we must first have some background to show how the Oriental customs in this regard differ from our own Western concepts. Here in the West, adoption is the taking of a child from one family and making it the member of another family. The Greek word for adoption is HUIOTHEIA. The first half is HUIOS, the common noun for an **adult son**. The latter half is THESIA, meaning a **placement or an installation**. In Israel,

as in many Eastern countries, after a male “child” had come to full age and had been instructed and trained and had proven through obedience that he was able to assume the responsibility of the family name, wealth, and power, then the father held a public ceremony where some of the families and neighbors in Israel gathered together and the father publicly placed his boy as a “son”.

Jesus, in His relationship to His heavenly Father, passed through these two stages, as the prophet points out: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...” (Isa. 9:6). Consider these two statements: (1) a CHILD is BORN (2) a SON is GIVEN. Jesus fulfilled the first when He came into the world as a babe. The “child” was born in Bethlehem. But thirty years passed before the “son” was given at the Jordan river. When Jesus was twelve years old the revelation of who He was came to Him, but even then “He went down with them (Mary and Joseph), and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them...and Jesus **increased** in **wisdom** and (spiritual) **stature**, and in **favor with God** and man” (Lk. 2:51-52). After passing through thirty years of spiritual development under the dealings of His Father, learning His **ways** and **complete obedience**, in a public ceremony at Jordan, with multitudes of the families of Israel present with John the Baptist, God declared His Son’s SONSHIP: “And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven saying, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am WELL PLEASSED!**” (Mat. 3:16-17). From that day forward Jesus assumed the responsibility of His Father’s name, wealth, and power, and God’s SON became manifested to the world, glorifying the Father in word and in deed. That is when the Kingdom of God came among men.

The proclamation of adoption gave the son certain privileges not enjoyed by him before this time. These privileges are important to all who have received the call to sonship and will teach us much about our own adoption as God’s sons if we think upon them. First, the son at the adoption ceremony was given the right to **use his father’s name**. He had the power of attorney and could buy or sell and do business in his father’s name. Secondly, at this time the son was given his **inheritance**, all the wealth that the father would entrust to him. It was at this time that the prodigal son came to his father to request of him all the portion of goods that belonged to him. Thirdly, and of tremendous importance for our consideration, the son was promoted to **equality with his father!** None of this was his by right of birth, but only as an attainment received following years of growth, development, discipline, schooling, testing, and experience. Ah, at this present time we know in part and prophecy in part and our spiritual life and ministry is limited to that “measure” given to us as the *children* of God. But the Spirit witnesses around the world, by incontrovertible witness and testimony, in dreams and visions, through the mouths of holy prophets and apostles, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation to many thousands of saints, that the hour is wonderfully close at hand for the **adoption**, the **placing**, the **manifestation of the sons of God**, the full, complete, qualified, prepared, body of that firstborn Son. What a day this is for us, and for the whole creation that groans and travails for deliverance!

The implication of such a marvelous event as the manifestation of the sons of God is staggering to the imagination, and it is small wonder that the immature and careless Christians know nothing at all of it even as the day of manifestation draws nigh. But the implication it holds not only for those who have received the call, but for the entire

creation in the age and the ages to come, is beyond expression or even imagination. Jesus Christ, the lonely carpenter of Nazareth, the first manifested Son, who challenged death, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, cast out devils, wrought mighty signs and wonders and miracles, and had power over the laws of nature and all things, was but *one man* placed as the Son of the Almighty Father in heaven; but what glory it will be when the entire family of sons is placed by adoption and stands up in the earth to do the works Jesus did and even greater works than those!

Earlier I mentioned that an adopted son shares equality with his father. Suppose you are driving down the street and pass a store with a sign out front that reads, BROWN AND SON HARDWARE — what does this suggest to you? Naturally, it suggests that Mr. Brown is the owner of the store and that Mr. Brown has a son who is partner with him in the business. But it further suggests that this son is **grown**, that he has reached the age of maturity, experience, and responsibility where he can be taken into his father's business **as a partner** — as a mature **business man**! You certainly would not expect, upon entering the store and asking for the son, to be presented to a ten year old boy or an infant in a playpen! Nor have we ever seen a sign across the front of a store that read: BROWN AND CHILD HARDWARE! This, then, is *exactly* the difference between a *child* of God and a *son* of God. A child is *born*, but a son is *developed*. Since we have been born of God we have God's **nature**, the divine nature. But we must grow up into God's **character** and **ability**! That is what it really means to be a manifested son of God!

So many Christians today are satisfied with merely an *entrance* into the Kingdom realm of God where as children they can enjoy the many blessings and the wonderful benefits of God's mercy, goodness and kindness. Their eyes are blind to the higher purposes of God, and any efforts to lead them on to higher ground are rebuffed and resisted by a human reasoning that asks why one should waste time on "deep things" when they are already saved and "on their way to heaven." But the new birth, while it is the most astounding miracle of the ages, is, nevertheless, but the birth of a mere **spiritual infant**. There are many further steps that must follow this birth if one is to come into all the glories and the full heritage which is prepared for those who follow on to know the Lord. The life of God is a free gift of unmerited mercy and favor. But heavenly attainments of spiritual wealth and power and glory and usefulness are given to those who **grow up** unto the "measure of the stature of the **fullness of Christ**" (Eph. 4:13). There is great glory, wisdom, power, and responsibility awaiting those who grow up to be God's sons. Let us press forward unto SONSHIP!

QUALIFICATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

God's Kingdom is a body politic. And there are two parties: God's righteous government, and the opposition. The opposition has been trying for six thousand years, by any and every means, to gain control of the government. But it has been a disheartening battle. The Word says, "The government shall be upon HIS (Christ, Head and body) shoulders...of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9:6-7). Because this rule can never diminish or cease, every apparent victory of the enemy, in the end, has turned out to be a defeat. Of course, God planned it that way from the beginning for our learning and development in the Kingdom.

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 God has created the negative realm for a specific purpose, to serve as a backdrop for the positive realm. That purpose is stated in the opening words of the above quoted verse: "I have created the **smith** that **bloweth the coals in the fire**, and that **bringeth forth an INSTRUMENT** for His work." 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? Meditate deeply upon the following passages and I do not doubt that you will see how it is that God Himself sends the adversary into our lives to accomplish that work which can only be done by adversity, trouble, temptation, processing, trials and testings. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be TEMPTED (tested, tried) 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).

A friend has written, "God is constructing a temple, made of living stones, through which to manifest Himself throughout the ages to come. 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 and goodness, 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 in 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 power and might, and **all things** are in His hand and by His design — even this adversary whom we call the Devil."

The human race fell to the deception of the opposition at the very beginning. But instead of that being a victory for the adversary, it turned out to be a blessing for the human race. For now, not only will all men be restored to what was lost by the fall, but those who are called and chosen are translated to the heavenly realm, to a position as far removed from a perfect Edenic state as the east is from the west. The opposition even went as far as to crucify the King, the Lord of glory. But that seeming defeat for Christ's cause was a signal victory, for on the third day the crucified One arose from the tomb, thus breaking the sway of death and delivering all who were in bondage from its clutches. Because He arose, so shall every son of

Adam arise. “The hour is coming, in the which A-L-L that are in the graves shall hear His voice and come forth...” (Jn. 5:28-29). The Kingdom of the righteous One has not yet been brought forth in all its fullness and perfection over the earth. We are passing through a period of preparation in which those who have proven themselves faithful to the rightful King and His cause, are being sealed, and now joyfully await the day when, upon the full manifestation of the Kingdom, they will be raised to great honor and power and majesty, to reign as heavenly kings over the earth, to bring life and light and love to all mankind and to all worlds and all creatures throughout the endless vastnesses of infinity.

Faithful adherence to the principles of the government is the one and only condition laid down by which men attain to these positions of honor. But through the ages the opposition has been trying to overthrow the dominion of the Kingdom of God and to gain the ascendancy by enlisting the supporters of the government in his own cause. He enlists them and leads them to work against their sovereign Head by confusing them concerning the principles of the government. Those who thus follow the adversary are rebels, traitors, unfaithful servants. They can never come to honor. That doesn't mean they can't be saved—it means that they forfeit their place in the government of God. They have betrayed a sacred trust in that which is considered least: they have been faithless in a few things. Thus they have proven themselves unfit to be entrusted with more important matters. I have seen brethren who received the call to sonship take the word of the Kingdom and prostitute it with the ways of religion and the methods of the flesh, for financial gain, for a name, for a following, to build a little kingdom around themselves, to control men's lives, or simply because they lacked the faith and consecration to *walk out* the principles of the Kingdom of God. They can never, with the faithful, be made rulers over many things. And such is the sad state and condition of the church in general of the present day.

The Lord has, in mercy, allowed the least faithless of the popular church systems to declare enough of the gospel to lead a few to the Saviour. Some of these receive and teach a genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit, with gifts, and healings, and blessings and miracles. But from here on, practically everything that is taught is nothing but defilement and shame: nothing but the traditions of the elders, and the lies and deceptions of the adversary. Oh, that we all might now leave our delusions and press on toward perfection. My God, lead us onward and upward to “be no more children, tossed to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). Adult spiritual perfection alone will win the prize incomparable at the end of the race. And that perfection can be attained only by leaving the popular crowd: by seeking the Lord who is our life, and by trusting Him to take us all the way in to His crucifixion, and then into all His glorious fullness of resurrection life and light and glory. Let us die to all that defiles. Let us awaken to righteousness and truth and reality.

From out of the masses of the redeemed our Father in heaven is even now calling and preparing a people to **inherit** the Kingdom of God, a people that has learned through the processings of this Day to *let the mind of Christ* dwell in them. They live and act out of that perfect, holy, wise, glorious mind. From the hosts of the redeemed He is raising up a company of kings and priests to share His glorious throne and dominion. Even now they are reigning over a few things, and soon they

shall be given dominion over many things. By the spirit of revelation these have been quickened to the knowledge that they are integral parts of **Himself** — all the sons of God elect according to the purpose of Him from the very foundation of the world. Oh, with what incredible faithfulness and omnipotent power our heavenly Father has with His chastening rod and His tender mercies molded the vessels of glory appointed to His Kingdom! Ah, my brother, my sister! *Strip for the race!* Let nothing impede your progress now. Cast off *every weight* and *the sin* which so easily besets us, *looking unto Jesus*, who is both the author and the finisher of our faith.

Just as there are certain things which are essential prerequisites to inheriting the Kingdom of God, so there are certain things which are hindrances and barriers and which stop a man from inheriting it. Certain of these barriers we must already know for they are the opposites of the things that are the qualifications for the Kingdom. Just as the childlike, the forgiving, and the serving spirit are all necessary passports to the Kingdom, so the proud, the bitter, and the selfish spirit are hindrances and barriers to the Kingdom. The apostle Paul, earnestly contending with the carnality of the saints in the church at Corinth, speaks to believers about such a mundane thing as suing each other at the law. He admonishes them in the love of Christ that it is a shame for them to do this. He is trying to persuade them that this is not something the elect of God should be doing. They, like Jesus, should be willing to suffer loss rather than fight and contend with one another over earthly things. How can we rule and reconcile *all things* in mercy and love, if we demand our rights and use the law against those who wrong us today? That very spirit is contrary to the principles of the Kingdom! It will keep you off the throne of righteous judgment, my friend!

By the wisdom given to him by the Lord, Paul writes, “Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous (believers) **shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, **shall inherit the kingdom of God**” (I Cor. 6:7-10).

The above list is not pleasant, but it needs to be published. These things remind us that the principles of the Kingdom must be laid in our everyday lives. It is easy to relish the deep teaching of the Kingdom, and revel in the hope of the glory that is coming, but the nature of holiness and love and perfection must become expressed in every word and deed of those who call themselves the sons of God. We may not be subject to the grosser sins of the flesh, but there is also selfishness, anger, jealousy, idle words, faultfinding, condemning, dissension and a hundred other personality traits that defile the Kingdom. There is a Kingdom of God to which we must give answer every day of our lives. There is an eternal Kingdom of power and glory to be “inherited” or lost. There is an eternal issue to all of life. It has its terminal point in the eternal Kingdom. There is something then at stake — vitally and desperately at stake. It is our inheritance, our place, our usefulness, our reward, our very future in the government of God!

A passage in Galatians says essentially the same thing: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**” (Gal. 5:19-21. Do you know any Christians who do such things? Do you practice these things yourself? If you do, then you can be assured that you will not inherit the Kingdom of God. You will not enter into the glory God has prepared for you. You will be ruled “disqualified”. **Disqualified** for the Kingdom! Ah, you will be saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but will forfeit your opportunity to rule and reign with Christ. This is not judgment and condemnation I am preaching today — this is the solemn truth and wisdom of God who is raising up kings and priests who shall REIGN IN RIGHTEOUSNESS! Only the righteous can reign in righteousness!

In God’s Kingdom today there are great spiritual rewards. There is joy unspeakable and full of glory, and righteousness and peace in the Holy Ghost. But there is a Kingdom of life, of incorruption, of immortality, of universal rule and dominion, of almighty power and glory that lies just before us. But we will never know it or taste it unless we lay aside what is keeping us from entering in. The exhortation of the first perfect Son of God reaches us even today, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Lk. 13:24). This is referring to how a pack animal, in order to go through a narrow opening in the gate of a city, first had to have its baggage all unloaded. It was only after being thus disencumbered that a beast of burden could squeeze through. The sad reason that some who have heard the call to sonship do not enter into the Kingdom is that they are unwilling to rid themselves of all the baggage that is keeping them from the will of God. They are hanging on to many things, fleshly or religious, being afraid to let go of them and trust God to be all to them. Many believers have barely gotten the aroma of the rich enjoyment of Christ that is available to them today. They stand in the Outer Court, or in the Holy Place, and never enter into the Most Holy Place, into the very presence of God, into the fullness of incorruptible life, glory and power, because they are attached to an outward, organizational, ceremonial, ritualistic, creedal, emotional, sentimental and works-oriented religious realm. Let us lay aside the weights and the sin which so easily besets us and *run the race*. If there is something that is keeping you from inheriting the Kingdom, cast it aside. Do not be encumbered, my beloved, so that you cannot fully enter in to inherit your promised land. The Kingdom of God lies waiting before us. The door is open, and all who hear the call may enter in. Let me say boldly that no one is too weak or too feeble. The ones who do not enter are simply *unwilling*. No matter what your state or your condition, you can turn today to the heavenly Father, the Father of mercies, the Father of glory, and He will strengthen you, nurture you, and empower you to inherit the everlasting Kingdom. Arise, and enter in!

Chapter 23

Inheriting The Kingdom

(continued)

We are learning what it means to be a son of God, realizing God's great plan and purposes involved. One of the most important rights of sonship is that of *inheritance*. Heirship depends entirely upon our relationship with God. When we were born again, born of God, we became children of God and consequently potential *inheritors* of all that pertains to our Almighty Father. One inherits in the country of his parentage and according to the laws of that land. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that in order to enter into the Kingdom of God human beings have to be **born again** — of the **Spirit**. The Kingdom of God is the realm or land of our inheritance, and that great land is entered by birth. It is there in the land of the Kingdom of God that we are able to see, enter, possess and inherit Christ as our All-in-all.

Sometimes when a person inherits money or an estate, conditions are laid down which must be fulfilled before that person can receive his inheritance. That principle is also true in the Kingdom of God. For instance, one of the conditions in the Kingdom is that the full inheritance is given only upon our reaching spiritual *maturity*. Another condition is *overcoming* the world, the flesh, and the devil. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:7). To be *poor in spirit* is yet another condition for inheriting, as Jesus taught, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 5:3). We must also undergo a mighty *change* in order to receive our inheritance, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). Only those who possess the spirit of *ministering to* and *servicing* their needy brethren and the groaning creation shall have any inheritance in the Kingdom, for it was to those who saw the Lord hungry, and gave Him food; who saw the Lord thirsty, and gave Him drink; who saw the Lord naked, and clothed Him; who saw the Lord sick, and visited Him, and in prison, and went to Him; it is to these that the King says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit* the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34-46).

There are four classes of people in relation to the Kingdom of God today. There are those who see the Kingdom. Then there are those who *enter* the Kingdom. After that there are some who press their way in to *possess* the Kingdom. And finally there is a people that *inherits* the Kingdom. To see the Kingdom is *vision* or *revelation*. To enter the Kingdom is *exploration*, as when the spies went in and spied out the land of Canaan. To possess the Kingdom means *appropriation*, as when Joshua led the children of Israel to conquer the land. And to inherit the Kingdom is to *fully and permanently utilize all of its riches, abundance, provisions and position*; and to *fulfill all of its responsibilities and exercise all of its powers*, as Israel did once the land was fully possessed. That is the power and glory of inheritance in the Kingdom of God!

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:3). It seems strange to say that the poor in spirit inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; rather it would seem that the rich in spirit should inherit the Kingdom! There is a great depth here that can only be plumbed by the wisdom of God. The things of the spirit are always contrary to the logic of the natural mind. Only when we are willing to reject our minds and our wisdom does God draw nigh to us and give us light, true light. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14).

It is in that glorious sermon called “The Sermon on the Mount” that Jesus reveals this great truth. The Sermon on the Mount announces the laws or principles of the Kingdom of God. The giving of the Kingdom of Heaven to the *poor in spirit* sets the tone for these laws. To be poor in spirit does not mean to be lacking in spirit, but indicates an attitude of heart. The Greek word used for poor is PTOCHOS. It is one of two words for “poor” in the Greek language. While the other word, PENES, is used to describe one who has fewer possessions, and has to work hard for a living, the word PTOCHOS describes the man who has absolutely nothing at all. It means a pauper or a beggar. It has connections with the root word PROSSEIN which means to couch or cower. It describes the poverty of one who has been beaten to his knees. To be “poor in spirit” is to become like Jesus, who “made Himself of *no reputation*” (Phil. 2:7). For, “though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became *poor* (pstchos), that ye through His *poverty* might be rich” (II Cor. 8:9).

Ah, we cannot come to be taught of God feeling within ourselves that we are understanding, we are wisdom, we are power, we are creators, we are kings and rulers, or that we have anything that commends itself to God. We must be **poor** in spirit, **poor** in attitude — unclothed of self. The word “spirit” is used many times to describe an attitude of heart or a state of mind. If we say of someone, “He has a good spirit,” we don’t mean that he has an holy angel or a well-mannered ghost living inside of him. We mean that he has a good attitude, disposition, temperament, personality, demeanor, and expression. The *beatitudes* are just that — attitudes of being. They are the BE-ATTITUDES, the very attitudes the sons of God must **become**. Jesus said in effect, “The attitude of a poor person is the same attitude that will help you to inherit the Kingdom of God.” But He does not mean by this that we are to be *spiritually destitute*! We must realize that we are the “branch” dependent upon the Root and the Vine just as the firstborn Son testified of Himself, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do *nothing of himself*, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. I can of mine own self do *nothing*: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I *seek not mine own will*, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (Jn. 5:19,30). It follows then that the poor in spirit are actually the rich in spirit!

Poor in spirit means “renounced in spirit.” Yielding up everything of self — selfishness, self-assertiveness, self-interest — that we may gain Christ. One Greek scholar has said that poor in spirit comes closer in the Greek to mean “teachable in spirit.” Ah, that hits the nail on the head! “Blessed are the teachable in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Have you ever observed one who knows everything (in his own estimation), how far from happiness and fulfillment he really

is? Being rich in his own eyes he is extremely impoverished, for no one can add of their wealth to him. The poor in spirit are poor enough to receive — they are receptive in spirit, willing to break old habits and ways and thought-patterns and mind-sets and take new ones. Right on the threshold of the Kingdom of God we encounter an act of renunciation from the deepest depths of our being. This is just the opposite of the sociology and psychology being taught in the colleges and universities. In many schools they teach “self-assertiveness,” “take,” and “realize.” But the Kingdom of God will not sanction such concepts. To be happy and blessed you must be *poor* in spirit, *renounced* in spirit, *teachable* in spirit, *pliable in spirit*, and *receptive* in spirit. Receptive to all that God is, to all that God does, and to all that God is saying by His Spirit. You must be *pliable* in the Master’s hands at all times and in all situations. You must have an ear to hear, and a heart to respond. You must know and think and be nothing of yourself. You don’t just belong to the Kingdom, and you don’t bring anything to the Kingdom. But the Kingdom is yours! All the resources of the Kingdom are at the disposal of the renounced-poor-teachable-pliable-receptive. The Kingdom is within you, and it also reaches to the lowest hell and beyond the farthest star. All the powers of the Kingdom are centered in you, not in your *self*, but in *Christ your life*. “It is no longer I, but Christ that liveth in me.” That is the glory of the poor in Spirit!

The saintly George MacDonald has beautifully expressed the truth in these inspiring words: “The poor, the beggars in spirit, the humble men of heart, the unambitious, the unselfish; those who never despise men, and never seek their praises; the lowly, who see nothing to admire in themselves, therefore cannot seek to be admired of others; the men who give themselves away — these are the freemen of the Kingdom, these are the citizens of the New Jerusalem. The men who are aware of their own essential poverty; **not** the men who are poor in friends, poor in influence, poor in acquirements, poor in money, but those who are poor in spirit, who *feel themselves poor creatures*; who know nothing to be pleased with themselves for, and desire nothing to make them think well of themselves; who know that they need much to make their life worth living; these humble ones are the poor whom the Lord calls blessed. The gate of the Kingdom begins to open to such a man.

“Whatever such a man has attained to, he straightway forgets; it is part of him and behind him. His business is with what he has not, with the things that lie above and before him. The man who is proud of anything he thinks he has reached, has not reached it. He is but proud of himself, and imagining a cause for his pride. If he had reached, he would already have begun to forget. He who delights in contemplating whereunto he has attained, is not merely sliding back; he is already in the dirt of self-satisfaction. The gate of the Kingdom is closed, and he outside. The man who does not house self has room to be his real self— God’s eternal idea of him. He lives eternally; in virtue of the creative power present in him with momentarily unimpeded creation, he *is*. How should there be in him one thought of ruling or commanding or surpassing! He can imagine no bliss, no good in being greater than some one else. He would lift every man to the embrace of the Father. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they are of the same spirit as God, and of nature the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” — end quote. Awesome!

CORRUPTION DOES NOT INHERIT...

The apostle Paul by the wisdom of the Spirit given to him, said, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (I Cor. 15:50).

If there is one lesson we are learning from all the sex scandals, unethical conduct, fraud and financial shenanigans coming out of the government in Washington it is the lesson of the depravity of the human nature and the corruption of the carnal mind. The carnal manifestations that have come out of the religious systems over the past couple decades are not one whit better than the events in Washington or what is transpiring in the vilest section of an inner city. We are disgusted with the fleshiness and corruption on every hand, and I am sure I get an “Amen” from many who read these lines. Corruption of one kind or another has destroyed the Lord’s people as well as His temple **except for the holy remnant**. Corruption cannot **inherit** the Kingdom of God! Therefore there must be a mighty victory over corruption in the life of every one who cherishes the beautiful hope of sonship. *We must be changed!*

The perfect example we have been given of one who has been changed into the full glory of the Kingdom of God is Jesus. He is the first Son to overcome the dominion of corruption, and He is our example. As Jesus conquered by the Spirit of Life from God, so is it given to every one of His younger brothers to overcome in this day. To be changed, we must be cleansed and purged of every vestige of the carnal mind and every work of the flesh. Our omnipotent Lord who lives within us is completing the work He began when He saved us by His grace. He is bringing us to completion and perfection by manifesting the power of the Kingdom of God within us. Christ is reigning in mighty power upon the throne of our lives, by the Spirit. When He has completed His cleansing, purifying, transforming work within us, we shall be fully prepared for the last trump transformation — the redemption of our body. Paul wrote to the Romans, telling them that the whole creation travaileth in pain together for deliverance from the **bondage of corruption**. But I must remark that the corruptibility of “flesh and blood” — the body — is but an infinitesimal part of the great and dreadful **realm of corruption**.

The Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostle Peter, has given us these blessed words of divine understanding. “According as His divine power has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 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. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible renders verse four, “By means of these He has bestowed on us His precious and exceedingly great promises, so that through them you may escape from the **moral decay, rottenness and corruption** that is in the world because of covetousness (lust and greed) and become sharers of the divine nature.” And J. B. Phillips has beautifully translated, “It is through this generosity that God’s greatest and most precious promises have become available to us men, making it possible for you to **escape the inevitable disintegration** that lust produces in the world and to share in God’s essential nature.” Corruption is thus far more than the aging process in our mortal bodies which eventually leads to physical death and dissolution.

The word corruption is from the Greek PHTHORA meaning “to destroy by bringing into a worse state or inferior condition.” According to Romans 8:20-21, the whole creation, animate and inanimate, is subject to the bondage of corruption. Corruption

is so universal and absolute that it was formalized about one hundred years ago into a fundamental law now called *The Second Law of Thermodynamics*. This law states that “*all systems*, if left to themselves, tend to become degraded and disordered, and deteriorate.” Physical systems, whether watches or suns, eventually wear out. Organisms grow old and die. Instead of life and growth there is decay and death. There is no permanency in anything physical. This universal law of the cosmos is diametrically opposed to the theory of evolution which supposes a progressive improvement and refinement of living organisms.

From the very heart of events from the dawn of creation this law of corruption has been manifested in the things that are made. The fall of Adam into sin, separation, sorrow, pain and death, is the very first sad example of the law of corruption. Man has ever been the object of God’s solicitude and care. Man came from the hand of God created in His image and likeness, crowned with glory and honor, and given dominion over all the works of God’s hands. Gradually, however, subjected as he was to this gross material realm, formed of the dust of the ground, the cycle of his career turned downward from his high plane upon which God had placed him, until he reached the depths of disaster. The race of Cain was a filthy, perverted race; they were hateful and violent and they were murderers. They were boastful and vile in the extreme, and would have nothing to do with the God that made them. They were the offspring of a murderer who slew his brother. They filled the earth with their lust, violence, and evil, until even the righteous line of Seth was corrupted and they were so bad that the scripture says that “their thoughts” and all the “intents of their hearts” were “only evil continually.” They were so bad that God could not wait for them to die, and another generation to arise, but in order to re-establish some order in the earth He had to sweep all of them off the earth into hell.

Noah alone, out of all the families of the earth, was perfect in his generation and found grace in the eyes of the Lord. His uncles and aunts were not righteous. His brothers and sisters were not righteous. His cousins and nephews and nieces were not righteous. They were all corrupt. How do we know this? They were all swept away in the judgment of the flood! Only eight souls out of an entire civilization were spared. Righteousness started afresh in the earth with Noah and his seed. But this did not help, for man’s one obsession and inborn trait all through the centuries has been rebellion and backsliding and faithlessness. And so again God made a new provision. So far, His saints had freely mixed with the world. But now He purposed to segregate them from the world. He purposed to remove them from the idolatrous influence of the ungodly. And so, beginning with Abraham, He began this segregation. He called Abraham out from the world and promised him a land, an inheritance. When once in this land, his seed were to destroy completely, even to the last man, the heathen who dwelt there. “Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: but thou shalt utterly destroy them.”

Here was a truly remarkable and wholly new provision. For in Egypt God took His church and made a nation of them. And then He led them out of Egypt with many infallible signs and wonders and miracles. He divided the sea for them: the same sea in which their enemies perished. He gave them a tabernacle and sanctuary, patterned after the true Sanctuary on High, and there He condescended to have His very presence dwell among them continually. He gave them a perfect set of national laws written by the finger of God Himself on stone. He showed them His power. He fed them with manna from heaven. He preserved their clothing and shoes throughout

the whole period of forty years of wanderings in the wilderness. And yet, in spite of God's manifest love and care, their very first act, when Moses left them to go up into the mount of God, was to make a golden calf and fall down to it! Talk about *corruption*!

Read the account of their sojourn in the wilderness. Read the accounts of their idolatry after they entered their own land. Yes, the first thing they did upon coming into their promised land was the exact opposite of what God commanded them. Instead of destroying their enemies completely, they began making covenants with them. No wonder God says concerning them, "But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments...and my sabbaths they greatly polluted" (Eze. 20:13). No wonder God says, "I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof...they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prov. 1:24-29). And friend, human nature has not changed one particle in all the years. Believers as a whole (the popular church) are just as wayward and rebellious now as they ever were. God's church has ever been "a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face" (Isa. 65:2-3). And it was not to the fleshly Israel of old, but the New Testament Church that the Lord Jesus sent this piercing rebuke, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee...remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Obviously, the *law of corruption* was still at work!

Let us go on. God intended that His saints, as long as they obeyed Him and walked with Him, should be masters of the earth. They were: that is, until God, because of their sins and backslidings, had to cut them off. He was very lenient with them. He made more than one new provision following their rebellions from Him. He gave them every consideration and every opportunity to reign over the earth. For did not He tell them that if they would hearken unto Him, "thou shalt be blessed above all people"? (Deut. 7:14). "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour" (Deut. 26:18-19). "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God...the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth" (Deut. 28:1). Ah, here was great provision made which would enable God's people to dominate the whole world! And they did enjoy that heritage of power and honor for a time. Consider the Patriarchs, and Job. Consider Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of whom God witnessed that they were very great. And then consider king David, and consider king Solomon in all his glory, a glory so resplendent that even the Queen of Sheba witnessed, "Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it, and, behold, the half was not told me: the wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (I Kings 10:7).

But then there came a change. A new order was introduced. For, in spite of all of God's provisions and blessings, His people went from bad to worse. And here is the result, foretold by Moses in the wilderness. He told them that if they would not keep God's commandments then, instead of being masters of the earth, "the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies...thou...SHALT BE REMOVED INTO ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH" (Deut. 28:15-25). Of all the physical proofs of the inspiration and infallible accuracy of the prophecies of the Bible, there is no proof that can compare to that great sign of signs which is the NATION OF ISRAEL. In 721 B.C. the northern house of Israel was carried into captivity into Assyria and consequently disappeared from the page of history so suddenly and completely it was as though the land of their captivity swallowed them up. Historically, however, the ten tribes escaped their captivity and through various migrations became scattered throughout the continent of Europe, just as the Lord had said.

The house of Judah finally experienced the same fate. Some thirty-five years after Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, the wrath was poured out. Jerusalem fell, and great was the fall thereof! Signal, terrible, and unparalleled was the Jewish war, ending with the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Roman general, Titus. It needs a pen dipped in fire and in blood to write the story in its true colors! The sufferings and miseries that overtook the Jewish nation in that age, are all but indescribable, the very record of them is appalling. And they have been scattered for two millenniums through all nations just as the Lord said. In this sordid picture of the unceasing degeneration of the human race, as well as God's own people, we receive the unimpeachable testimony of the universal LAW OF CORRUPTION. Ah, my beloved, if you think corruption refers only to the mortal body, you are badly mistaken. It runs much deeper than that. Science states that "all systems, if left to themselves, tend to become degraded and disordered, and deteriorate." God puts it this way: "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, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:1-5).

Oh what a stormy sea the world has sailed from Adam's transgression until now! What indescribable travail the earth has seen under the curse of *bondage to corruption*! And not just man, not alone the earth, but the *whole creation* was made subject to this vanity and it is the whole creation that now groans with a sort of universal travail, waiting for the sons of God to reach the glory and honor of adoption, waiting for the transfigured family of sons at last to speak the wonderful words of life and deliverance. In the throes of corruption all things are propelled by the swirling momentum of the *downward spiral* to destruction, utterly helpless and powerless to invent any method of preventing the ultimate catastrophe.

The dark foreboding and terror of every creature and all things is not unlike that of the victim of punishment by the Hohenstaufen house in Germany. One of the methods of punishment, it is said, was to incarcerate the victim in a luxuriously appointed room. Instead of feeling any special remorse, he was rather delighted with his lot. In a day or two, however, the prisoner realized his illusionment. He noticed, as he arose each morning, that the walls had slightly contracted. At first he could

scarcely conceive of it. He examined the space closely and found his fears verified. He watched the movement very closely, and sure enough, they were gradually contracting. In oiled and silent grooves these heavy metal walls were gradually drawing closer and closer. He was startled, and placed all manner of objects to check the oncoming tide. But it was all in vain. The walls were irresistible in their progress. It dawned upon him that this beautiful luxurious room was a deceptive snare.

When he realized that this comfortably and beautifully furnished room was to be his death cell and the place of his doom, invariably cold perspiration poured out of his temples and he cried out frantically for help. But no response came. The metal walls simply gave back a hollow echo and continued to draw closer. When the furniture had been demolished by the pressure and the walls had come so close he could not do anything but stand upright, he placed his back to the wall, and bracing himself with his hands and feet, he tried with one superhuman effort to withstand his doom. But the walls were not to be gainsaid; they were not to be denied of their prey. Finally the walls crushed him to death. Is this not the sense of every man who beholds the ravishing power of corruption in his body? As old age appears, with its multiplied physical weaknesses, degeneration, ailments and limitations, they feel themselves crowded to the wall and think they are daily approaching their fatal and final end. Unable to make any further resistance, they passively submit themselves to the inevitable and slip away quietly from this world. Behold in this, my friend, the awesome power of the BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION!

The crumbling ruins of ancient civilizations buried beneath the swirling sands of ages bear silent testimony to the unrelenting *power of corruption*. Proud empires which like the towering mount Everest dominated the lives and fortunes of multitudes of men and vast stretches of global real estate, have disappeared from even the memory of those now dwelling upon the earth. In the afterglow of a thousand battlefields, in the shattered dreams of kings and world conquerors, in the light of treachery, moral decay, and spiritual bankruptcy, the word of God standeth invincibly true. Mighty empires and nations that with the vaunted pride of wealth, commerce, education, refinement, and disciplined armies controlled the souls of men have all eventually fallen and crumbled to dust beneath their own weight, becoming like the dust of a summer threshing floor and the wind blew them away.

The universe itself is no less subject to the bondage of corruption. As a recent article in *Discover* magazine reported, six or seven billion years from now the sun will begin to die, but it will not die alone. When the sun runs out of hydrogen fuel at its core and begins burning the hydrogen, helium, and heavier elements in its outer layers, it will swell tremendously, expanding out to earth's orbit. In its death throes it will swell into a red giant star, engulfing and incinerating Mercury, Venus, and Earth. Life on earth — if indeed any still exists — will surely end. A like fate awaits every star and planet in every solar system in all the two hundred billion known galaxies that make up the universe. Everything is winding down and burning out. In the light of this solemn knowledge let us reflect again upon the Holy Spirit's sacred message of hope and deliverance, "For the earnest expectation of the creation *waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the *creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption* into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the *whole creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain

together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, **the redemption of our body**" (Rom. 8:19-23). Lift up your heads and rejoice! O creation — the sun will *not* burn itself out, the earth will *not* be incinerated, the universe will *not* collapse, the myriad worlds scattered through space will *not* pass away, because the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption **into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!** What a word! What a hope! **Universal deliverance from the bondage of corruption! The reversal of the Second Law of Thermodynamics!** No wonder the earnest expectation of all creation WAITS FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD! Hallelujah!

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption. The message is clear — *we must be changed!* That is what it means. Mortal flesh and corrupted blood cannot inherit the Kingdom realm of God. As long as our bodies remain in the vile form they are now in, they cannot inherit that eternal sphere. "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Standing alone these words sound as though that which is corruptible is beyond hope. The body of corruption would go to the grave with no hope of resurrection or change forever. And it would mean exactly that were it not for the qualifying message that follows. "Behold, I show you a *mystery...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. 15:50-54).

No one can deny it — we must be changed, spirit, soul, and body! Only by a mighty quickening of divine life can soul and body inherit the Kingdom. The apostle does not say that the *body* cannot inherit the Kingdom, merely that *flesh and blood* cannot inherit the Kingdom. The word of God has made it very clear that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, "shall *change our vile body*, that it may be fashioned *like unto His glorious body*, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue *all things* unto Himself" (Phil. 3:21). The vile body of flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom, but the changed body does indeed inherit the Kingdom. Oh, the *mystery* of it!

Very few of the Lord's people understand the great truth that there are **two bodies**, but the truth is that "there **is** a NATURAL BODY, and there **is** a SPIRITUAL BODY" (I Cor. 15:44). Many seem to think that the spiritual body will be the natural body changed or transformed. But that is not what the apostle tells us. It is not said that there **IS** a natural body, and some glad day after while there **SHALL BE** a spiritual body. No! "There **IS** a natural body, and there **IS** a spiritual body." There **IS!** Both bodies are a present tense reality. The natural body is the body of the outward man, whereas the spiritual body is the body of the inward man. That is why Paul in another place assures us, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16). The outward-man has a body and that body is perishing — we all know that! But few understand that the inward-man also has a body that is renewed, being *raised up within us*, day by day. The outer-man body is the flesh and blood body inherited from Adam. The inner-man body is the glorious resurrection body of Jesus Christ inherited from Him. Just as the outer-man body is not given to us "ready-made," but following conception in our mother's womb is gradually **formed** over a number of months, and continues to be formed for years until we reach adulthood; so the inner-man body is not given to us "ready made," but subsequent to our begetting as children of God the spiritual resurrection body of Jesus

is formed in us by the life of Christ raised up in us, progressively fashioned as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” And just as the outer-man body is from earth, so the inner-man body is from the Lord from heaven. The first is a natural and earthly body; the second is a spiritual and heavenly body.

The inner-man body is the spiritual body. The inner man body is our house from heaven. So the apostle continues by showing how it is that the inner-man body exists even if the outer-man body is dissolved or passes away. But God’s highest purpose is that the outer-man body **be caught up into**, and **swallowed up by**, the inner-man body. Hear what the Holy Spirit would teach us in these words of wisdom and understanding: “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (the outer-man body) were dissolved (dies, decays), we (still) **have** a building of God (the inner-man body) eternal in the heavens. For in this (the outer-man body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven (the inner-man body, the Christ body): if so be that being clothed (having the inner-man body) we shall not be found naked (a dis-embodied spirit). For we that are in this tabernacle (the outer-man body) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed (not have any body), but clothed upon (with the inner-man body), that mortality (the outer-man body) might be **swallowed up** of life (the inner-man body). Now He that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the firstfruits of the Spirit” (II Cor. 5:1-5). The only way for corruption to *put on* incorruption, and for mortality to *put on* immortality is for the outer-man natural body to be swallowed up **into** the inner-man spiritual body so that the two BECOME ONE — the mortal made immortal by the resurrection body of Jesus Christ formed within the inward man. That is precisely why Paul says that we are not burdened to be unclothed, that is, to die and put off the outer-man body, but we are burdened to be *clothed upon*, that is, to put on the inner-man body **over top of the outer-man body**, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Oh, the wonder of it!

Our bodily change and full salvation is promised by our Lord. We ourselves, along with all creation, groan within ourselves, waiting for the *adoption*, that is, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY. This honor of adoption, which means the redemption of our outer-man body, the universal Adamic body, belongs to all the *sons of God*. It is the work of the Holy Spirit within us, as Paul also explained, “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 (MAKE ALIVE) YOUR **MORTAL BODIES** BY HIS SPIRIT THAT **DWELLETH IN YOU**”(Rom. 8:11). And now, already, praise be to God, we “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*; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be GLORIFIED TOGETHER” (Rom. 8:15-17). This, then, in some small part is the honor and glory for which the sons of God seek — the *glory of incorruption* and the *honor of adoption*. How glorious is the race now set before us! How marvelous and wonderful is it all! Blessed be the Lord who hath called us unto **His Kingdom and glory!**

The Kingdom of God is the realm of incorruption and immortality! And we cannot fully inherit that which is immortal while we are in a mortal state. We must be changed! We must put on incorruption! We must put on immortality! The only way we can inherit the fullness of the Kingdom of God with our whole being is for us to be changed. Although we began in some small way to see the Kingdom when we were

first born again, and through the experiences of Christ began to *enter* into the Kingdom, and now by faith and obedience are beginning to *possess* our land, the fullness of the Kingdom can only be *inherited* by being changed into the incorruptible, immortal, imperishable, eternal life of Christ. The corruption of these mortal bodies and carnal minds cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. If we are to rule and reign with Christ in His incorruptible throne of glory and power, we must be changed into His image and likeness. Nothing short of the divine nature can handle such glory and power without prostituting it.

Let me make very plain that all who are now entering and possessing the Kingdom have indeed already **escaped corruption!** That will sound incredible and unbelievable to many who read these lines. But I must point out that corruption is not the same as mortality, although these terms are often used interchangeably by religious people. They do not bear the same meaning at all. Corruption and mortality are not two ways of saying the same thing. On the one hand, mortality is the *state* of being liable to death. On the other hand, corruption is the *process* by which death works. We are mortal *because* we are corruptible, but we are not corruptible *because* we are mortal. In physical terms we can illustrate it by saying that the *aging process* is corruption, whereas mortality is the *condition* that underlies the aging process, and the final result of the aging process.

The Word of God does not tell us that any man has fully escaped **mortality**, and indeed none has except our Lord Jesus Christ. "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: who **only hath immortality**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto..." (I Tim. 6:14,16). The apostle Peter does tell us, however, that the saints of God have been made partakers of the divine nature, "**having escaped the corruption** that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:4). Having **escaped!** Having escaped **corruption!** Having escaped the very corruption that was brought into the world by lust, by the lust or **desire** of mother Eve when she "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be **desired (lusted after)** to make one wise..." (Gen. 3:6).

What does this wonderful word mean to us? Where and when and how have we escaped the corruption that is in the world? Ah, my beloved, corruption is the *process of dissolution* that leads to death, the *downward spiral* by which all things in the universe are being reduced to a worse state or inferior condition. All organisms age and grow old. All food spoils. All mountains erode. All mechanical things wear out. All societies break down in moral decay. Every kingdom and empire weakens and finally collapses. Every spiritual movement, historical and current, eventually stagnates and goes into apostasy. Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse. Suns and stars burn out and self-destruct. There is a universal law of corruption, the bondage that enslaves every visible and invisible thing of the cosmos. The movement is always down, down, down.

And that's how it was in my life until that blessed day when Christ appeared and I was born again by the **incorruptible seed** of the word of God that liveth and abideth forever. A divine and incorruptible life was injected into my reality and in that wonderful moment old things passed away and all things became new. By that heavenly and divine intervention my course was changed, my direction reversed, my movement turned up-side-down. Instead of continuing the downward journey, I

commenced an upward climb. And now I can truthfully and joyfully testify — I am no longer getting worse — I AM GETTING **BETTER!** Oh, yes! **I AM GETTING BETTER!** I am now learning of Christ. I am growing up into Him in all things. I am putting on the mind of Christ. I am receiving His chastisements and experiencing His dealings. I am tasting the powers of the world to come. I am apprehending His righteousness, peace, and joy. I am eating His word and drinking His life. I am overcoming sins, weaknesses, unbelief, problems, fears, and obstacles of every kind. I am putting off the old man, and putting on the new man. Daily, continually, progressively, unceasingly, from glory to glory I AM BEING CHANGED! No longer am I being reduced to a worse state and an inferior condition — I am now being transformed by the renewing of my mind into a **better state**, into a **superior condition!** I have escaped the irresistible downward plunge — I have escaped **CORRUPTION!** Oh, hallelu-yah! I am now incorruptible — on my way *up* instead of *down!*

This truth of incorruption is far too important to be passed over without earnest consideration. The wonderful truth is that incorruption *leads to* immortality. This corruptible must put on incorruption *before* this mortal can be empowered to put on immortality. That is the precise and significant order in the Word of God. God's purpose in man's redemption is not to just deliver us from the penalty of our sins, but to re-create us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image of Him who created us. Having been molded and fashioned after the image of the first man, we have now begun to put off that likeness and to put on the image and likeness of the second man, the Lord from heaven. We must put off the image of the earthy, and put on the image of the heavenly; we must be changed from the natural, earthly, living creatures we first were to be re-fashioned as spiritual, heavenly ones. This is not an option, it is a must; it is not discretionary, it is mandatory if we are to inherit the Kingdom. So the scriptures declare, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." My! what a purpose this is. It staggers the imagination to contemplate such a change; but change we must if we are to inherit the promises.

Incorruption is the process of man's "fall" being **REVERSED!** If one is watching a program on his VCR and decides to stop and rewind it to see a scene again, he is simply reversing what he has previously seen with his eyes. It is comical sometimes to watch the people running backwards, and bodies rising from the ground to the roof of a building. You can see a vase that was smashed into a thousand pieces put together again, or a car that wrecked, back up and become as it was before. Whatever you saw was restored to its beginning by passing through the motion in reverse. And this is exactly what *incorruption* is: **THE FALL OF MAN IN REVERSE!** It means a progressive rising up again into that oneness in God that man knew in his bright beginning. The order of Adam first being alive, then sinning, then becoming more and more vile, and finally dying, is put in reverse. From that death we stand up again in the spiritual life of Christ within. Then we proceed to obedience, overcoming, and transformation into the image of God — and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is **death!**

When we were first begotten of God our bodies were not "changed" or made "immortal" at that time, but when that birthing of God's Spirit took place the life of Christ **began** to be raised up in us. In that blessed moment the ego of old Adam laid down in us and died, while the new creation man was conceived within the womb of our flesh. Corruption **put on incorruption!** Truly the resurrection had dawned within

our bosom. But our outer-man bodies saw no change. The spirit within, which first died in that long ago Eden, centuries before Adam's body died, has been quickened by the Spirit of life from God and caused to stand up from the realm of separation and death. We have experienced the resurrection of our spirit, and now there must follow the resurrection of our soul. We have experienced the standing up again of our spirit, and now the awakening and rising up of our minds, emotions, wills and desires into the mind, emotion, will and desire of Christ is taking place. Through the process of incorruption all the spiritual faculties that were lost in the fall of Adam are being restored to the elect by the operation of God. All that was lost shall be regained. It is more than merely coming to life again, it is the orderly restoration of the totality of our original state of being including all the mighty spiritual faculties, capacities, abilities, and all wisdom and knowledge. Such awesome powers do not belong in a mortal body, nor would we want an immortal body apart from those powers! That is why God has arranged that the final, ultimate, crowning event of this restoration will shed itself in the REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY. At that blessed moment we shall have *fully inherited* the Kingdom of God!

The spiritual world of the Kingdom of Heaven is a world with which we become familiar as we walk in the Spirit of God and experience more and more our union with the Father; a world so wonderfully real that all who once have had their eyes opened to it beg to remain within its celestial precincts, never more to return to the lowly estate and level of the natural man. It follows of necessity that man's being, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. A bird would need a mighty change to be able to live under the water, or a fish to live in the air; but the Lord promises a much more striking change to those who are predestinated to be manifested as the sons of God with power.

With what anticipation do we wait for this glorious manifestation! Meantime we are taught to believe: "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body..." This is not meant merely for revelation, to be left for the future; for the full development of our life in sonship we must seek to enter into it and appropriate it. We do this as we learn to triumph over death on every level. We do it as we learn to look to Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here and now victory over the terrible dominion sin has had in the body. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). We do it as we allow the powers of the coming age to possess us, and to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our hopes, and to anticipate here and now, the things that have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Sons of God! Seek after *incorruption* and *immortality*. Let this be the crown of your life in sonship. Do not seek immortality in your physical body first, or only, apart from incorruption in your thoughts, emotions, desires, ambitions, will, purposes, hopes, dreams, attitudes, and actions. Seek to live an *incorruptible life*, to walk an *incorruptible walk*, as that which will lead you to glory and immortality. Nothing will prepare you for immortality more than faithfulness in every step of putting on the MIND OF CHRIST. The experience of His power to make you holy, spirit, soul, and body, will quicken you to a power that shall not cease its work until the sin that causes death has been abolished in your being. As you seek to experience within yourself to the full, the power of HIS TRANSFORMING LIFE, your heart will be enlarged to see the position the sons of God have been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to them, and you shall for your part be

fitted to live worthy of that high and holy calling! Can you not see how it is that *incorruption leads to immortality*? Immortality is the ultimate end of the process of incorruption, just as human maturity is the end of the process of physical and emotional development.

This glorious realm of immortality that lies beyond the power of temptation, sin, limitation, sickness, sorrow and death belongs to the sons of God, but, blessed be God! it is likewise the hope of ALL CREATION. The creation itself shall be delivered from the **bondage of corruption** to begin its journey into the spiritual dimension of immortality in the Kingdom of God. Creation is not groaning for another revival, nor for another evangelistic campaign, nor for another healing campaign, nor for more gifts of the Spirit, nor for more apostles, prophets and teachers, nor for more signs, wonders and miracles, nor yet for 144,000 flaming evangelists just like Jesus when He walked the shores of blue Galilee. For two millenniums we have had revival after revival, healing upon healing, signs and wonders and miracles in abundance, New Testament Churches with their five-fold ministries, and none of them have ever brought forth the fullness of the Kingdom of God on earth, nor has even one of them or all of them together ever delivered the creation from the bondage of corruption! The creation continues to groan in its bondage and we ourselves, groan within ourselves, as we wait for the disclosing of our sonship — the redemption of our bodies! It is not another “patch-up” job we want, not a re-run of previous moves of God, but a full and complete and eternal deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of limitation, imperfection and death!

Jesus is the first of the firstfruits of this glorious victory. The sons of God are the firstfruits, redeemed from among men (Rev. 14:5). All creation is the harvest that follows. It was necessary that after having lived in the flesh and overcome all things, Jesus should be resurrected Himself by the power and glory of the Father, that He might be able then to minister even that resurrection life to a firstfruit company; that they, in turn, apprehending all that pertains to that life, might be able then to minister it to the rest of creation. For this creation waits expectantly!

Chapter 24

Except You Become As A Little Child

The eighteenth chapter of Matthew begins with these words, “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* And Jesus called a *little child* unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this *little child*, the same *is greatest in the kingdom of heaven*. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones...it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to *that man* by whom the offense cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into eonian fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that ye despise not one of these *little ones*; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of *these little ones* should perish” (Mat. 18:1-14).

The subject of this wonderful passage of scripture is WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? There are two characters in the divine drama. You find these two all the way through this teaching of Jesus. The two characters are directly involved in the answer to the question, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” Of these characters one is a child. The other is a man. The child is the greatest in the Kingdom. The man is so offensive that he ought to be drowned in the sea. These are the two characters — the *child*, and the *man*. The issue between these two is who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

There is no need to inquire who would *aspire* to being the greatest in the Kingdom. The very thought brings to mind the mother of the disciples, James and John. It was she who came to Jesus with her sons, and kneeling, worshipped Him and asked a favor of Him. Jesus asked her, “What do you wish?” She answered Him, “Give orders that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in your Kingdom.” Ah — what an audacious, ambitious and enterprising mother she was! Out of her fearless mother’s heart of love she was moved to seek the very highest positions in Christ’s Kingdom for her two beloved sons. Jesus did not flatly deny her the request. He did not tell her that her sons could never be the

greatest in His Kingdom. Jesus simply replied, “You do not realize what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink and to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? You will drink my cup, but seats at my right hand and my left are not mine to give, but they are for those *for whom they have been ordained and prepared* by my Father” (Mat. 20:22-23).

Perhaps you think as I have thought, that there was a bit of selfishness, perhaps even a liberal dose of ego, a spirit of “power grabbing,” and the desire for recognition and advantage on the part of this mother. But is the desire to be greatest in the Kingdom a wrong desire? Is it unethical or unspiritual? Is it a selfish, vain, conceited, power-mad, un-Christlike, reprehensible desire to be the greatest in the Kingdom? Not by any means! If your desire to be great in God’s Kingdom is a grasping after greatness *for greatness’ sake* — to make a name, to acquire a following, to dominate men’s lives, to control events, to issue orders and call the shots — then you can forget it. You will never be great in the Kingdom. Recently a sister shared with us about a man in a certain church who used to get up and say he’d be so glad when the sons were manifested, because then that neighbor of his would find out he was dead wrong about the boundary line between their two properties! If such childish carnality lies at the root of one’s desire for greatness in the Kingdom, matters not how persistently that one pursues it, it will escape him. It will be denied. God will never commit His almighty power into the hands of petty, self-serving bullies.

On the other hand, the blessed Holy Spirit gives us the qualifications for greatness in the Kingdom. He tells us what the spirit of greatness is. He reveals the nature and character of greatness. He delineates the marks of greatness within a man. He also assures us that there exists such a position of greatness in the Kingdom, and it is available to any who will pay the price. The Lord Jesus refers on a number of occasions to those who are *least* in the Kingdom. “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called *the least* in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:19). He also speaks of those who are *greatest* in the Kingdom. “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 18:4). There is that potential within each of us of winding up down the road somewhere in either of these two categories — the *least* in the Kingdom, or the *greatest* in the Kingdom.

Not a few saints are like the man who told my father one time, “I just want to make it to heaven. If I can just make it inside the gate, I shall be satisfied.” My father, a Pentecostal minister, responded, “I hate to disappoint you, my brother; but that space *just inside the gate* was taken up a long time ago!” Some people look forward to a “cabin in the corner of glory-land” while others will be satisfied with nothing less than a “mansion over the hill-top.” But there is a hope far greater than these, cherished within the hearts of a people who know the Lord in deeper measures. There is a place in the Kingdom, in the government of God, in the authority and dominion of the Christ, where the sons of God shall be empowered to be a blessing to every people and nation, yea, to all the vast creation of God forevermore.

Abraham Lincoln tells a marvelous story about a blacksmith who took a long, round bar and stuck it in the coals until it was red hot. Then he put it on the anvil where he hammered it flat to make a sword. When he was finished, he was most unhappy with it. So he put it back in the red hot coals and decided to broaden the flat part out a bit

and make a garden tool. He tried that, but it didn't please his fancy either. He put the bar back into the coals. He rounded it a bit again and then shaped it into a horse-shoe. This effort also failed miserably. As a last resort, he put the bar into the coals one last time. As he removed it from the hot fire, he wondered if there was anything else he could make from it. Deciding that there was nothing, he merely stuck it into a barrel of water. As it sizzled, he said, "Well, at least I made a fizzle out of it." God doesn't want to make a fizzle out of you, my beloved! His purpose is just this: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a special people, that you should set forth and display the virtues and excellencies of the wisdom and power of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). These words are meant for **you**. You are God's special people! You are a chosen generation! You are kings and priests, a royal priesthood! You hold in your life the power to shape the world and human history, to bring in a new order that shall alter the course of all creation! Do not settle for the fizzle — pursue the vision God has birthed within your spirit!

God is raising up a kingdom of priests, a kingly priesthood, to bless all the families and nations of the earth. This is one of the promises given in the long ago to that mighty man of faith, Abraham. How great were the promises made to Abraham! There were seven great and exceedingly wonderful promises given to him, enumerated in chapter twelve of Genesis. The first was, "I will make of thee a great nation." The second was, "I will bless thee." The third, "I will make thy name great." The word name carries with it the idea of honor, authority, and the character of the individual. God was saying to Abraham that He would make his honor to be great; his authority was to be great and even his character great. I will make thy name to be great. The fourth promise was, "Thou shalt be a blessing." The fifth, "And I will bless them that bless thee." The sixth, "I will curse him that curseth thee." Then the seventh was, "In thee shall ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." Not the families of Israel, nor the families of the Church, but ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH. In these precious promises God caused Abraham to understand that he was the beginning of something that was to be **world wide** and **all-inclusive**, not some insignificant local affair.

God promised Abraham that He would bless him. And when Melchizedek came out of the celestial realm that day, HE BLESSED ABRAHAM. Then the Lord said, "Thou shalt BE a blessing...in thee shall ALL families of the earth BE BLESSED." Hear it! Abraham was blessed...to **BE A BLESSING!** With reverence and godly respect I now tell you that you, dear reader of these lines, are included in these wonderful promises. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as to many; **but as of one**, and to thy seed, **WHICH IS CHRIST**" (Gal. 3:16). God made this promise, even this covenant, with two people only — with Abraham, and with the seed of Abraham, who was also God's Son, Jesus the Christ. With Abraham and his singular seed — WHICH IS CHRIST. God not only made this covenant with a man, Abraham, but He made it with HIS OWN SON. God had a witness in earth and a witness in heaven that He had made a covenant that through Abraham and His Son every family and nation would be blessed, and it was confirmed with an oath so that it could never fail. Oh, the wonder of it!

"And if ye be Christ's, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE" (Gal. 3:29). Never have words more pregnant with promise been uttered. Today, now, we are heirs according to that marvelous promise God gave to

Abraham and the Christ. We are heirs of every one of those seven covenants that God made with Abraham. We can take them all individually and apply them to ourselves and to the whole body of the Christ. They are both individual and corporate. To Abraham God promised a seed which would come to bless the whole earth, a seed through whom each and every person ever to see the light of day would be delivered and blessed. We see that seed begin to form in the preparation of a nation chosen and separated unto Himself. Long centuries afterward we behold Jesus of Nazareth, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, walking the length and breadth of that favored nation showing forth among its people the wondrous glory of His Father. God's infallible word declares Him to be the direct seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but the Son of God with power. Truly He was the promised seed, the seed of Abraham and the anointed Son of God, "thy seed which is Christ."

To the apostle Paul it was given to reveal how we, the elect redeemed of this age, are MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR OF CHRIST, so that we are the **Christ body** as Jesus is the **Christ Head**. The Head and body together form one Christ, the temple of God and the habitation of the Most High, for "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: SO ALSO IS CHRIST" (I Cor. 12:12). It is through this many-membered Christ that the promises to Abraham and his seed shall be gloriously fulfilled in their totality. All families and all nations of the whole earth **shall be blessed!**

"Even as Abraham believed God...know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, PREACHED BEFORE THE GOSPEL UNTO ABRAHAM, saying, IN THEE SHALL ALL NATIONS BE BLESSED" (Gal. 3:6-8). In this passage we see that God one day did some preaching. The almighty God with infinite care and wisdom laid the plans for the magnificent work He would do through Abraham and his seed. Then He told Abraham to attend a preaching service He was going to hold. Abraham was the congregation. It makes no difference where the service was to be held. God was the preacher and it would have been very wonderful to have been in the service. As God began to preach, He brought forth the Gospel or the GOOD NEWS and it was this: ALL NATIONS were to be blessed in Abraham!

It is the infallible proclamation of the omnipotent God — all the families and all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. Certainly they have all been kissed by God's wonderful sunshine and have drunk in the refreshing rain from heaven, but that is not what God is speaking of. He is pointing to a great manifestation and outpouring of God's grace and glory that still has not occurred — a time when God will speak to all, reveal Himself to all, redeem all, transform all and bless all. Not individuals, not the Church, but the NATIONS! A great and mighty move of God shall yet come in the earth that few men have even dreamed of, when the younger sons of God, the **Christ body**, having fully grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ, shall be manifested in all the fullness of the nature, wisdom, power and glory of God. In that day the whole creation shall be lifted from the bondage and night of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:18-23). What an exceeding great potential and responsibility is laid upon us in the promises to Abraham which we share!

A millennium after God blessed Abraham to make him a blessing, the word of the Lord came to the remnant of Abraham's seed, proclaiming, "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen...so will I save you, and YE SHALL BE A BLESSING: fear not, but let your hands be strong" (Zech. 8:13). Hear the heart of God in this statement: "Ye shall be a blessing." How important punctuation is! Should someone put a question mark behind this statement it would read, "Ye shall be a blessing?" And looking at ourselves, none of us are very important people in this world, we're just common, ordinary, mostly uneducated people; laborers, plumbers, farmers, electricians, mill workers, office workers, store keepers, barbers, housewives, mechanics, etc. The great ones of this world would look askance at us and incredulously query, "YE shall be a blessing?" But we know from the Lord God Almighty who made us, called us, revealed Himself to us, and has been actively training and preparing us through great and terrible dealings, that **weshall be a blessing**, indeed. So we put an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence, not a question mark. "**YE SHALL BE A BLESSING!**" I am sure that all of the Lord's elect, who follow on to know the Lord, cherish the precious promise that we are apprehended of God to be a part of that promised seed that shall bless all the families and nations of the earth. As we daily view the desperate needs about us, of family and friends, of the sinful, sorrowful, needy, sick and dying, oh! how we WANT to be a blessing! To be a blessing — what a promise that is! What hope is contained therein! But you don't just walk up to someone on the street and announce, "I'm your Blesser." First, we must BECOME. You shall BE... To "be" bespeaks a state of being. God is teaching us, preparing us, training us to truly BE blessers. We can only bless when we have BECOME THE BLESSING.

The Order of Melchizedek is an ORDER OF BLESSERS. In this divine Order there are no curses, no negation to be uttered, no vindictiveness, no judgment, but there is a ministry of blessing. This is far more than a doctrine to be received, a formula of words to be repeated, or a claim to be made; this is an expression of unconditional love and unrestrained compassion that flows from our spirit toward others until all the families and nations of the earth have been touched and healed and quickened by His all-conquering love.

I must mention the principle of the Melchizedekian Priesthood and the seed of Abraham in respect to blessing. We know that Melchizedek *blessed Abraham*. God had said to Abraham, "I will bless thee...and thou shalt be a blessing...in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." First Abraham was blessed, and then he could become a blessing. Blessed to BE A BLESSING! Oh, may the Spirit of God somehow burn this truth indelibly into our hearts. But there is also the realm where men bless in order to be blessed, giving in order to receive, giving and receiving again according to how they have given. "Give, and it shall *be given unto you*." "Blessed are the merciful, for *they shall obtain mercy*." "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should INHERIT A BLESSING." This is all true, and most "faith" and "word" people dwell there. But when the Holy Spirit begins to reveal that higher Order of Melchizedek within your spirit, a vast transforming change begins to take place in your understanding. Gone forever is the desire to give in order to receive, to be merciful so that in some future time you might receive mercy, or to bless with a view to being blessed. Henceforth we begin to see things as God sees them, and from this high and holy vista our purified desire becomes only to BE BLESSED that we may BE A BLESSING. It is *not* giving to receive, but *receiving to give*.

In the Order of Melchizedek **ALL THINGS ARE REVERSED**. Truly there is a changing, a reversing of all principles and laws in the *new order* which is being birthed in the sons of God. Our old ideas, teachings, conceptions, and desires are being upset and overthrown, and our old theology and methodology acquired in the religious systems of Mystery Babylon are fast flying out the window. The Spirit of the Lord quickens the yielded minds of those who wait before Him in this hour, the elect is being led in new and strange paths of the divine order of the Most High. So fear not, beloved child of God, to let go of the teachings and practices of yesteryear, for those were but the swaddling clothes of your BECOMING in God. God's apprehended ones are now moving into a dimension where there is higher understanding, higher laws, and higher reality. It must ever be kept in mind that every dimension functions by laws of its own, and so it is with the Melchizedekian Order. The first order of this sacred realm is BLESSING.

A divine work of transformation is now taking place within our minds. God is not dealing in this hour with outward manifestation, but He is probing deep into our being, to change the attitudes, thoughts, and desires of mind and heart. Thank God He is stripping away the masquerades and facades, purging and purifying, that we might be conformed to His image, changed into His mind, a partaker of His nature. We are challenged with our own development unto spiritual maturity, and therefore we have received a commandment to bless — not that we might receive anything in return — for we cannot truly bless another until it proceeds unselfishly and unmixed out of a pure heart — a genuine desire that they be blessed. Oh, for that purity of spirit, that complete deliverance from the “seed faith” mentality being peddled by the money-hungry preachers of this evil day that continually urges the people to **give** in order to **get** and to **bless** with the motive of **being blessed** a hundred fold in return. May the blazing heat of God's holy fire so transform our minds and hearts until every action can be thoroughly WITHOUT GUILE, no ulterior motive for whatever this might return to us for our own gain.

I do not hesitate to tell you that giving to receive again, planting with a vision to reaping a harvest, is a true principle in God, and it will work for you on that level, but it is *not* the law of the Order of Melchizedek. It is the law of a lower plane. Increase is the law of the realm of limitation, of want, of need, the in-part reaching forth to acquire more. But the priesthood of Melchizedek pertains to the realm of the unlimited, of His fullness, after the power of an endless or unbounded life. The priests of this order minister not from a sense of THEIR NEED, but out of the realization of HIS FULLNESS. This transformation of mind and attitude must take place in every son of God. These sons shall not do the will of their heavenly Father in the childish hope that He will **reward** them for it; but such lift up their voices in one accord with that blessed firstborn Son, saying, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I **DELIGHT TO DO THY WILL**, O my God: yea, Thy law is written in my heart” (Ps. 40:7-8).

Ah, my brother, my sister, is it your heart's desire to *be* a blessing? God is creating within us the insatiable desire to be a blessing, not only to our precious brethren, our children, our family, our friends, our neighbors, our city, state and country — but to be a blessing to the whole earth and to all creation. I want that. Oh, how I desire it! Now here is God's promise: “Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: **FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE**: and ye shall be unto me **A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS**,

and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6). I have often characterized this verse of scripture as the GREAT DIVINE SANDWICH. A sandwich is two slices of bread between which is placed meat, fish, cheese, or the like. Three items are necessary to make a sandwich, the two outer items — two identical pieces of bread — in between another, and different, item. Such is the structure of the scripture passage just quoted. There are two statements of like nature surrounding and enclosing another and different kind of statement. Notice the two outer statements: (1) *ye shall be* a PECULIAR TREASURE unto me above all people (2) *ye shall be* unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation. Then, “sandwiched” in between these two wonderful promises is this remarkable word: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE.

In the light of this scripture I would like to reaffirm something which the world at large, and many Christians, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD’S WORLD! “Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof” (Ps. 50:10-12). Moses said, “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is” (Deut. 10:14). God said to Job, “Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine” (Job 41:11). And David said, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). I will be the first to admit, however, that this world doesn’t look much like something that is owned by the great and good God! I look out over the world today and see demons stalking through the lands, with literally billions of people held in the prison houses of the dense darkness of false religions, worshipping idols, and devils, and the gods of superstition, tradition and fear. I look out over the world today and I see the spirit of strife and hatred and war, thousands dying daily at the hands of terrorists, and in bloody revolutions on earth’s battlefields. I look out over the world today and I see nearly two billion people still enslaved under the iron heel of godless, atheistic communism. It doesn’t look much like God’s world, but IT IS!

I look out over the third-world nations today and I see poverty and squalor and ignorance on an incomprehensible scale, millions of people starving to death, pitiful little children with protruding eyes and stomachs bloated from malnutrition, without hope in the world. I look out over the industrialized nations of the West today and I see untold millions of people bowing before the gods of humanism, secularism, and worshipping before the shrines of the gods of pleasure, sex, perversion, and debauchery. Fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are all a big joke, just something to laugh about on the sit coms, and glorified by Hollywood and the media. One thousand Americans are infected with venereal disease — not every year, not every month, not every week, not every day — but every hour! Ah, it doesn’t look much like a world that belongs to God, but IT DOES!

I look out upon our land today and I see millions of our children spaced out on drugs, angry at the world, hostile to parents and all authority, and out-of-joint with society. I see that evil teachings, incredible in their filth and degradation, have crept into our public schools on every hand, while God, prayer, and the Bible have been thrown out and openly ridiculed. I see a giant crime wave sweeping across our cities, rape is out of control, murder is commonplace, and no one is safe on our streets anymore. It doesn’t look much like a world that is the property of God, does it? But IT IS!

This present evil world is hideously marred by SIN. Let us make this thing more personal. Go with me to yonder hospital, and listen for just a moment to the cries and moans of the sick and suffering. See the red eyes wet with tears, and think of the bleeding hearts behind those tears as they carry that loved one away. Go with me to yonder prison, and see the young lives blighted and shriveled with sin, caged up like wild animals. Follow me now to yonder asylum, and listen to the unintelligible jargon of those poor, pitiable souls with their distorted reason and deranged minds, and the very walls seem to whisper the word —Hell! I can't really imagine how much a million is. A dollar a day since the birth of Christ would total only three-fourths of a million dollars. I can't imagine the suffering of a million people, let alone a billion or six and a half billion. Yet, that's the reality of today's world. Famine, storms, illness, fear, oppression, exploitation, poverty, hopelessness, sin and death, all that is the daily lot of billions of people. Doesn't look like a world that is owned by God, does it? But IT IS!

I believe that God passionately loves the world. It is my deep conviction, born of communion with my heavenly Father, that God now loves all lost men. There are lost men in jails and prisons and insane asylums. They are in saloons and brothels and in death and in judgment and in hell, and God loves them all. He still remembers them and remembers His Son on the tree, suffering and dying on their behalf. And in the redeemed body of this resurrected and glorified Son He now prepares with infinite wisdom and care a Royal Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek, a SON COMPANY, a KING COMPANY, a PRIEST COMPANY, to restore mankind into the image of God again. **"Because all the earth is mine**, ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!" Ah, that is the "divine sandwich" — One piece of bread is the promise, "Ye shall be unto me a special people." The second slice of bread is the promise, "Ye shall be unto me a royal priesthood." And the meat in between is the reason and purpose for the special people and the royal priesthood — **BECAUSE ALL THE EARTH IS MINE!** The earth, the world, and all they that dwell therein belong to God first because He made them, and second because He redeemed them.

In Romans 8:20 Paul, moved by inspiration, states that the whole creation groans for this "priesthood." I took the liberty of putting "priesthood" in there, but that's exactly what he's talking about. The whole creation groans for the **manifestation of the sons of God** for "the creation itself *also* shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). I see it. I see something stirring in the atmosphere. I see a people being taught of God, purged, purified, processed, perfected, overcoming, taking on the mind of Christ, transformed again into the image of God, taking their rightful places — sons and kings and priests unto their God! This people has received a vision of what they are destined to be in God, of what they are being prepared to do for creation. The message of the hope of sonship and the kingdom is going forth in power in this hour and circling the globe as multiplied thousands of the Lord's elect people are heeding the call. God is removing from the hearts of these the foolish desire to "fly away" to some far-off heaven somewhere, as He unfolds within their ransomed spirits the beautiful PURPOSE He has in His firstfruit company. The reality of a full and complete redemption in spirit, soul, and body, to be revealed in the sons of God, is so very near that we can see, hear, smell, taste and touch its powers.

Because all the earth is His, God is raising up a Royal Priesthood to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, but with an

outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, bringing the two together, that God may indwell men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate other men's lives, but to deal with them in judgment and mercy to break the power of selfhood, rebellion, sin and the devil, that men may be reconciled to God. Kings have power and authority over every enemy, priests reconcile in mercy and love. But once the reconciliation has been effected, and the Christ is enthroned, we shall deliver men up to God, even the Father, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL. That is the law of the Kingdom. We rule only to subdue men unto God — then GOD RULES IN THEM. That is the power and glory of the Kingdom of God! Oh, beloved, come, let us now open our hearts wide to Him. Come, and as we reverently consider this glorious ministry and its life-flow to all the families of the earth, let us yield ourselves unto God that He may work His wondrous work in our lives, that we become in nature and power His ROYAL PRIESTHOOD in the earth! The manifestation of the sons of God is nothing less than the full manifestation of God's fully developed and empowered body of king-priests after the Order of Melchizedek. Those apprehended unto this ministry are indeed A PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE.

If you desire to *be a blessing* in the ultimate of what that means, then you desire to be GREAT IN GOD'S KINGDOM! It is really very simple and powerful. The greater you are in the Kingdom, the greater your potential to *be a blessing*. You see, the President of the United States has a greater capacity to do good for people than does the local sheriff or the checker at Wal Mart. The higher you rise in this world into positions of ability, accomplishment, prestige, influence, finance and power, the greater your capacity to do good. If your heart is right, if your motive is pure, it is not wrong to desire to be the greatest in the Kingdom, for with that position comes the authority to bless. If I am least in the Kingdom I will not be nearly as effective on behalf of creation as the greatest in the Kingdom. To whomsoever much is given, much is required, and to whomsoever little is given, little is required, saith the Lord. The one who receives little of the Lord in the Kingdom can bless but little. When one's desire for greatness is rooted in the true purpose and the divine nature of greatness, then greatness is a legitimate aspiration. It will not be denied. The spirit that produces greatness is the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ who, though He was rich, became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

Now let us return to the two characters in our story. One of them is a child, who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. The other is a man, referred to as "that man," and that man is so offensive that he should be drowned in the sea. Now here is the mystery of the parable. Both of those characters are *in you* and *in me*. The man — who is so offensive and despicable that he ought to be drowned — you look at that man every morning in the mirror. He is the *natural man*, the *soulish man* who understands not the things of the spirit. He is the *outward man* who is perishing and the *carnal-minded man* who is enmity against God. This natural, soulish, carnal-minded, outward man is hostile to the spirit and offensive to the little child of the Kingdom. This man is self-centered. The characteristics of his nature are self-indulgence, self-appreciation, self-love, self-motivation, self-defense, and self-preservation. On the other hand, you need not look in the mirror to meet the little child who is the greatest in the Kingdom. This child cannot be seen with the natural eye. You must look deeper, into the very deepest part of your being; past the body, and on inward past the soul, into the very spirit itself — there you will find the child of

the Kingdom, the inner son, the seed of life, Christ in you. The little child is the *spiritual man* having the *mind of Christ* and bearing the *image of God*.

The issue is just this: WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? That's a loaded question, but when you ask Jesus you are going to get the right answer. "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The word converted means *changed*. Unless we are changed, Jesus says, and become like little children; unless we step out of the ego of the soulish man, and step into the humility of the Christ who humbled Himself and was made of no reputation, taking upon Him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient even unto death, we will have no place in the government of God. If we want to have a part in God's ruling government to bless the nations, we must humble ourselves and become like this little child. And if we do, not only will we be a member in God's government, but we can be the very GREATEST in that government. What a proposition that is!

That is just the opposite of man's ways. How many people today would vote for a child to be President of the United States? We don't want a child in the White House! We want a person of stature, a graduate of Yale or Harvard, a lawyer, business tycoon, or politician with experience, knowledge and skill. But Jesus says, "I'm forming a government. This government will be an international and universal government over all things. The blessings of this government will be life more abundant, with love, joy, peace, and righteousness upon all men everywhere. And the required prerequisite, the one and only qualification for participation in this government is to be *changed* and become as a *little child*. There is no position open to any who fail to meet this criterion. The implications of such a revolutionary concept is staggering to the imagination, and it is no small wonder that the carnal mind is totally void of the capacity to understand a principle so transcendental and sublime. But the implication it holds for those who meet its demands is beyond comprehension or even imagination. One thing must be very clear. Jesus did not say, "Be *childish*." He said, "Be *child-like*." There is a whole world of difference between *child-ish* and *child-like*. "Except you become *like* a little child."

Now, what does it mean to be *childish*? Children can be self-centered, selfish, and ungrateful; sometimes they throw temper tantrums, demanding their way; they may even bite and scratch when they're angry; they don't always think before they act; their bellies often control their behavior. Further, their eyes are often bigger than their stomachs; sometimes they take more than their share, and other times they take what doesn't belong to them. They can be disobedient, and with a face that could win an Academy Award, they can deny doing all of the above! Such behavior is childish. And how remarkably each of these characteristics reflects the behavior of nearly all of the **governments of this world!** In II Timothy, Paul describes childish people: selfish, irrational, immoral, manipulative, impulsive, crude, and cruel. Worst of all, they are without faith in God. Obviously Jesus would never say we should become childish. Such people have depraved minds and will be promptly rejected by God for any position of rulership in His Kingdom, for they cannot be His sons. Some terms that equate with childishness are immaturity, lack of experience, knowledge and understanding. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child," the wise man said.

On the other hand, what are the characteristics of *child-likeness*? Doubtless many of Jesus' listeners wondered how a person that was grown could become like a little child again, how one could throw away his knowledge, his experience, his habits, his ideals, his established accomplishments and become like a little child, and start out afresh to acquire a new store of ideals, principles and values. Many doubtless felt it was well nigh impossible, and many did not wish to try, for they did not wish to give up their pet desires and ways and their proud positions. To become like a little child was to become humble, as one who knew nothing and possessed nothing. Pride and self-seeking and every soulish attribute were to be put away. To become like a little child meant a revolution in the life and thought of the individual. Yet it was an absolute essential for rulership in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Child-likeness speaks of innocence, lowliness of mind, humility, unconditional love, trust and dependence; a child freely forgives, is unbigoted, teachable, inquisitive, impressionable, and pliable. Children are active wide-eyed explorers of ever-expanding horizons. They express simple, uncluttered feelings, thoughts, opinions, ideas and truths. The attitude of the little one who is greatest in the Kingdom is an attitude that sees all men through the eyes of God which are the eyes of love. The little one sees Christ in every man, is ever ready to believe the best about every person, and rejoices not at an evil report, but discerns the purpose of the Father in every thing.

This reminds me of the testimony I read once of a preacher in England many years ago. He wrote: The simplicity of childhood in regard to the things of God often shames us now. There rises to my mind as I speak one sweet little incident of a fortnight ago which did me great good. It was during a time when I was passing through a not very serious controversy, but which had found its way into the papers, and into the home of a certain clergyman of the Church of England. The father and mother were speaking of this incident over the breakfast-table. Their only child, a little girl, was present; she had never seen me, she had only heard my name from her father and mother, who are my friends. Presently in her childish treble, she asked whether Mr. Campbell was in trouble. They said, "Yes." "What is it?" "Oh, they are saying he is a bad man." "Is he a bad man?" she asked. Her father very stoutly and courageously answered that he was not; whereupon the little girl slipped down from the table and went away. They did not seek her or follow her. Presently she returned, and climbing back into her chair at the breakfast-table, said, "It is alright." "What is alright, my dear?" "About Mr. Campbell. I have told God about it. So that's settled." I think I can presume far enough on the tender-heartedness of fathers and mothers to say that when the letter of the parents of that child reached me, telling me of the incident, somehow I did feel as if it were alright. —end quote.

What, then, are the qualities of the child-like spirit? First of all, there is the *humility of the child*. It was really that which was uppermost in Jesus' thought when He told the disciples that they must become as little children. "Whosoever therefore shall *humble himself* as this little child..." These disciples looked on Jesus' Kingdom as a kingdom of this world and they were always concerned about who was going to have the biggest jobs and the highest places in it. A little child is not interested in position and prestige and rank. He is not interested in getting the seat of honor at a feast or the first place at some important political function. He would not be in the least worried if he did not get a seat on the platform at a public meeting. He just does not think of such things at all because he does not think of *himself*. It is only people who have a

high idea of their own importance who speak and act like that, vying for place and position. A little child, even a child celebrity, does not think himself important. **Humility is always the sign of a really great man.**

A second trait of childhood is *guilelessness*. The little child has not learned the slippery arts of a deceptive life. He has not become an expert in the craft of contriving schemes of ambition and advantage, and then throwing over them the aura of innocent simplicity. A child does not try to lead a double life, or appear as that which he isn't. It is not to children, but to adults, that the apostle writes: "Putting off all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envying and all evil speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:1-2). A third trait of childhood is *isteachableness*. How readily and implicitly a little child believes everything its parents or its teachers say! It waits not to doubt or debate, but unhesitatingly accepts every statement as truth. It will try anything it is told with all the fervor and diligence it can muster.

A fourth quality of the child-like spirit is *unconditional love*. The little child makes no bigoted calculations about the profit of living on terms of friendship with anyone. It does not reason itself into a state of friendship, and say, "I ought to love: therefore I will love." Race, color, creed or station matter not to a child in choosing friends. Children often love and adore even abusive parents. They love the unlovely. The child loves naturally, spontaneously, because it cannot help loving. Love is the characteristic impulse, trait and condition of childhood. And therefore childhood is the very best symbol as well as the absolute term of that heavenly Kingdom whose very scepter is Love. Happy the son of the Kingdom who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and all men and all creation with an uninhibited, unqualified love: for this is the nature and the law of the Kingdom of God.

A fifth trait of childhood is *trust*. Luke, in relating this incident of Jesus with the little child (Lk. 18:15-17), goes a little deeper by including *infants*! To that we should give some serious thought. Have you ever heard of babies biting their nails, worrying whether it will have a crib to sleep in? Have you ever heard one child say to another, "I wonder where our next meal is going to come from?" What about a little boy afraid that there won't be any fireman's jobs left? Or a little girl fretting that she won't qualify for a student loan in fifteen years? Small children do not worry about the future. They live for today, for today is always *their day*. They live by faith — faith in their parents. Mom and Dad will provide what is needed for today. They don't wonder whether their parents will make enough money to keep up with the Joneses. Clothes, food, cleanliness, safety, and shelter are important, but no child lives for these things. Sons of God live for their Father — not for things. Trusting little children are *pliable*. Sons of God come only to do the will of their Father. Whoever has a DETERMINED MIND OF HIS OWN cannot partake in the government of God. This suggests that we need to have our minds renewed, so that it does not function out of the knowledge systems of this world. It also implies that living in the Kingdom does not allow us any personal rights, but just as a little child is *totally subject* to its parents, so we are totally subject to our heavenly Father.

Suppose we were caught in a fire and could not get downstairs; suppose we were standing at a window; suppose it was quite dark and we could not see the ground. If a voice said to us, "Come on! Jump!" and we recognized that voice as our father's voice, would we hesitate because we could not see? Ah, we would know our father

would not let us down. That is not the way the son with a child-like spirit *ought* to feel about his heavenly Father — that is how the son with a child-like spirit *does* feel about his Father! The son of the Kingdom with a child-like spirit is in every situation and circumstance certain that God will guide him and direct him and order life for him according to His great plan and purpose. I do not doubt for one moment that *trust* is the first and greatest of all the conditions of entry into, and participation in, the government of God!

When these child-like qualities are inworked into our lives we become sons of God who with child-like innocence are lowly of mind, easy to be entreated; humble before God and man; unconditionally merciful, loving, and caring to all men; trusting explicitly the heavenly Father for all things and in all things; totally dependent upon the Father, knowing that of ourselves we can do nothing; forgiving one another and all men their trespasses, no matter how grievous, not imputing their trespasses unto them; unbigoted, unprejudiced, tolerant, and respectful toward every man of every race, color and background; spiritually inquisitive, not blinded or bound by static creeds, doctrines of men, or traditions of the elders; teachable, impressionable, obedient, and pliable in the dealing hands of God. My! My! My!

A farmer watched a bird building her nest in a heap of branches pruned from the apple tree beside the farmhouse. All day long the bird toiled; in the evening the farmer destroyed the work she had done —scattering the tiny twigs about and trampling them beneath his feet. The next day the bird, undaunted, began her building once again. Again at evening time her work was destroyed. Judged by the feeble standards of the bird, ignorant of all beyond the cycle of her instincts, the man was cruel and not to be called good. The third day she began her nest once more, but this time in the rose bush beside the kitchen door. In the evening the farmer smiled upon the bird and her work remained. Day after day she continued her cyclic round; the nest was completed; the eggs were laid and warmed beneath her bosom. But long before the time for hatching, the pile of branches from which she had been driven had been removed and burned. Had the farseeing farmer allowed the bird to have her way, all her nest, her little ones, and her hopes for the season would have been destroyed. She did not see beyond one summer; the farmer saw the end from the beginning. So our omniscient Father knows the end from the beginning, and the son who has submitted himself to the Father has received a new set of senses by which he learns to trust God in all things, even those which he cannot understand. Jesus said to His disciples, “What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter” (Jn. 13:7). The son with the child-like spirit has learned this lesson well and goes on in confident trust in Him who worketh all things after the council of His own will without question, concern or disquiet.

The Lord Jesus teaches us that if want to be great in the Kingdom, if our heart's desire is to be able to bless multitudes of people in significant ways and deliver groaning creation, these child-like qualities must be in us and abound. They must be the law of our life. When we are humble, growing, inquisitive, yielded, pliable, trusting, searching, and learning as we walk with God we **become that little child** who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. By these principles established as the nature of our being we are empowered to assume a role in the rule of God to be made salvation unto the ends of the earth. When we are able to fully *trust* God for all that we need; when we really *commit* our way and all that touches and enters our experience into His loving hands; when we follow on to *know* Him in all His glorious

fullness, as a child grows up knowing and learning everything from his parents: there is a release into our life of the inexhaustible riches of His grace and glory — the depth of His understanding, the vastness of His wisdom and knowledge, the purity of His nature, the omniscience of His mind, the justice of His ways, the unlimitedness of His love, the immeasurableness of His grace, the absoluteness of His authority, the omnipotence of His power, the fullness of His Spirit, the endlessness of His mercy, the bountifulness of His goodness, the incorruptibleness of His life and the unsurpassed splendor of His majesty.

As these powers are released into our life, we in turn become a channel for them to flow out to humanity. Such high and mighty purpose is certainly beyond the comprehension of the natural man and the carnal mind. The truth and wonder of it all solemnly teaches us how it is that in the glorious and wonderful wisdom of the heavenly scheme it is not in becoming *childish*, but by becoming *child-like*, that a person is able to attain unto greatness in the Kingdom of God.

In closing this thought I am moved to share these poignant words from brother Paul Mueller: “What a practical lesson for us! When we entered the kingdom by being begotten of the Spirit, we came as a little child. We came into the kingdom knowing little, with no background of experiences in the Spirit. As transgressors, we came into the kingdom just as we were, bringing nothing with us that might have hindered our entrance into His kingdom. Now the kingdom of God is coming into the earth in a greater way. And we must come into its greater glory as a little child. When we come as a child, we turn from the ways of the past. We leave past truths and doctrines behind. What was truth yesterday, during the church age, is either fulfilled, or is raised to a higher level, to be fulfilled by the Spirit in a greater way. Having come to the greater glory of the kingdom of God, as it is revealed in this new Day, we must come **AS** a little child. In spiritual reality we are starting over. As more mature sons of God we know the great truth that we grow spiritually by denying self. We grow spiritually by learning. And we can only learn by **becoming AS little children**. We have not yet attained unto all that God has for us, for we have much more to learn and experience of God and His kingdom. The apostle Paul was unquestionably one of the great spiritual leaders of his time. Yet, near the end of his life, he said, ‘Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and **reaching forth unto those things which are before**, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 3:13-14). Those who really see this new Day and the greater glory of the kingdom of God are truly ‘forgetting those things which are behind, and **reaching forth unto those things which are before**.’ They are pressing toward ‘the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ Keep pressing on, saints of God! The prize of the high calling of God in Christ is not far away!

“When the kingdom of God even more fully comes to the earth, the anointed word of the Lord declares, ‘The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; **and a little child shall lead them**. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp (an adder or poisonous viper), and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ (a similar poisonous viper) den’ (Isa. 11:6-8). What a wonderful change shall take place as the reign of Christ transforms every living creature. And ‘**a little child**,’ which is the comparatively small manchild

company or the elect remnant, shall lead them into the fullness of the kingdom of God. Then, the peace and harmony of the kingdom of God shall prevail among all creatures everywhere. And every word declared by our Father shall be completely and totally fulfilled.

“May the Lord help us all understand the vital importance and significance of our present walk with God. As we walk this kingdom pathway, being led of the Spirit to make the transition from the old age to the new, we are thereby marking out a clear path to the kingdom of God for the rest of the creation to follow. We are indeed that **‘little child’** that is leading the whole creation into the greater fullness of the kingdom of God. Our **‘greater works’** ministry is a sure work of the Spirit. It is unseen by the carnal-minded, but it is leading the creation to a glory that shall ultimately be fulfilled in due time. The **‘little child,’** or this corporate, Christ-man, shall bring righteousness, peace and justice to the mountain of the Lord, which shall then flow down to the whole creation, making it all new by the sovereign power of our mighty King of kings and Lord of lords” — end quote.

Chapter 25

Except You Become As A Little Child

(continued)

Before beginning this Study it would be beneficial to each reader to refer to the previous Study, or your Bible, and rehearse our background scripture, Matthew chapter eighteen, verses one through fourteen.

The subject of this wonderful passage of scripture is: WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? There are two characters in the divine drama. You find these two all the way through this teaching of Jesus. The two characters are directly involved in the answer to the question, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” Of these characters one is a child, the other a man. The child is the greatest in the Kingdom. The man is so offensive that he ought to be drowned in the sea. These are the two characters — the *child*, and the *man*.

Both of these characters reside *in you* and *in me*. The man — who is so offensive and despicable that he ought to be drowned — you look at that man every morning in the mirror. He is the *natural man*, the *soulish man*, the *outward man*, and the *carnal-minded man*. This man is hostile to the spirit and offensive to the little child of the Kingdom. This man is self-centered. The characteristics of his nature are self-indulgence, self-appreciation, self-love, self-motivation, self-defense, and self-preservation. The *soul* is self, and self is the soul. The soul is man’s personality apart from the spirit. Soul and body in union constitute *the flesh*. Therefore, this man is the earthy, fleshly man. You can look this man in the eye across the table or in the mirror. You need not look in the mirror, however, to meet the little child who is the greatest in the Kingdom. This child cannot be seen with the natural eye. You must look deeper, into the deepest part of your being; past the body, and inward past the soul, into the very spirit itself — there you will find the child of the Kingdom, the inner son, Christ in you. The little child is the *spiritual man* having the *mind of Christ* and bearing the *image of God*.

In this Study we take up at verse five. “And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me” (Mat. 18:5). What a tremendous statement that is! If you receive even one person who has that child-like relationship with the Father, you receive the Lord Christ Himself. And we know that when we receive Christ we also receive the Father. Luke’s Gospel says it this way: “Whosoever shall receive *this child* in my name receiveth *me*: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth *Him that sent me*” (Lk. 9:48). It should be obvious to any who meditate upon these words that when one receives Christ he receives the Father, for the Father is in the Son. In like manner, when one receives the *little child* he receives both Christ and the Father.

Someone says, “Well, I don’t know that I know a little child like that whom I can receive in that way, so that I receive both the Father and the Son simply by receiving him.” Let me put in a way where you can grasp the eternal truth of it. When you *become* that little child, the Father and the Son dwell in you. And when you make yourself available in this world as the temple of God, as a vessel through whom the anointing and the wisdom and the life and the power and the glory of God flow — when you make yourself available on that level as a king-priest — let me assure you, precious friend of mine, there are vast multitudes of people that will hasten with expectation to drink from that fountain which you are. They will receive you and drink from you when you come as that little child that is greatest in the Kingdom with a flow of Life, Light and Love; and receiving you and drinking of you they partake of both the Father and the Son who are in you. The little child is the ultimate conduit for the life of God to flow out into creation. The one through whom God flows unreservedly and unconditionally is the person who is the **greatest in the Kingdom!**

In Matthew chapter twenty-five there is that wonderful teaching of Jesus about the *nations* being divided as sheep and goats at His right hand and His left. Of the sheep it is said that the Lord was hungry, and they gave Him meat; He was thirsty, and they gave Him drink; He was a stranger, and they took Him in; He was naked, and they clothed Him; He was sick, and they visited Him, and in prison, and they came unto Him. The goats, of course, failed to do any of these things. The sheep asked, “When did we see you and do any of these things unto you?” Then the Lord answers them, saying, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the *least of these, my brethren*, ye have done it unto *me*.” Through many years I have heard a great many sermons on this passage of scripture — especially *missionary* and *fund-raising* sermons! We have been told of the starving children in India, the impoverished masses in Africa, the drunk in the gutter, the homeless on the streets, the orphans, the run-aways, the drug addicts, the prisoners and the sick and dying in the hospitals. Impassioned pleas have been made for money to support programs to minister to all these people, to help the needy, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, rehabilitate the drunks and addicts, and preach the gospel to the heathen. And with reference to all these desperately needy ones the scripture has been pressed upon us, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto **ME**.” The notion is that if you give a dime to a bum, a dollar to the homeless, a meal to a starving child, or some used clothing to the missionary barrel, you are ministering to Christ Himself. Let it be thoroughly known and understood by every man and woman who names the name of Christ — **we ought to do those things!** And more. That is the gospel in action, and it is certainly the love of God in manifestation. We are commanded to pray for all men, do good to all men, and bless all men. None can deny that. But — that’s *not* what Jesus is talking about!

The remarkable words of Jesus are, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of one of these, **my brethren**, ye have done it unto me.” The subject is not the starving in India, the poor in Africa, the drunk in the gutter, or any other sinner in the world. The subject is the LORD’S BRETHREN. These brethren of the Lord are members of the Christ-body, kings and priests in His Kingdom, participators in the government of God. *That* is the issue. It’s about how the people of the *nations* act in respect to the *Lord’s brethren*, not how Christians act in respect to the needy in the nations! The preachers, as usual, have it backwards. “And before Him shall be gathered all NATIONS: and He shall separate them (the nations) one from another, as a shepherd

divideth his sheep from the goats.” The nations who respect, assist, bless and minister to the Lord’s brethren in the Kingdom are set at the right hand of the King to receive the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God. Those who hate, mock, resist, persecute or ignore the Lord’s brethren are set at the left hand of the King to receive the purification of judgmental fire. The way the nations will be dealt with relates precisely to their response to the sons of God, the “least” of His brethren, the “little child” who though humble, meek, unassuming, unpretentious, and esteemed as the least of all is, nevertheless, THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to *that man* by whom the *offense* cometh!” (Mat. 18:6-7). I would draw your attention to the words, “Woe unto **that man**.” Earlier I pointed out that there are only two characters in this teaching of Jesus, the “little child” and “that man.” Everything is summed up in these two personalities. Now the Lord explains that whoever shall offend one of these *little ones*, it would be better for that man to be drowned in the sea. “Woe unto the *world* because of offenses...woe unto *that man* by whom the offense cometh!” Can we not see by this that the *world* is *that man*! That man is the man of this present world, the natural man, the soulish man, the fleshly man. He is the man of human reasoning, soulish logic, carnal understanding and worldly wisdom. And this is the man who *offends* the little one!

What does it mean to “offend”? Have you, dear brother, precious sister, ever been offended? To the modern mind offend means to speak a word or commit an act that creates resentment, anger, hurt feelings, or bitterness. If I offend someone, usually I can discern that they are offended by their demeanor, response or actions. They may have a “hurt” look on their countenance, eyes flashing with anger, bitterness in their words, or coldness in their actions. Offense is a matter of the feelings, the emotions. “You stepped on my feelings, you said something I didn’t like, you did something I don’t appreciate, you didn’t do something I expected, and that hurts me — I’m offended.” So I pout, thrust out my bottom lip, put a scowl on my face, and if I see you coming down the street I will cross over to the other side and pretend that I’m window shopping so that you won’t know that I know that you’re passing by. You see, I’m OFFENDED! My feelings are hurt, so I throw a pity-party. But I have news for you, my friend. When we throw a pity-party, God doesn’t show up. Nor do the sons of God show up! The sons of God are not offended after the manner of the natural man. But that kind of offense is not what Jesus is talking about. He’s not saying, “But whosoever shall hurt the feelings of one of these little ones, it were better for him that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.” The ways of God are not petty or trivial. If you’re the greatest in the Kingdom your feelings are going to be quite stable, in fact. God is not fickle and those who walk in His nature and bear His image are not fickle, either.

The word “offend” is from the Greek SKANDALIZO meaning “to trip, to snare, to cause to stumble, or cause to fall.” If a man comes to the little one, that child of humility and yieldedness to the Lord, who is guileless, pliable, obedient, and trusting — if a man comes and does something so deceitful, so crafty, so drastic, and so detrimental that it trips that little one, snares him, causing him to stumble and fall, turning him aside from his journey into the fullness of God — **woe unto THAT MAN!** That is the man who is so offensive that he should be drowned in the sea! And let

me say to every one reading these lines —that man is not your boss; he is neither your husband nor your ex-husband, your wife nor your ex-wife; he is not your mother-in-law; he is not your neighbor; he is not your meanest enemy. No — that man is the *natural man*, the *soulish man*. May I say it another way — he is *your* natural man, *your* fleshly man, *your very own* carnal mind! We have found the culprit and *he is us!* That man lies within each one of us. Our own natural reasoning, our own human logic, our own carnal desires, our own will, emotions, ways, plans, hopes, ambitions, and designs point the finger at us, crying, “*Thou art the man!*” That is the man who is always seeking to trip, snare, and cause this little one to stumble and fall. Out of the heart of that man springs the whole world system of things. Everything in this natural realm is set against the life of the spirit. The world system moves along lines and upon principles that are contrary and opposed to the mind of Christ and the ways of the Father. Woe unto THAT MAN!

Go with me now into that long ago when Jesus walked the dusty trails with His disciples. He had asked the twelve 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 figure this out by yourself, Peter. You didn’t reach this conclusion by human 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 Barjona!”

Only minutes later Jesus began to introduce to these disciples the subject of His coming suffering and death on the cross. This was an unsettling and disturbing possibility for these men, for they had all their hopes fastened upon Jesus and all their fortunes invested in Him. They had forsaken all to follow Him because they were convinced in their heart of hearts that He was indeed the Messiah, the King of Israel. Was He not the Son of God? Did not He come to liberate their nation from the yoke of Roman tyranny and establish a great and glorious Kingdom? Were not they, the disciples, to reign with Him in that Kingdom? And now their King announces that He is going down to Jerusalem to be despised, hated, mistreated, yea, to suffer and *die!* Then Peter, who had just been pronounced *blessed*, took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, “No way, Lord; that can’t be. We won’t allow it to be! We will fight to the death to defend you and see that your mission is accomplished.” 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 *offense* 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 Christ’s identity, the one called blessed, the one to whom the Lord had just given the keys to the Kingdom of 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, **SATAN!**” 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!” Our carnal mind is no better than Peter’s. But Jesus replies, “Get thee behind me —

SATAN!” And our Lord was not merely on a name calling spree, nor was He retaliating out of hurt feelings or fleshly anger. He never uttered words in vain, without a definite meaning. Jesus did not speak merely to Satan *in* Peter, nor did He say to Peter that His words *sounded* like the words of Satan. He didn’t say, “Get thee behind me Satan, because you’re full of devils.” He didn’t say, “Get thee behind me Satan, because you talk to the dead,” or, “you’re an ax-murderer.” There was no gross sin — just this explanation: “Get thee behind me Satan, for thou art an OFFENSE unto me: for (because) thou savorest not the things that be of God, but **those that be of men!**” The problem was that Peter spoke out of his natural man, his soulish man. He SPOKE AS A **MAN!** “Get thee behind me Satan — you who think and speak like **a man!**” Was 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).

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 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 compatibility between 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, 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 and good logic of Self is the cunning mind of the Serpent. And Self is — **THAT MAN!**

Have you ever considered that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, could be *offended*? Do you think that means that Jesus’ feelings were hurt, or that He was greatly disappointed in Peter? Do you suppose that Jesus went out and threw a pity-party? Do you think maybe Jesus “snubbed” Peter for a few days? Isn’t that how people act when they are offended? But that’s not what it means! Armed with the understanding that “offend” in the scriptural sense means to trip, snare, stumble, cause to fall or turn aside, how clear it is that Peter was trying to turn Jesus aside from the path Father had marked out for Him. Peter’s logic would have caused Jesus to stumble and fall from His child-like walk wherein He was completely yielded, one hundred percent pliable, and totally obedient to the Father’s plan and purpose, though it included deep suffering and the agony of the cross. Peter’s suggestion was of an *alternative* pathway to the throne, just as the devil had propositioned Jesus in the wilderness. Peter was Satan, an adversary, whose kind and well-meaning counsel would have aborted the whole redemptive work of the Christ. Peter was an OFFENSE!

Each of us faces this same test, and we meet it every day. The test is just this: Will we do things God’s way, or, do we do them, in the words of the song, “My way.” *God’s* will can only be done by the *little child*. *Our* will is done by *that man*. That man who does things “his way” deserves to be drowned in the depths of the sea, for he is an offense to the little child who treads the path of the Kingdom. This is why discernment is so important in the life of a son, and all things, even prophecy, must

be *judged* — the spirit of man can even enter into and pollute a prophetic word. For example, several years ago the Lord spoke to me clearly and powerfully that I should stay home and give myself to writing. Every year we receive numerous invitations from all parts of the country to speak to various groups, churches, seminars, conventions, etc. For many years we traveled extensively throughout the United States and abroad. I love to travel. I love the body of Christ, and enjoy fellowshiping with, and ministering to, the elect people of God. And, believe it or not, it would be a lot easier to be on the road than to maintain the schedule we have to keep with the writing ministry.! The Father requires us to give ourselves personally to answering our mail, and overseeing each of the various operations involved in sending out many thousands of articles and books. The burden to put into print a number of truths never before penned (by me) or published intensifies within my spirit. To comply with this vision requires our total and undivided energies. Heretofore we tried to accommodate the brethren who have pressed us to come and minister at their gatherings, crowding meetings into our already busy schedule. But on Monday morning we would stumble into our office tired, bleary-eyed, and exhausted to begin another week of ministry to thousands of saints through the written word. Finally the message penetrated, bringing the deep and clear conviction that we must not accept any further out-of-town speaking engagements, except on those infrequent occasions when Father Himself directs us to go here or there. We miss seeing many of our precious friends across the country, but the reward expresses itself in a flow of revelation truth from our pen unhindered by conflicting concerns.

My point is just this. No sooner had the Spirit of God settled the issue in my heart, when every traveling ministry that passed through El Paso prophesied to me, “Yea, my son, thou shalt travel more than thou hast ever traveled!” And sometimes they prophesied this to me just before their next Convention! I am not joking — brethren have tried to “prophesy” me to their churches and gatherings. This is why Paul wrote, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other *judge*” (I Cor. 14:29). *All* prophecy stands to be judged. If I tried to do everything people prophesy to me, my life would be total confusion. One brother said to me once, “Bro. Eby, the Lord shows me that you’re going to Alaska.” I replied, “Well, praise God, brother, if I ever go to Alaska, *it will be the Lord!*” No offense to our precious brethren in Alaska, it’s a wonderful state — I just don’t like cold weather! It gives me no joy to find it necessary to say these things, but to my utter grief I find that there are a lot of the Lord’s people running around today, saying, “Thus saith the Lord,” or, “the Lord told me this,” or, “the Lord showed me such and such,” when the Lord has said nothing. Have you never been in a service where someone stood up and prophesied out of their own mind and heart, out of their own desires or emotion? Flesh touched the gift of prophecy and perverted it. The shabbiness and shallowness of modern day prophecy too often stands in the weakness and humanity of **that man**. And sometimes it can be an **offense**, designed to trip, snare, cause to stumble or fall, to turn one’s feet away from the will of God. Let no one misunderstand me. We are always open to allow Father to speak to us through writings, ministries, prophecies, or any other avenue, but these must bear witness with our spirit and confirm the stirrings of the Spirit within our hearts. We cannot alter our course just because someone tells us that God has told them something for us.

In twenty-seven years of publishing Kingdom Bible Studies, having mailed out, free of charge, well in excess of a million papers and books, we have never solicited funds in

any meeting or by mail. The Lord dealt with us many years ago never to ask for money or even mention any needs, great or small. And, of course, we have nothing to sell! We are forbidden by the Holy Spirit to put a price on any word of God, or even to “suggest” the amount of a “free will offering” to cover the costs. We neither judge nor condemn our brethren who do those things, for every man stands or falls to his own Master, but this has been the dealing of the Lord in our lives. We have been called upon to trust God completely and explicitly without any manipulation. The “closet” principle has been tried, tested, and proven in our walk and we have found that it works! Through these years, though the expenses have been great, we can testify that every bill has been paid each month, and sometimes God blesses with an overflow! At other times we have had to tighten our belts, but I bear witness that we have never gone hungry or defaulted on a payment. Great is HIS faithfulness!

Then the Lord gave us a further word. He instructed us never to use our mailing list to promote any kind of business proposition. We could never become involved in any financial venture or multi-level marketing program, and use our brethren who love us and support this ministry, to draw them, because of their confidence in us, into some financial scheme whereby we would profit monetarily. The word of the Lord was emphatic — we could *never* do such a thing. It’s not that we could not participate in any business program, it’s just that the Lord has prohibited us from *using our brethren* or our *mailing list* to promote it.

How many times do you suppose we’ve been tested on that? I’ve lost count! Friends have tried to enroll us. Brethren have pressured us. And, of course, offers come almost daily in the mail. Just recently a dear sister sent information about a unique money-making program, and as I scanned it I could immediately perceive the vast potential that it held. At once the thought presented itself in my mind, “Wow, if I would just send this out to everybody on the mailing list, probably within a year or two I could retire!” And not only would we have been blessed, undoubtedly it would have blessed a number of people on our mailing list! So — what could be wrong with that? As soon as the thought came I had to turn, just as Jesus did to Peter, and rebuke that wily devil — “Get thee behind me, Satan: you’re an *offense* unto me!” You see, God told us how to finance this ministry — by prayer and faith — and such ideas and schemes savor not the things that be of God, but those that be of *men*. Time and again I have heard the voice of **that man!** The thought that I could bless both my brethren and myself was a kindly thought. It was a good sentiment. It might even appear to be *spiritual*. What was wrong with it was that it was a product of Self, it emanated from human sympathy and greed, not from the heart of God. Worst of all, it was opposed to the mind of God and contradicted the revealed will of God. It was an *offense!* It was a snare to trip me into *disobedience* which, simple as it is, could, as with Moses, KEEP ME OUT OF THE PROMISED LAND. **That man** was an offense to the Spirit-led **little child** in me. Both of these personalities were right there within me! And they are both in you today, my friend. The Spirit of God is even now causing some who read these lines to make the application of this feeble illustration in your own life. You know where the area is that that man is an offense to the little child of the Kingdom. And you will deal with that man when you clearly understand that he deserves to have a millstone hung about his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea! The issue is crucial, for that man is an offense to the little child destined to be greatest in the Kingdom of God.

“Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot *offend* thee, cut them off and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into hell fire. And if thine eye *offend* thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire” (Mat. 18:8-9). For many years I read this passage of scripture and it was a complete enigma to me. I heard a number of explanations, but none of them spoke to my spirit. I read what the Commentaries have to say, but that didn’t satisfy.

The deepest desire of my heart is to bring the power of the everlasting word of God to bear upon all our lives that we may be able to see with all saints what is the height and depth, and the length and breadth, of the wisdom of God. Let the word of God not be a dead letter but a quickening spirit that we may be, one and all, conformed to the image of Christ. The scriptures certainly do not teach or condone *self-mutilation*. Can we not see by the spiritual eye that the hands, feet and eyes that offend us are most often the hands, feet and eyes of **that man**, the natural man, the soulish man **within us**. That man with all his self-motivated actions must be severed from us, member by member, if necessary. I think David Wilkerson hit the nail on the head when he wrote: “It is a rebuke against self-effort. *It’s all about our helplessness!* The Lord is saying, ‘If your hand tries to work out your problem — that is, if you’re taking matters into your own hands — *then stop immediately!* If your feet run around desperately trying to solve your trouble, *then stop running!* If your eye looks to something or someone else for help — a man or woman who you think may be the answer to your prayer — *then by all means, stop looking and pluck out that type of thinking immediately!*’

“I used to do these very things in Teen Challenge. A man once donated a house to our ministry, and we sold it to help buy a building in Brooklyn. About six months later, I was in deep financial trouble —we needed about \$5,000. I sat in my office, thinking, ‘Whom shall I call?’ Suddenly, in my mind’s eye, the man’s name appeared, and I thought: ‘He gave us a house worth \$55,000!’ I told my associate, ‘Call him on the phone. We’ll get our \$5,000!’ Ten minutes later, my co-worker came back with his head down. He said, ‘I’ve never been so chewed out in my life.’ Then, instead of getting on my knees, I said, ‘Surely, there’s somebody else who can help.’ I wasn’t praying — *I was thinking!* Oh, how it hurts God when we keep looking for a person or something else to solve our problems! We go around with our hands, feet, and eyes searching for answers — but God is saying, ‘Cut it out! Stop it! **It is an offense!**’ Jesus makes it clear that there are serious consequences when we try to make things happen without relying on Him. ‘What?’ you say. ‘Do I have to pray about everything? Do I have to depend on God for all?’ Yes! That is the humility of a child! It means spending the rest of your life saying, ‘**It’s better to live totally dependent on the Lord than to be cast into the fire trying to do it on my own!**’ I see such shrinking back among many today. They have no faith; they do not abandon themselves to God’s care. They see themselves as helpless, forsaken, abandoned children. They have not cast themselves upon the Lord, saying, ‘Yes, I’m helpless — but I’m a son of Almighty God!’” — end quote.

This truth applies as well on another level. We are all members of the body of Christ. Just as the body is a unity and yet has many parts, and all the parts, though many, form only one body, *so also is Christ*. By one Spirit have we all been baptized into one body. The body does not consist of one limb or organ but of many. If the foot

should say, "Because I am not the hand, I do not belong to the body," would it be therefore not a part of the body? If the eye should say, "Because I am not the ear, I do not belong to the body," would that make it not a part of the body? God has placed and arranged each of the members in the body as it has pleased Him and with the best adaptation. Collectively we are Christ's body and individually we are members of it, each part distinct, each with his own place and function. Not only are we all the members of Christ, we are also *members of one another!* As an individual member of the body, you may serve as my "ear" or my "hand" or my "foot" or something else.

What I am about to say may sound drastic to some, but let us hear the voice of the Spirit and consider the words of Jesus in the light of the body of Christ. "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, or with one eye, than having two to be cast into hell fire." Please read these words with all diligence and prayer, that the Holy Spirit may apply its truth as a cleansing purifying soap to cleanse us all as we press our way into the Kingdom of God. If the present form of the body of Christ is the end of your hope, then you will despise the words I now write. But if you are of those who cherish a hope in Christ *above and beyond* the present church order, you will hear and understand by the Spirit and rejoice with exceeding great joy.

The hand that holds the pen with which I am now writing is not my true hand. The feet that walk the streets of El Paso are not the feet of which Jesus speaks. My eyes which beheld with wonder this morning the beauty of the dawn are not the eyes that offend and should be plucked out. The physical is not the realm where the truth and the power of Jesus' teaching should be applied. The true body members of those who believe on Christ are the MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. Someone is quick to retort, "Now wait a minute, brother Eby, that doesn't sound right. Do you mean that if my brother in Christ is a foot, or if my sister is a hand, or if another is an eye, I am to cut that one off, and cast him from me?" If he **offends you — YES!**

Hear my heart. I'm not talking about if your brother hurts your feelings, gossips about you, falsely accuses you, cheats you, mistreats you, or does something you don't condone. That's not the issue at all. The issue is **offense**. If one would trip you, lay a snare for you, cause you to stumble and fall, or turn you aside *so that you miss the Kingdom* — even if that one is your brother — CUT THAT ONE OFF! It is better for you to lay hold upon the power and glory of the incorruptible life of Christ without that one's contribution into your life, than to fall short because of his influence and be cast into the fiery, purging, purifying judgment of God. Nothing — not even your brother in Christ — must prevent you from growing up into your sonship or keep you from possessing your inheritance. The stakes are too high. The issue is too critical. If anyone by carnal wisdom, fleshly zeal, false doctrines, powerless traditions, worldly methods, man-made programs and promotions, or religious guile would turn you aside from following the Lamb to mount Zion and fulfilling the high purposes of God in your life — separate that person from you. That is precisely what it means.

The Lord is not talking about condemning your brethren, assuming a holier-than-thou attitude, exhibiting an ugly spirit toward them, hating them, mistreating them, or damning them. He is talking about raising up a barrier between your forward walk in God and their walk so that you are not turned aside from God's purpose in you. You

see, my beloved, you cannot cut any man or woman off from Christ and it is utterly impossible for anyone to cut you off from Christ. No bishop, board, organizational hierarchy, church or saint can excommunicate anyone from the body of Christ. Ah — they can certainly excommunicate you from an organization or denomination, from a man-made religious system, even from their love and fellowship, but *not from Christ*.

We must love every man, especially those who are of the household of faith. I do love them. I love them every one. I pray for them all. I care for them all. I yearn after them more deeply and fervently than they could ever imagine. I ask God's blessing upon them all without partiality. I want only God's best for every believer in Jesus Christ, irrespective of their level of spiritual development, or what doctrines or religious systems they are involved with. But I cannot walk with many of them. I cannot join myself to them in their childish traditions and carnal institutions. I cannot partake with them at their table of static creeds and man-made doctrines. I cannot participate with them in their empty rituals and ceremonies. I cannot be involved in their grandiose schemes and soulish promotions by which they imagine to save the world. Their insipid vision of joining the church and waiting to die and fly away to that bright glory-world above has nothing in common with the beautiful hope of sonship and the revelation of the Kingdom birthed within my ransomed spirit by the quickening breath of my Father in heaven. Their expositions, sermonizings and homilies, their activities, meetings, and projects, their hopes, aspirations and goals hold nothing for me in the light of the glory to be revealed in us. Such high and glorious purpose is certainly beyond the comprehension of the natural man or the carnal mind. "That man" knows nothing of God's eternal purpose and is an offense to it and to all who would lay hold upon it. The truth and sacredness of the high calling of God in Christ only begins to dawn within the consciousness of a saint of God when the spirit of wisdom and revelation bursts upon our quickened spirits giving us a glance behind the scenes into the glorious and wonderful fullness of our Father's great and heavenly plan. "That man" *within our brethren* is altogether as offensive to the little child of the Kingdom as is "that man" *within us*. Anything *within me* that would detrimentally affect my progress in the Kingdom must be **cut off**. Anything that proceeds from "that man" in any person or movement must be put away from us. It must be cast from us as a menstrous cloth is cast from a woman. Anything that would hinder our growth and development into Christ must be severed. Anything that would prevent us from becoming the king-priests that shall bless the nations and deliver creation must be separated from us.

I must say today to every Christian who walks as "that man," just as our Lord said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." When it comes to my quest after the Kingdom of God I do not receive input from "that man." I receive not the counsel of the Pope, nor the opinions of the theologians, nor the authority of the denominations, nor the vision of the Charismatics, nor the hope of the Pentecostals. Neither do I receive the testimony of any man or movement, even if he calls himself "kingdom" or "sonship" or by any other label, when he seeks to lead me in any direction other than **the voice of the Son of God**. Although I love and respect all of the Lord's people, that is why I am not pastor at First Baptist, rector at St. Michael's, or elder at First Pentecostal Church. I'm not there because I can't do things their way. I am called to do things my Father's way. If they are my foot, I have cut them off. If they are my eye, I have plucked them out. There's a break, a division, a separation. Their input into my life does not help me on my journey or contribute

anything to the vision of God. It would, in fact, derail and destroy the call of God in my life. Are they people of God? Certainly! Do they love God? Absolutely! Are they very busy trying to do the will of God? Undoubtedly! But they still *think like men*.

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven *their angels do always behold the face of my Father* which is in heaven” (Mat. 18:10). For centuries there has been a world of carnal-minded preaching from this text. First, it has been said that every person has a guardian angel. I do not deny it. I believe there are guardian angels. Is it not written, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them” (Ps. 34:7). I am not of the opinion, however, that Jesus is talking about guardian angels when He says, “their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” Most people conceive of every sweet little child having a guardian angel who as a spirit being is able to see the face of the Father in heaven.

Another interpretation is that the “angel” is the very spirit of the little child, and that when a child dies, his spirit goes to heaven, where it abides in the presence of the heavenly Father. That is a beautiful and sentimental thought, and probably true, but it has nothing to do with the child-like one who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven! May God deliver us from *childish interpretations* and impart to us all *achild-like spirit* of understanding. The word “angel” in both Hebrew and Greek means **messenger**: one sent with a message, who is both the message itself and the personal representative of the Sender. Anyone sent with a message is a messenger — an angel. The very same word is used of those sent by men and those sent by God. Any messenger sent by a king, or any other person in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, is an “angel” of that person. And anyone sent by God, whether a man on earth, or a spirit being out of celestial realms, is called an “angel” — a messenger. Any messenger of God is His angel, His personal representative in that particular mission and message. There are scores of examples throughout scripture of those who were God’s angel-messengers either by what they *said*, by what they *did*, or by what they *werein* their person by nature, character, or obedience to God. Often the message and the messenger are one. It is not my purpose to belabor the point, though many passages of scripture might be presented.

Let your heart consider what I now say. “Take heed that ye despise not one of these *little ones*; for I say unto you, that *in heaven...*” In heaven! Where is heaven? Is it a place? Is it a planet? Is it a galaxy? Is it beyond the stars? The easiest way to understand heaven is to realize that it is where God lives. And God lives everywhere at the same time! I point you today, dear child of God, to another world, spiritual in content, which lies beyond the immediate grasp of the physical senses. Heaven is not a *place*, not a geographical or astral location — it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is the invisible realm of the Spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is only *up* in reference to its essence and quality, it is a higher realm than this universe of matter, though it is all around us and within us. It is the realm of **spirit reality**, of **being** where God is all that He is. Heaven is the unseen realm of the Spirit, and when we are in the Spirit we are in that realm. Here and now we are raised up together and made to sit together **in the heavens in Christ Jesus**. So you see, beloved, we’re not *going* to heaven, we’re *in heaven*!

In the realm of the Spirit the angel of the *little child* who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven does always behold the face of the Father. That is, the *message* the little child bears, yea, the message that he *is*, the *word* that is in him, the *revelation* of the Spirit expressed through him — this angel-message-word-revelation always beholds the face of...WHO? The FATHER! Those who are the little ones who are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven are ever looking only upon the Father. They are Father oriented. They behold the glory of the Father. They know the Father. They love the Father. They dwell in the Father. They speak the words of the Father. They do the works of their Father. They reveal the Father. The Father is the message they bear. The Father is the message they *are*. These are the sons of God through whom the Father is made known. Babes in Christ are most conscious of JESUS THE SAVIOUR. They are always talking about Jesus, calling on Jesus, Jesus...Jesus...Jesus! However, as one grows up into Christ he receives a revelation of the FATHER. This is the *spirit of sonship* whereby we cry, "Abba, Father!" If there is a spirit within you today that cries, "Father!" then know, my beloved, that you are beginning to enter into your sonship to God. You know that you are a "little one" because more and more, in all you say, do and are, you are beholding only *the face of your Father* which is in heaven. The Father has become your reality, your life, your message, your expression.

Not only do the little ones see the Father's face by entering into His glory, but they behold it also in *all things*. As the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that back of all things standeth GOD, omniscient and omnipotent, arranging and ordaining with infinite wisdom and purpose all the events that touch our lives. It is my conviction, learned both in moments of glory and in the crucible of suffering, that everything God does to us and in us is to further our growth and development in Him. But as we come to realize that behind every happening in our life, behind both the good and the evil, is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we are caused to exclaim with the patriarch Job, "He knoweth the way that I take: *when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold*" (Job 23:10).

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. In one tragic day all Job's earthly wealth and glory had vanished in a mist before the rising sun. But did Job curse God for all of this calamity? Did he even blame 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). Ah, Job KNEW God! Therefore, in spite of how terrible and hopeless things appeared, He did not condemn himself, wallowing in self-pity, nor did he see the hand of Satan in any of this —HE BEHELD ONLY THE FACE OF HIS FATHER! Yes, precious friend of mine, that is the experience of every little one who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven — in *everything* he sees only the face of His Father in heaven!

Marvelous are the promises of God to these little ones who are the greatest in the Kingdom. “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” (Mat. 18:11). It is positively true and abundantly evident that these meaningful words are directly connected to the passage above them. This is clear due to the connecting word “for” at the beginning of verse eleven. For is a preposition used here as a conjunction bearing the meaning of “because”. Using the word “because” it reads, “In heaven their angels (the message they are and bear) do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven *because* the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” It is plain to see that the two statements belong together, the former depending upon the latter.

The question follows: What was it that was *lost*? The religious world supposes that *lost* means *eternally damned*. “You’re *lost*!” the preacher shouts, and he means you are headed straight for hell to burn, writhing mercilessly in pain and indescribable horrors, forever. Eternal, unending doom! Do you know what it means to be lost? Have you ever been lost? Incredibly, I was lost right here in El Paso several months ago. While driving about the city on business one day I unconsciously made a wrong turn and found myself in unfamiliar territory. I recognized none of the streets, including the street I was on. The streets ran in weird formations and within only a minute or two I was completely disoriented and had no idea what direction I was going or how to get back to my point of deviation. How terribly confusing and bewildering it was! What a relief when I finally found my way out of the labyrinth of streets!

When one is lost there are three things he doesn’t know: (1) he doesn’t know where he is (2) he doesn’t know how he got to where he is from where he was (3) he doesn’t know how to get back to where he was from where he is. In other words, when you are lost, you just *don’t know where you are*, you don’t know *how you got there*, and you don’t know *your way back*! For many years it has been clear to me that this is exactly what Paul had in mind spiritually when he wrote of the unbelieving people in the world, “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...should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). The truth of Christ is hidden from those who *don’t know where they are*. The teeming multitudes of earth know not the place of their *origin*. They have no idea *why* they were born. They have never discovered for what *purpose* they are here on earth. The wonderful plan and purpose of God is veiled from their understanding. They are like men walking in a fog. They perceive not that they came out of God and have not the knowledge of how to get back to God. Untold millions don’t even know that they are *supposed* to get back to God. THEY’RE JUST L-O-S-T!

“How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray” (Mat. 18:12-13). Within my spirit is the blessed knowledge that the sublime words of Jesus now under consideration are something beyond God’s plan of salvation for the world. It is sadly true that all mankind is lost, but it is equally true that our blessed Jesus is the Saviour of all men. He is not merely a Saviour *for* all men, but He is the Saviour *of* all men — meaning that He *will save all*.

The subject in Matthew 18:12-13, however, is not the masses of mankind that are lost and must be found. The subject has not changed one iota from verse one all the way through verse thirteen. The subject is *still* the **little child who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven**, and **that man** who is so offensive that he should be drowned in the sea. There are many things to be learned from types and parables for by them truth is taught with more force than any spoken word. Here Jesus relates a wonderful parable about a man who has a hundred sheep. One of these sheep is somehow enticed, and goes astray. Now, pay close attention to the equation here! It is not, "ALL we like sheep are gone astray," as the prophet said of Israel, but merely *one* sheep out of *one hundred*! Only one percent of this shepherd's sheep has become lost. Can any doubt that these words fail to describe the scope of the tragedy that befell the human race when Adam sinned? "For by the offense of one judgment came upon **all men...**" When Adam sinned ALL THE SHEEP were lost — every single one of them!

Many of us have thought that the one lost sheep was the heathen in Africa, the starving in India, the godless communists in Russia, or the sinner across the street. But if the unconverted masses are the one lost sheep, then WHO ARE THE NINETY-NINE THAT AREN'T LOST? If the sheep are humans, then God would still have ninety-nine percent and the devil would have only one percent! Something is seriously wrong with the mathematics — I'm sure you know that's not how it is in the real world! Let us look at it. The flock is the Lord's flock, for Jesus is Himself the Good Shepherd. "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Lk. 12:32). So the one hundred sheep are Christ's little flock who are given the Kingdom! Christ gives the Kingdom to His whole flock and it is a little flock, even a flock of *little ones*. The masses of unsaved humanity are not in this little flock that receives the Kingdom, nor are they the one lost sheep out of this flock. It is speaking of something else.

In our parable only *one* little sheep is lost out of one hundred. *One* of them goes astray. *One* is turned aside. *One* is enticed away by something or someone, and becomes lost. What happened to cause this "little one" to be turned aside? Ah, he was **offended!** You see, my beloved, that is still what Jesus is talking about. "But whoso shall *offend* (turn aside) one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mat. 18:6). Some person or some thing offended, tripped, snared, and turned aside this little one. GUESS WHO THAT COULD BE! "Woe unto **that man** by whom the offense cometh" (Mat. 18:7). According to Jesus it is a serious offense to offend one of His younger brethren — sons in preparation. You had better believe it! Woe unto that man. There is something within each of us that seeks to turn aside that inner son, that little one, the Christ-life within, from fulfilling the will of the Father, from growing up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, from inheriting his inheritance in, and position in, the Kingdom of God. Everything in our soulish man, everything in our carnal mind, everything in our flesh, everything in the whole world, and most of the things in the church systems, are arrayed against that little one, hostile toward the spirit of sonship in our hearts, and in active opposition to that inner son who is destined to become the ruler and the blesser of all nations and the deliverer of creation. That is the warfare of this dark hour — between **that man** of the flesh and the **little Christ child** within. And blessed be the Lord, the judgment is pronounced: "Woe unto **that man!**"

Deep within the depths of my spirit is an inconsolable longing to see things as God sees them. I want to see with the eyes of God and I want to feel and understand with the heart of God. What is the Father's attitude and what is the Father's action toward the little one who goes astray? He goes after him! Write it between your eyes and never forget it. The Good Shepherd who came from heaven, that Great and Good Shepherd of the sheep who laid down His life for the sheep, will seek, and seek, and seek until that little sheep is found and brought back to the fold. This is the work of the Good Shepherd. Let it be perfectly clear, the Good Shepherd will seek him until He finds him. If He didn't, He wouldn't *be* the Good Shepherd! He will seek him in his solitude at home; He will seek him in the frenzied activities of the religious systems; He will seek him in the pleasure spots of the night; He will seek him in the cults; He will seek him in the heights and in the depths; He will seek him in the deserts and in the swamps; He will seek the little one lost from his little flock through all the earth and through all the hells and through all the heavens until He has found him and set him again among the congregation of those who are marching to Zion.

Friends, make no mistake about this — not everyone who starts out on this path into the Kingdom is a *sheep*. Some people start out on the path of sonship and turn aside because the spirit of sonship was never in them. No one trips, snares, or turns them aside. They were never called to begin with. They were not chosen. Therefore they were not faithful. They were goats in sheep's wool. They had not the depth in their soil for the Word of the Kingdom to put down firm roots, grow and produce fruit. Their ground was so full of briars, thorns and thistles that they had neither the will nor the courage to eliminate. The seed fell by the wayside of their carnal minds, received only momentarily as an exciting proposition, as a beautiful possibility, as an intellectual concept, as another religious fad in their shallow spiritual world. These are not lost sheep. These are not offended little ones. The Good Shepherd does not go after these dogs who have returned to their vomit or these sows who return to their wallowing in the mire. Yes, He will go after them in due time to save them, but He does not go after them to make them the greatest in the Kingdom.

But if you are of that blessed company that has truly received the call to sonship; if you treasure deep within your being the beautiful hope of the Kingdom of God; if you desire above all else that the Father's purpose be fulfilled in your life; then, my beloved friend, you will never get away from Jesus. Even though you be momentarily turned aside by some work of the flesh, by some allurements of the world, by misunderstanding, by error or deception, by spiritual pride or vanity, by sin or Self, Jesus will follow you everywhere, He will tenderly pick you up, He will carry you back in His loving arms and restore you to the hope of your high calling. You can't get away. You may think you can, **that man** may lead you to believe you can, but if you are ordained to this Day, you are HIS. HE will not let you go! We have His own word for it. What consolation, hope and faith this evokes in our hearts!

How can we know for certain that the one lost sheep is one of these little ones destined to be the greatest in the Kingdom? In closing let us hear from the gracious lips of the Master Himself the true and powerful explanation of His parable. "If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth He not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that He find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. **Even so** it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that **one of these little ones** should perish" (Mat.

18:12-14). There you have it! Who is the **little one** whom the Good Shepherd seeks? “And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you...whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, THE SAME IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN” (Mat. 18:2-4).

The little ones are the greatest in the Kingdom. While the world in its vaunted pride passes on unheeding and unknowing, the Lord of the universe has been preparing individual lives among mankind in His own image and likeness. They have brought forth fruit unto eternal life, sending their enlightening rays to illumine the earth and their heavenly perfume to call men home to the love of God. The whole creation, that has groaned in travail and pain throughout the night of every dispensation, is soon to hear the glad refrain of sons coming up on mount Zion to rule and reign in righteousness, filling the earth with wisdom, power, and understanding, for the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the seas. The little ones are the sons of God.

Chapter 26

Repent! For The Kingdom Of Heaven Is At Hand

“Look both ways before crossing the street.” “Don’t feed the bears.” “Stay on the path.” All of us have heard these familiar statements. Each one is really a one-sentence sermon that says something important: if we don’t look out, we could get hurt; if we feed the bears, we may be inviting danger; if we don’t stay on the path marked out, we might get lost. It’s to our advantage to take these one-sentence sermons to heart. Jesus also preached a one-sentence sermon: “Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 4:17). It was in accord with Jesus’ conception of the Kingdom of Heaven as the rule of God in the hearts of men that He preached repentance as a necessary prerequisite for living in the Kingdom. The rule of the Spirit cannot begin without a turning to God, for it is not a rule of force but of love, and therefore repentance holds a prominent place in the Kingdom teaching of Jesus.

There are occasions when if one speaks a word about “repentance” to saints who have received the call to sonship and are pressing into deeper truths and higher realms in God, most of them have closed their ear to such a word, and have no desire to hear anything else that is spoken, thinking that the message isn’t for them, only for the unsaved. Having once repented of their sins, receiving Jesus as their own personal Saviour, being washed in the blood and regenerated in spirit, that message which deals with repentance has to be for people in a lower realm, so they think. When we look carefully into the scriptures, however, setting aside our own religious conceptions, we see that the words of God paint quite a different picture from ours.

Christ taught that every man on earth is in need of a Saviour. He taught them how they could be saved. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have eonian life” (Jn. 3:16). “If thou shalt *confess* with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe* in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9). “For by *grace* are ye saved *through faith*” (Eph. 2:8). The GOSPEL OF SALVATION also includes a realm of repentance, but repentance is not first. Faith is first. The GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, however, does not begin with faith. We do not say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt enter into the Kingdom.” No, that’s not it. Do you want to know the beginning of the gospel of the Kingdom of God? We find it in the Gospel of Matthew. “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat. 3:1-2). That is the beginning of the gospel of the Kingdom, not faith, but *repentance*. This, then, was the message John brought to Israel. The people who for centuries had looked for the Messiah and for the Kingdom which He would establish were now confronted with the sobering truth that, though the long awaited

Messiah was about to appear, there could be no entering into His Kingdom without a true repentance on their part. Jesus Himself came preaching the same gospel. “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent ye*, and believe the good news” (Mk. 1:14-15).

The gospel of the Kingdom begins with this: “Repent! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” It presents the KINGDOM — not forgiveness, not reconciliation, not salvation, not cleansing, not eternal life — as the object of repentance. Why should we repent? Not merely to obtain mercy, not merely to obtain pardon, not merely to obtain acceptance, not merely to obtain reconciliation, not merely to obtain life. We should repent because there is a heavenly Kingdom that requires our repentance. The Kingdom is coming and repentance is the first priority in order to become a partaker in it. We may be satisfied, as most Christians are, to have obtained grace, and pardon and life; but the Kingdom demands more than that. The word of the Kingdom comes to us saying, “You must repent!”

The subject of repentance is one that has scarcely been touched because of our ignorance of the matter and the total lack of understanding of the meaning of the word. The English words “repent” and “repentance” have placed the idea on such a low level that we have entirely lost the true and biblical meaning of the term. Webster’s dictionary defines repent as “to feel sorrow, remorse, or regret for one’s past errors, sin, omission, action or conduct; to experience such contrition as to amend one’s way of life; to remember with compunction or self-reproach; to feel remorse on account of.” I am certain that most of those who read these lines are aware that the Bible was *not* written in English. The English meanings of words are not always the meaning in the original language. And even in English, after correctly translating, words often change their meanings over the decades and centuries. Translators are fallible and often unspiritual men who sometimes, despite their best intentions and accomplished scholarship, flavor their translations with the beliefs, doctrines and teachings acquired from their religious backgrounds. This is just as true of the King James Version of the Bible as it is of any of the modern revisions and translations.

The older the English the more unintelligible it becomes. The spelling changes, word meanings change, sentence structure changes, until finally one is helplessly lost in a morass of indecipherable hieroglyphics. Even in the four centuries since the translation of the King James Bible, what changes have taken place! “Thee” and “thou” have been replaced by the more familiar “you” and are now used only in classical literature and religion. “Let” meant to “restrain or prevent” in King James’ day; now the word means *exactly the opposite!* So with Greek. Ancient Greek is a dead language, while modern Greek is a living language, with about as much similarity as there is between Spanish and Italian. And don’t think for one moment, dear friend, that religion doesn’t influence language! The English word “hell” once meant “a dark hidden place,” but church dogma has through the years caused it to take on an altogether different connotation. There is so much fire in the modern hell that there could be absolutely *no darkness there!* Word meanings *do* change! And religious dogma has effected many such changes.

It is furthermore interesting to note how our English word, repentance, came to us. It was originally brought to us from the French and Latin languages. My book on word

origins shows that it stems from the word “pain” and is connected with the word “penalty.” With the “re” prefix attached to it, it signifies “pain-again.” Therefore we might say that repentance, in English, is “twice born pain; a second penalty.” And that is exactly what sinners feel during a scathing hell and brimstone sermon when they run to the altar weeping and wailing because of their sins.

As one has written, “Repentance is a word of classical Latin origin and of Latin theological and ecclesiastical descent. The core of it is not *mind*, but *pain*. The note of it is not emancipation, but of condemnation. The scope of it is not spiritual, but judicial. The working of it is not joyful, but sorrowful. Its face is turned in horror toward sin, not in rapture toward righteousness. It is a way to righteousness, but by way of retreat. It flees the evil in fear of *penalty* — of the vengeful punitive action of God or of its own conscience. In its effective operation it can take hold of the mind, change the mental attitude, but it can never renew the spiritual constitution of the mind. It is retrospective, and it leads to introspection, often to intense spiritual self-consciousness.”

Before I try to tell you what repentance is, let me tell you what it is not. It is *not* a certain amount of felt and experienced broken-heartedness caused by deep conviction evoked in the heart over the great failings or wickedness of one’s past life. There are those who suppose that the goodness of God toward them depends upon the depth of their sorrow, even as those of yesteryear, who had a “mourner’s bench” where people would come and mourn their sins. If they were penitent long enough, wept loudly enough, shook violently enough, and were sorry deeply enough for their sins, perhaps there was some chance that they might, in some way, induce a stern and angry God to have mercy upon them. But nowhere in all the New Testament did the Lord Jesus or Peter or James or Paul or anyone else call people to an altar and tell them to weep and cry their way through to either salvation or the Kingdom. Such a concept is unscriptural, totally foreign to the Word of God, and is in fact an “extra-biblical” concept.

In the days of the great revivals that swept the world in the past few centuries, there were altar calls in evangelistic meetings, and sinners came down and wept before God with godly sorrow and holy brokenness, dreadfully sorry for the things they had done and the life they had lived. In the well-known Welsh Revival at the turn of the century, people were so sorry for their sins that they were at the altar weeping and wailing many hours into the night. The people were so sorry for their sins, that the entire society underwent a transformation. But I do not hesitate to tell you that none of that sorrow WAS REPENTANCE. Ah, it indeed did *lead* them to repentance in relation to their sins, but the sorrow and pain and weeping and begging God for mercy was not of itself scriptural repentance.

With divine inspiration and deep spiritual insight the apostle Paul wrote, “For godly sorrow *worketh* repentance” (II Cor. 7:10). Can we not see by these words that godly sorrow IS NOT REPENTANCE. Godly sorrow works repentance, it leads one to repentance, but godly sorrow is not repentance. The notion that *sorrow* for sin *is* repentance is another of the foolish fables of Babylon. I have seen people weep their eye balls out at altars, drenching the floor with their tears, and their lives never changed. Until men are willing to **turn** from sin, to **turn** from carnality, to **turn** from self and self-will, to **turn** from religiosity, to think differently about these things, to see all things with a **new mind**, there has been no repentance. And when men do take a

new mind about things and turn from their course, they have repented even though they shed no tears and experience no wailing or emotional brokenness.

The Greek word METANOIA and our English word REPENTANCE do not bear the same meaning at all. “Repentance” has cast an almost exclusively emotional character around the preaching of the gospel that brings men to Christ. Those who hear the preaching of repentance in Fundamentalist and Pentecostal circles particularly, hear it like a cry, a note of danger, a somber warning, a dire alert, full of alarm and terror, amid which the hearts of the people stand still, instead of what it really was when Jesus preached it — the invocation of a mind, heart and life which should be prepared and adapted to receive such a glorious reality as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. If the call had really been “Repent ye!” as we understand the term in English, it would have been only an appeal to the feelings, and we would find a record in the Gospels of men kneeling and weeping and trembling and wailing in the streets of Jerusalem, in the desert sands of Judea, and along the seashore of Galilee. It would have moved men to *look back* to what they had done amiss, and for which punishment hung over their heads, instead of forward to the glory of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The cry for repentance would have stirred up in the people a terrific image of wrath, judgment and punishment. Instead, the repentance Jesus preached brought great joy, expectation, anticipation, hope and a change of attitude and action that prepared men for the coming of the rule of God in their hearts by the Spirit.

TAKING A NEW MIND

Then **what is repentance?** May the blessed Spirit of Truth help me, while I try to tell you. METANOIA, the Greek word translated in the King James Version of the Bible as “repentance”, in its plainest and most literal meaning signifies A CHANGE OF MIND. Yet that in itself can miss the mark. A better rendering would be TO TAKE ANOTHER MIND. A man may change in the conceptions of his mind, thus bringing himself to another viewpoint, but with the possibility of being just as mistaken in his new opinion as he was in his former. But to TAKE ANOTHER MIND brings into being A NEW CREATURE, one who cannot revert back to the old viewpoint or adopt another faulty reasoning out of the limited powers of the old mind. So let us see that repentance has to do with the TAKING OF ANOTHER MIND, never before possessed. There is to be no mixing of the old leaven with the new bread. This is extremely important if we are to have any understanding at all of God’s workings in this, our day.

Thus repentance means “to change the mind” — and **with a new kind of mind**. Let us notice the difference between some terms. Repentance involves a radical change or exchange of *mind*, whereas regeneration involves a radical change of *nature*, and conversion involves a radical change of *life-style*. Each is involved in the formation of a NEW CREATURE. The command of our Lord, “Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” would have been more literally translated, “Take a new mind! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” If you even try to understand the things of the Kingdom of God without having a new mind you will be thoroughly confused and confounded. It means that as we approach the Kingdom every man who from his birth, or from his entrance into society, or from his beginnings in religion, remains unchanged in the thoughts, ideas, opinions, perceptions and conceptions he has

about God, himself, and the nature of all things, **is shut up from the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Repentance is, above everything else, a turning away from your wrong idea about God. It is changing your mind (by the Spirit of Truth) about everything you thought about God. Do you think anyone had the right conception of God before Jesus came? There were those who were circumcised, who constantly poured through the scriptures, who prided themselves that they kept every jot and every tittle of God's law, and pretended to know God. Yet these were the very people who hated and crucified Jesus! Obviously they did not see God in Jesus. That is an indictment on all mankind. You know, we can crucify Jesus today. When preachers "kill" the image of God in Jesus by preaching a false idea of God, they crucify Jesus afresh. We need our minds, our whole impression of who God is and of what God is doing in the earth today, to be changed. It indicates the receiving in our hearts of a whole new concept, instead of a mere mental change of viewpoint in regard to God. It is not the changing of our carnal mind about something, not an intellectual shift in our thinking. An EXCHANGE has to take place. We are a NEW CREATION in the image and likeness of God. So we are to put away everything that comes from the natural mind. The mind of Christ is not obtained through acquired knowledge or formal training. It comes by the transforming work of the Spirit.

Repentance is what has been referred to by some as a **paradigm shift**. A professor was asking his class if they knew what a paradigm shift was. The students scratched their heads — thinking. After a few minutes, one student spoke up, "A paradigm shift is when you give me twenty cents because that's a pair of dimes." The professor answered, "Well, not quite. A paradigm shift is when you gain all kinds of opinions and knowledge and experience about a thing, and suddenly you receive new information, new facts, fresh truth, or further experience, which causes you to have a change of mind, a change of feeling, a change of understanding, a change of belief, a change of heart. You suddenly have a different perspective on life which gives you a totally new set of priorities and sense of being. That is what is called a paradigm shift." This is what Jesus brought into the world. Jesus came as the revelation of truth and the power of life, the expression of God as He really is. Encountering Christ and the realm of sonship He opens to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, is mind-changing and life transforming. To touch His reality produces within us a paradigm shift that *is repentance!* It is the taking of a new mind about God, ourselves, and the true nature of all things.

The two kingdoms of which Jesus spoke — the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of Heaven — are in total opposition to each other. There is no middle ground. In order to become completely subjected to Christ's Kingdom we must be set free from Adam's. This requires a deep, thorough repenting in the heart of every man concerning the things which he was thinking and doing before he knew about the Kingdom of God. If we are really going to do God's will and accomplish His purpose in the earth and all creation we must repent categorically for everything in which we have been participating that is contrary to His mind, His ways, His heart, and His purposes. Repenting is not a weeping, it is not a wailing or mourning our sin. We may weep out of frustration and be sorry out of shame, but we have not truly repented until we have changed our mind about ourselves, the world, religion, the church, and God Himself. True repentance deals less with the negatives of sin and failure and more with the positives of embracing God's ways and God's will. When

we truly say an irrevocable and eternal “Yes” to His plan in our lives, we have repented.

It means changing our mind and making decisions out of the mind of Christ, to repudiate one kingdom and embrace another. As Ray Prinzing has said, “Marvelous indeed is HIS SUSTAINING GRACE even while He processes us so, for it is essential, yea, it is imperative that we be brought to the absolute end of ourselves, that we might be totally filled WITH HIM. Repentance is not a one time event at the beginning of our conversion, it is an ON-GOING PROCESS as we are changed from glory to glory — being fully renewed into the mind of Christ. Thus He probes even deeper — into areas it would not have been possible for us to endure in the beginnings of our walk with Him. Patiently He has endured with great long-suffering our carnality and self-centeredness, our ambitions and desires, while He steadily drew us closer to Himself, filling us with a desire for more of HIM in His righteousness, peace, and joy. And now He also reveals new depths to being made conformable to His death, that we might come forth in the power of His resurrection life. A life that is a WITNESS UNTO HIM!”

Right now today we need to repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And yet, *we cannot do it!* Adam cannot repent. The carnal mind cannot repent. The natural man cannot repent. But when that word, “Repent! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” comes to you in the power of the Holy Spirit and you hear it by the Spirit, it is a creative word within you just as the words of omnipotence in the beginning, “Let there be light!” were creative words of divine power. Just as the gospel comes from God, just as conversion is the work of God, and in the same manner that the Kingdom is of God, repentance also originates not with man, but with God. Repentance must be wrought within us by the Spirit of the Lord. Notice carefully in the following scriptures how repentance is *given, granted, and worked in us* by God Himself. “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to *give repentance* to Israel...” (Acts 5:31). “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted repentance* unto life” (Acts 11:18). “Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God *leadeth thee to repentance?*” (Rom. 2:4). “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will *give them repentance* to the acknowledging of the truth” (II Tim. 2:25). Men can only *acknowledge the truth by receiving a new mind.*

In the Old Testament the words repent, repented and repentance are seldom used in relation to the sinner (check your Strong’s Concordance!). There it is God who is usually spoken of as repenting or changing His mind. God repents. And the way it is brought out in the context is that in His dealings with mankind GOD TURNS in His feelings, in His actions, towards His creation. That is, He purposes within Himself to initiate a new method, a new way of dealing with humanity. It was *not* that God didn’t do things right the first time, that He made a mistake, or that His program was failing so He had to remedy the situation by admitting His error and starting over; it was, rather, that He had brought man as far as man could be brought in that way, so it was necessary for God to “shift gears” so to speak, to change the order, to turn and institute new provisions for man’s instruction. It was a CHANGE OF PURPOSE **conceived in the mind of the Lord.** The prophets wrote of that change of dealing and direction, that shift in attitude and intent on the part of God, as “God repented.” It means He **turned**, adopting a new posture toward man.

Repentance is the power by which we put aside our own will to embrace the will of God — therefore it involves us in a radical change of mind. This is a more exacting process than many people realize, for it does not mean that we occasionally act on what we *presume* or *believe* to be divine guidance in preference to some impulse or instinct of our own. That indeed we must always be prepared to do. But *waiting upon God* to receive His orders for us is an essential function of the life of sonship. The son does only what he sees his Father doing. Something more than blind faith is required of the man who will truly walk as a son in the Kingdom of Heaven. He must learn to *know* the voice of the Father and *speak only* what he hears from the Father. He must see the Father's ways, the Father's heart, the Father's will, and the Father's actions and *do only* what he sees the Father doing.

Every son of God must repent! Repent of what? Ah, not just repent of certain fleshly wrongs, not just repent of certain sins. It is not merely repenting of anger, cursing, smoking, drinking, gossiping, lying and lusting; but repent radically — repent of insubjection to the authority of Heaven; repent of nonconformity to the word, will and ways of the King; repent of not submitting to the rule of God. It pains me to say it, but the sad truth is that most "saved" people know nothing of the mind of God, are not in line with the purposes of God, nor are they possessed of the nature of God. They may not curse, smoke, drink or carouse, but they continue to walk carnally after the desires of self, after the rudiments of the world, after the blindness of religion, obeying the traditions of the elders, keeping the commandments of men, employing in their service of God the methods and techniques of the flesh, observing sacraments, rituals, programs, holy days, and a whole world of religious activities that have neither been inspired nor commanded by the Lord. Are they, then, under the authority of God? No! Are they led by the Spirit of God? No! Do they know the ways of God? No! Do they have the mind of Christ? No! Is the gospel they preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God? No! They are not under the *rule* of God, which means that they are not walking in the Kingdom of God. There are yet few upon the earth who respond to the call of God to enter the Kingdom, who will to be God's sons, to be ruled *by* God and to rule *for* God. To all who are called to the Kingdom the Spirit cries, "Repent! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The Kingdom is near you. Let your King possess His own. Let God enthrone Himself in you, that all His will be done in your life.

Here is the grand and glorious reason why men were called to repentance by John the Baptist and by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is because the Kingdom is approaching. The reign of the righteous and loving King is about to begin. The revelation of the rule of God in the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit is ready to explode with power in the midst of mankind. The King who is all powerful to push His conquests, omnipotent to maintain His authority, is disposed out of His nature of love to grant a full and complete amnesty to all His enemies, and pour out His redeeming grace and transforming power in unrestrained profusion upon the right hand and upon the left. The King of glory is coming to men in mercy, grace, redemption and power! Therefore men must experience a drastic **change of mind** about God, about themselves, and about everything. May I point out the important fact that the Lord commands all men everywhere to repent because the Kingdom *is coming*, and not in order that it *would come*.

The King is approaching with His power, His glory, His profuse love and grace; therefore, you, my relatives, and you, my friends, and you, my acquaintances, and

you strangers, and you steeped in sin, and you entrenched in wickedness, and you overwhelmed with hopelessness and despair, and you bowed down with grief, and you who sit in darkness, and you shackled by the chains of religion, and you who are burdened with the impossible demands of the law and the commandments of men, and you who are weary of feast days, ceremonies, rituals, rules and regulations, ordinances, purifications, sacrifices, offerings, pilgrimages and self-righteousness of men — all ye people of the earth, make way for such a King as this! “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take *my yoke* upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Mat. 11:28-29). It is the most potent reason that can convince your mind, and impress your conscience, and inflame your heart, and arouse your will. Come at once and make way for the King!

Jesus was saying that there must be a change in our thinking in regard to the Kingdom of Heaven. We must see this Kingdom differently from the way the scribes and Pharisees and chief priests and elders of His day were seeing it. They were viewing the Kingdom in the very same way the Baptists, Fundamentalists, Pentecostals and Charismatics are viewing the Kingdom today. They were expecting an earthly Kingdom with an earthly Ruler. In their minds that rule of God was yet future, away out in some Golden Age yet to dawn. They could see no evidence of the Kingdom because Israel was ruled under the iron heel of Imperial Rome. How they longed for their Messiah and the Kingdom He would some day bring! Then Jesus came. His first proclamation was, “Repent! Re-think it! Reach a new conclusion! Change your mind about it! Adopt a new understanding! Prepare your minds and hearts!” And why? “For the Kingdom of Heaven **is at hand.**” Repent, change your way of thinking about the Kingdom. Don’t think of the Kingdom any longer as *future*, as something one day *coming* — because the Kingdom is now at hand, accessible. It is not future. It is now. It is available. You can enter it, partake of it, experience it, minister it. It is a place of dominion deep within you that governs and controls the rest of your outlook. If God is totally in control in that place, everything else will follow suit.

Jesus was telling the people of Israel that if they wanted to see the Kingdom the very first thing they needed to do was to repent, to take a new mind. They needed to *transfer the place from which they drew their thoughts*, because the Kingdom of God was not going to be realized the way they *thought* it was. The Greek word for repentance (METANOIA) basically means to transfer the realm from which we think. Jesus opened this realm up to men. He was telling men, “I don’t want you to merely try and change your mind because your mind is carnal; it is not subject to God, nor will it ever be. What I want you to do is draw from another account which I am quickening within you, in your *spirit*. I am giving you this account; now I want you to draw your thoughts from this realm of the spirit.” Once we begin to think out of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God instead of the brain, we immediately perceive that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. When we are thinking rightly, we are *in* the Kingdom and see it in its righteousness, power and glory. That is the first fruit of repentance. We need to have our minds renewed, re-programmed, in the light of Kingdom reality. Traditional interpretations and ideas that restrict the Kingdom to *acoming age* have to be re-thought out in the light of the fact that the Kingdom is within us.

Take a new mind, Jesus told the people of Israel, because the kind of rule of the **heavenly dimension** is at hand. Everything is changing. The law will not be the same. The temple will not be the same. The priesthood will not be the same. The nation will not be the same. Worship will not be the same. Sacrifice will not be the same. The government will not be the same. You will need to be re-programmed, re-oriented. You must **think differently** about everything and prepare for a new order, a new way of life, a new reality. Instead of the law of Moses, in the Kingdom of Heaven there will be the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Instead of the magnificent temple of stone, cedar and gold in Jerusalem, there will be in the Kingdom of Heaven a living temple of living stones. Instead of the priesthood of Aaron offering the sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs, there will be in the Kingdom of Heaven a Royal Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek ministering to men the blood-life of the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. Instead of a nation of physical descendants of Abraham, circumcised in the flesh, in the Kingdom of Heaven there will be a nation of people justified by the faith of Abraham, circumcised in their hearts by the sharp knife of the living word of God. Instead of ritualistic worship and ceremony, there will be in the Kingdom of Heaven worship in spirit and in truth. Instead of a human king upon a physical throne, in the Kingdom of Heaven there will be the rule of God by the Spirit upon the throne of men's hearts.

Two thousand years later people are still looking and waiting for the Kingdom of God. Evidently they haven't *experienced* the Kingdom yet. To them it is something illusionary, mystical, or intangible, and they can't get a grasp on it, so they think it is yet to come. If men are repenting because the Kingdom of God is at hand, is it not clear that they are repenting *from another kingdom*? We have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness *into* the Kingdom of God's dear Son. That is a transference from one kingdom to another. Jesus came to subdue the kingdoms of this world, and a kingdom is a rule, a domain and a dominion, a mode of operation, a system, an order. All men are walking according to a rule or a mode of living. The people of America walk in one way, the people of Saudi Arabia walk in another way, and the people of China walk in yet another way because they live in different kingdoms, under different rules, dominions, laws, governments, cultures, social customs and religious requirements. They are subject to various pressures, demands, mandates and conditions imposed by various authorities and powers.

When Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom He didn't say, "Repent because you have been sinning." Sin is not the issue in the Kingdom. The issue is **allegiance**. Repentance means to repudiate something you have believed in and clung to in order to believe in and cling to something else. Repentance is the call to change our minds about the rule of our lives. Repentance is the call for us to change kingdoms. The Kingdom of God is spiritual, it doesn't work in the carnal mind. So whether a man is sinning or being religious he must repent, because the Kingdom only works in the spiritual mind. Kingdoms clash. Every kingdom wants to rule. When one kingdom is in power and another kingdom comes to take the dominion there is warfare. The message of the Christ is repentance unto another Kingdom. Another rule comes into our lives which will cast out the demons and establish the mind of Christ. God has called upon us to repent of the rule of the flesh, the rule of the carnal mind, the rule of the world, the rule of religion, the rule of the church-systems, the rule of laws and external ordinances, and all that pertains to the old order. Repent of *sin*? Yes! But much more. It is a whole economy, a whole mentality, a whole way of life, an entire system of things that we must repent of in order to enter

into the Kingdom Rule of God. When we talk about entering the Kingdom we are changing many things; there must be a change in our whole world of existence, where we think we came from, who we think we are, what we think we are, what our purpose is in this world, how we live in this world, and where we think we are going. All our concepts and realities change. In our natural birth we came from the earth. In our spiritual birth we came from heaven. We are shedding that Adam identity, that Adam delusion, the Adam mind, the Adam life-style, the Adamic wisdom, knowledge and ability.

There is an interesting and illustrative incident in the ministry of Jesus that speaks powerfully to us of the new mind of the Kingdom. “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come. Therefore He said unto them, Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, **Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do WIPE OFF against you:** notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (Lk. 10:1-2,8-11). Jesus sent the disciples out to heal the sick. The healings were a *sign* and a sign is a *message*. The message was that the Kingdom of God had come. The healings were done by the power of the Kingdom. They were the sign, the declaration of the Kingdom, the proof that the power of another Kingdom was already at work in their midst. Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees, “O, ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times.” In other words, “You don’t understand the message that sounds forth when I do these things.”

Matthew records Jesus’ instructions to the seventy in these words, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, **shake off the dust of your feet.**” One thing is certain — the disciples were not just shaking dust off their clothes and shoes. They were saying something. By that action they were sending a message. The message was just this. When the people rejected the ministry of the disciples they were rejecting the Kingdom of God, because that is what they were preaching, demonstrating and manifesting. Jesus instructed them, “When the people reject the Kingdom of God shake that dust off of you, shake that Adamic nature off of you, don’t let that earth-bound mentality cling to you, or find a place in you, don’t be influenced or affected by their words or actions, don’t walk away from the city with the same kind of *serpent meat* they are providing!”

This brings us back to the curse laid upon the serpent in the beginning. The ancient serpent, having beguiled Eve, became the recipient of the *first curse* in history. “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” (Gen. 3:14). This is a symbol and the Deceiver, Satan, that old Serpent, the Devil, has to eat dust! The metaphor can be more clearly understand when we hear the judgment handed out to the man. God said, “In the sweat of thy face shalt 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, the fleshly man, that cursed man, is declared by the counsel of the Lord God to **be dust**. Said the wise man, “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! Adam's name could just as well have been called "Dusty." The mind of Adam is the *earthly mind*, and it always *minds earthly things*. It is a dust-mind.

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 *are earthy*: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that *are heavenly*. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:45-49). The Amplified Bible reads, "The first man was from out of the earth, made of dust — *earth minded*; the second man is the Lord out of heaven. Now those who are made of the dust are like him who was first made of the dust — *earth 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."

It's not news to any of us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms. 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. Adam is dust, the natural, sensual, sense-oriented realm. When God gave dust to be the serpent's meat the earthy man became the rightful food for the serpent. This means that the serpent 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. The curse of "eating dust" means that the serpent nature is only gratified in and through carnal-minded men. Today the sphere of Satan's activity is earth, and the object of his devouring is the man of dust. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking *whom he may devour*" (I Pet. 5:8). He devours you by overwhelming you with sensual lusts and carnal-minded pursuits in which your whole being becomes consumed with things that are not of the Spirit nor of Life.

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 wars 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*. He now crawls upon his belly, restricted to the realm of man's earthiness. He is the nature of the carnal mind. 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.

Adam is dust. If you want to keep the kingdom of satan, the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of the earth realm alive in you, just feed him! If you don't feed him, he'll starve! When you proclaim the Kingdom of God, and the message is rejected, shake off the dust of that realm, don't let anything people say or do against the Kingdom

cling to you, let them keep their earthiness, let them continue on in their carnal religious and worldly foolishness, and you be a testimony against that realm by continuing on progressing into the life and reality and power of the Kingdom of God! SHAKE OFF THE DUST, sons of God!

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). What we think in our hearts consciously and unconsciously consists of beliefs, ideas, concepts, habits and practices gathered from our earliest childhood, modified by education, reading, experience and contact with all kinds of people and movements including friends, mingled with the prevailing opinions of our times as drum-beat into us by the media, and the accepted standards of the society in which we live. Furthermore, most of those who read these lines have also been deeply influenced and powerfully shaped by the teaching and example of our religious leaders and spiritual mentors. Every one of us has had false ideas about God, false ideas about church, false ideas about the scriptures, false ideas about ministry, false ideas about sin, false ideas about law, false ideas about grace, false ideas about righteousness, false ideas about heaven, false ideas about hell, false ideas about the coming of the Lord, and false ideas about the Kingdom of God and the present and future program of God on earth.

Enough has been said to show how we have *needed* a MIGHTY CHANGE IN OUR THINKING! Our thoughts and understanding make us what we are and determine the way we live. So if there is to be any significant change in our lives it must be a **change of mind**. That is why the Spirit of God so often calls for a change of mentality. “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the *renewing of your mind*” (Rom. 12:2). “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23). The gospel of the Kingdom begins with the record of John the Baptist’s first proclamation at the Jordan: “Take a new mind! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” John was telling the people that although they did not discern it then, they were in the midst of a most marvelous change in the world’s history. He was telling them that those things God had given them in the past, by the law and the prophets, were being fulfilled and were passing away. The law, the temple, the sacrifices, the feast days, circumcision, the priesthood, the kingship, were all to be taken away. A completely new world order was to be instituted and made operative, first in their own midst, then throughout all the earth, and eventually throughout the universe.

John told the people there was ONE in their midst whom they knew not. This One was to be the head of the new order, the forerunner and firstborn of many brethren. He was to be despised and rejected of men, but given the highest honor and authority in God, and that honor and authority were to be passed on to those of His brethren when they were prepared for it. Yet He was totally and completely unknown to the people. John the Baptist told the people they were to take a new mind. The mind they possessed at the time of the coming of Jesus could never, under any circumstances, conceive of the work God would do at the coming of Jesus. Their minds were full of the law Moses had given them, of sacrifices, temples, and a whole system of earthly, worldly, external things. They would of necessity need another mind to be able to comprehend the coming of Jesus. All who were faithful in the present truth of that day, as revealed in the law and the prophets, were included in the call to repentance. Why? Because a new day had come! The order was changing! God would do a *new thing* in their midst and in the earth! And only with a new mind could they grasp it and enter into it. A new mind means a new creature, for we are exactly what we are in our minds! A new mind is a new reality, a new sense

of being. Repentance produces the NEW MAN FOR THE NEW AGE! Repentance was the very first word of John the Baptist. It was the first word of Jesus the Christ. And the first message of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost began with repentance, the taking of a new mind that they might comprehend the magnitude of the thing God was doing in that day. God would now call His elect people out of every tribe, every tongue, every people and every nation and would reconcile the whole world unto Himself through Jesus Christ. The Jewish mind was too narrow to believe that, so a new mind was needed.

All who are called to sonship and to God's new purposes in this hour at the dawn of a new age have experienced, and are experiencing, a mighty work of repentance. This change of mind may be, and in some degree must always be, a sudden transformation of life, but for most of us repentance is a process that goes on for years, from experience to experience, from realm to realm, from glory to glory, by which we put away our erroneous beliefs and old order practices and take on the mind of Christ. All of us are in the process of changing, and God is the author of that process. If you think repentance is something you have only experienced in the past, I suggest you think again. God has thoughts for you to think that are so powerful and creative. They will challenge all of your human limitations, doctrinal limitations, and spiritual limitations. He will continue to change the way we think until both our minds and bodies are in alignment with His plan for us in the Spirit. In this way He is forming us into His image and likeness, bringing us to our full stature and maturity in Christ, and accomplishing the work that shall make us the manifested sons of God. Oh, the wonder of it!

Repentance is the work of God. As we look back on our lives, it is evident that we have made no major choices of our own. The Lord made them all for us. He placed obstacles, blessings, brethren, books, ministries, dealings, teachings, movings of His Spirit, manifestations of His power, and experiences in our pathway to give us an understanding of His will and His ways and His great plan and purposes in the earth, in His people, and in the universe. He Himself injected all these things into our pathway. Every step we took was in response to His intervention and in obedience to His leadings. Never in a million years could I have found the way to the Kingdom of God. Never in a million years could I have searched to find God, to see Him as He is, to know Him as I know Him. Never in a million years of effort could I have uncovered the truth of this new day to which we have come. Just as in the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the church systems of today think all things shall continue on as they have been. They are not aware that an age has ended and a new day has dawned. They do not understand that God's program is changing, the order of the past two thousand years has waxed old and is ready to pass away. They cannot see that God's many-membered Christ has finally come to maturity and that the time has come for judgment to be given to the saints of the Most High. It is not in their thoughts that the true church, the spiritual woman of the heavens, is now birthing her manchild who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron. Their teachings know nothing of the manifested sons of God who shall deliver all creation from the bondage of corruption. There is ONE in their midst whom they know not. He is the **corporate son of Elohim**. The hour is at hand and the stage is set for the next phase of the Kingdom of God on earth. Some do not understand that there are different stages of development of the Kingdom and various ages of its unfolding from one glory to another. Israel of the Old Covenant didn't understand it, either. Therefore the message sounds forth today as it did across the Judean desert in that

long ago, “Repent! Take a new mind! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” As we repent our Father shall lead us into our destiny as the manifested sons of God and into the glorious future of the Kingdom of God in all the earth. Our faithful Lord and King shall lead us into the fullness of His Kingdom and into the greater glory that awaits us. The third day, the Holiest of all, the feast of Tabernacles, and the catching up of the manchild are upon us. Only by a deep, profound, and total repentance shall we be able to enter in.

“Have this mind in you,” says the apostle, “which also was in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). To be a son of the Kingdom is to do just that, to have the spirit of Christ and to learn to think and act out of the reality of sonship to God. We are no longer to see ourselves after the childish mentality that calls us “sinners saved by grace.” No more are we to be called after the much maligned, generic term, “Christian.” Beloved, now are we the *sons* of God. We are now laying aside our own mentality, conditioned as it is by the spirit of this world and the foolishness of religion, and accept the instruction of the Christ within. As we expose our minds to the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, our thoughts, understandings and beliefs undergo a marvelous change. Our fallacies, misconceptions, errors, ignorance and illusions lose their power over us and we begin to know the truth that makes us free. We cannot have power in the Kingdom of God as long as we are in bondage to any realm of knowledge or false conceptions about God and His purposes in us and in creation. If we are to rule for God in the earth and in the universe we **MUST KNOW WHAT HE IS DOING AND BE SUBJECTED TO HIS WAYS, PLANS AND PURPOSES.**

Much that has seemed to us in the past as just plain *common sense* is now seen for what it is — the perverted reasoning of Adam. Our natural and religious and church way of thinking is being transformed by the glory of Christ who is now being raised up within us in power as our very life. We are repenting of everything that has been a carry-over from our fleshly mind, we are repenting of all the baggage we have tried to bring along with us into the Kingdom from the church systems and tradition, we are repenting of all our ignorance and all our self-hood. We are repenting because our true and full inheritance in the Kingdom of God is now being offered to us by our elder brother, our forerunner, our Captain and our Lord who lives in us.

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give *repentance* to Israel” (Acts 5:31). In another place the term is “the repentance,” meaning to give them *the change*. Repentance means change. You see, it’s not a matter of what you *do*, it’s a matter of what you *are*. This change is more than a conversion to an idea, a philosophy, or a religion — it’s a change to LIFE. It’s a change of identity. “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted *repentance unto life*” (Acts 11:18). God has granted unto men of all nations the change that brings life. Why was Jesus raised up to the right hand of God, to the right hand of power? So He could give *change* to Israel! This repentance is the **CHANGE TO LIFE**. It reaches its consummation in a total metamorphosis.

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we **SHALL ALL BECHANGED**” (I Cor. 15:50-51). What is the *mystery* Paul was declaring? That we shall be **CHANGED**! We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye *transformed* BY

THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND” (Rom. 12:2). The word “transformed” in this passage is the Greek METAMORPHOO from which we get our English word “metamorphosis.” The same word is used of Jesus when He was *transfigured*. This metamorphosis, this change, is brought about by the renewing of the *mind*.

My prayer is that all who read these lines will understand what the renewing of the mind means. It is not exchanging negative words for positive ones. It is not the power of *positive thinking*. It is not being a *possibility thinker*. It is not mental *imaging*. Some people have the idea that the only thing a believer must do to renew his mind is confess only good things as opposed to bad things. “I don’t feel too good today” — “Oh, don’t say that, that’s a negative confession,” as if not saying it makes you feel any better. In the early days of my ministry I instructed people in that way because that is how I was taught. But often they got sick and died making their positive confessions. It was a kind of denial. If I have cancer and I confess, “I’m not sick...by His stripes I am healed,” I am still sick until I AM HEALED. It has been my experience that the most positive thinking people in the world are in many cases the most carnal and materialistic people. They mind earthly things.

Mind renewal is not positive thinking. It is a spiritual process of a changed identity. It is learning to use the mind of a completely different person than Adam. It is not making the carnal mind repeat spiritual phrases. It is not a matter of positive thoughts over negative thoughts, because both the positive and the negative thoughts may originate out of the carnal mind. Only if the Lord Himself has spoken it within yourself is it from the mind of Christ. It is a matter of experiencing Christ over and over again until the mind of that Spiritual Man is imputed and stamped and imparted into our thinking processes. The 144,000 sons of God in the book of Revelation have the Father’s *name* or *nature* stamped upon their *foreheads*. Their thought processes have become spiritualized by the raising up of Christ within them. This change doesn’t come by trying to think different thoughts, but by experiencing Spirit — the mind of Christ. The anointing within teaches your spirit man all things concerning the new creation. And that, precious friend of mine, is the renewing of the mind.

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror 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. 3:17-18). This change is coming out of the spirit within us. We are renewed from within, not from without, by the anointing that abides within us, to raise Christ up through us. Christ is coming to be glorified IN His saints. He is coming from the inside out. He’s not coming from the sky, He’s coming from among His people the way He came the first time. He came from heaven into man and out from man. The Life was planted in the womb of a peasant girl and was birthed in humanity into the world. Now He has come again in mighty Spirit power and been conceived within us, He dwells in our hearts by faith, He is being formed in us, He is growing up in us, and shall come out from us AS US — the new creation man, the image of God, the very Christ of God.

“In the beginning God *created* the *heavens* and the *earth*” (Gen. 1:1). By this scripture we learn the truth that creation is just two things: Heaven and Earth. Everything God created is contained within the heavens and the earth — there is nothing of creation outside of these. And now — “If any man be in Christ he is a NEW CREATION” (II Cor. 5:17). A new creation! The new creation is “the **new**

heavens and the **new earth** wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), for that is what creation is, heavens and earth. The new heavens and the new earth of the new creation are the mind of Christ made substance within us. Christ doesn't come from some far-off heaven and descend down to earth; He comes out of the new heavens and the new earth which we are to bring forth the revelation of Himself. Only those who have truly repented, who have taken a new mind, can understand the reality and power and glory of these things. Repent! Take a new mind! For the rule of God out of the mind of Christ within the sons of God is at hand!

Chapter 27

Repent! For The Kingdom Of Heaven Is At Hand (continued)

The Greek word translated in the King James Version of the Bible as “repentance,” in its plainest and most literal meaning signifies A CHANGE OF MIND. Yet that in itself can miss the mark. A better rendering would be TO TAKE ANOTHER MIND. Thus repentance means “to change the mind” — and **with a new kind of mind**. The command of our Lord, “Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” would have been more literally translated, “Take a new mind! for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” If you even try to understand the things of the Kingdom of God without having a new mind you will be thoroughly confused and confounded. It means that as we approach the Kingdom every man who from his birth, or from his entrance into society, or from his beginnings in religion, remains unchanged in the thoughts, ideas, opinions, perceptions and conceptions he has about God, himself, and the nature of all things, **is shut up from the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven**. It indicates the receiving into our hearts of a whole new concept, instead of a mere mental change of viewpoint in regard to God and spiritual realities. It is not the changing of our carnal mind about something, not an intellectual shift in our thinking. An EXCHANGE has to take place. We are a NEW CREATION in the image and likeness of God. So we are to put away everything that comes from the natural mind. The mind of Christ is not obtained through acquired knowledge or formal training. It comes by the transforming work of the Spirit.

I ask you now to be prepared for some deep spiritual thinking. It is certain that the *natural mind* cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. How, then, will we ever come to the knowledge of all truth except we learn to *think in the Spirit*. May the Holy Spirit of truth quicken each of our spiritual minds as we consider this thought of the *repentance of Jesus*.

When Jesus came to redeem us, He came to redeem us not only from sin, but to redeem us from the *law* which gave us the knowledge of sin and which is itself the very strength and power of sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:7; I Cor. 15:56; Gal. 4:4-5). Paul tells us that when Jesus came into the world He came subject to the law. “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made *under the law*, to *redeem them that were under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). We have to realize that for thirty years Jesus lived on this earth without ever manifesting His sonship to God. He was sent into the world as the Son of God, but He did not manifest His sonship until after He was baptized by John the

Baptist in the Jordan river. He was “made of a woman” — born of a woman, speaking of His true humanity.

The Father sent the Son in the likeness of sinful flesh by giving Him a human body. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. In this likeness of sinful flesh He looked like everybody else. He didn't look like a superman — six feet tall with a rugged, handsome face, piercing blue eyes, flaxen hair, bronze complexion, bulging muscles, and a Mr. American physique. He looked so much like any other Jew that He never stood out in a crowd. No one in Nazareth thought He would amount to anything beyond the norm, and when men sought for Him, He had to be pointed out to them. Nothing credible is written of Him, from the time when He was twelve years old, until the day He came to John to be baptized. He operated within the limitations of the flesh. He didn't use any special powers or, except on one brief occasion, display any unusual wisdom. He worked, ate, slept, and bathed like every man. He hungered, grew weary, knew weakness, and experienced doubts, frustrations, perplexities, pain and sorrow, for “He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

Notice further that when Jesus came He was “made under the law” — and therefore was in subjection under the law. God sent forth His Son from His throne on high, from the estate of His heavenly glory, to be made under the law with all its restrictions, requirements, and demands. He was not merely *born* under the law as a Jew, but “made” by His Father's appointment, and His own will, subject to the law to keep it all, ceremonial and moral; to perfectly fulfill it for all who were under it. Although He was the Lord of the law and its divine Author, He took His place under the law, that He might accomplish an important purpose for those who were under it. He made Himself subject to it that He might become one of them, and secure their release. And, praise God, He established a perfect record in that He kept the law fully. We know very little of His life while He was under the law. Only one incident when He was twelve years old is recorded. When Jesus walked under the law He was circumcised; He sacrificed; He observed the Sabbath; He kept the feast days; He attended synagogue; and in all His dealings He kept every tenet and precept of the law.

This enlightening passage which I have been unfolding (Gal. 4:4-5) contains yet a further truth. The definite article is not present in the Greek. It does not say, “*the* law,” as we have it in the King James Version, but simply “law”. “In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son...made *under law*...to redeem them that were *under law*,” is how the Greek text reads. Thus, Paul is not speaking exclusively of the Mosaic law given to Israel at Sinai, but is drawing attention to law in general, the whole realm of law as enforced upon men by every kind of government and power. It would certainly *include* the law of Moses, since that is the specific law-system Jesus was subjected to, but would quickly extend the application to all those who were subjected to any system of ordinances and regulations.

Jesus was sent into the *bondage of legalism* and required to wear that *legalistic yoke* in order that He might shatter it to pieces with His full and free redemption! I am absolutely certain that includes all the religious folk today who are held captive under the legalistic demands of church systems with their myriad man-made commandments of “do's and don'ts” laid upon people in order to make them pleasing to God. Matters not whether it is an Old Testament law about not muzzling the ox that

treadeth out the corn, sowing mixed seed in one's field, stoning an adulteress, washing hands before eating, kosher food laws, holy day laws, or more modern-day prohibitions against women wearing make-up and jewelry, dress codes, meats and drinks, amusements, coverings, or a thousand other laws, old and new, that the religious Pharisees impose upon the Lord's people. They are, one and all, LAW — and blessed be His name, Jesus was “made under law to *redeem them* that are under law, that we might receive the *adoption of sons*” — to be delivered out from under all law, and be brought under the rule of the Spirit; for “as many as are *led by the Spirit of God, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD*” (Rom. 8:14). The Greek word for “redeem” is an especially beautiful term. The concept is of one going into the slave market and purchasing the slave and then taking him out of the market, setting him free. Redeemed from the law! Redeemed to be no longer a slave, serving under rules, regulations and commandments that govern the flesh, to receive placement as sons who fulfill the nature of the Father by the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. Glory to God!

JESUS REPENTED!

At a definite time appointed by God, a man of strange habits and appearance began to preach in a remote desert part of Judea, near the river Jordan. “Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” he thundered. This man was of the priestly tribe, and had been consecrated to God from his infancy by the vow of the Nazarite. He was not clothed in soft raiment, but in a coarse tunic of camel's hair; he had no craving for sumptuous food, but was content with the simplest fare of dried locusts and honey from the rock; he was no reed shaken by the wind, but a gnarled oak that the wind could neither bend nor break. He was literally the Voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!” He professed to be raised up by the Spirit of God to announce the immediate appearance of the Messiah. Like the prophets of old he had a message directly from God for the people of Israel. His message consisted of the announcement that God was about to act. God would again visit His people. The Kingdom of God was at hand, and the King was already in their midst!

Later, Jesus made a startling declaration about this prophet, John the Baptist. “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding, he that *is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he*” (Mat. 11:11). Many wonderful men had lived before John the Baptist. Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, and many other powerful men of God had been born and had done exploits in the name of the Lord. But Jesus said that no one who had been born up to that time was greater than John the Baptist. In saying this, He was putting John the Baptist in a very high position. Jesus was saying that John was the greatest man that ever lived — the *greatest of Adam!* In our generation we have seen some of the *worst* of Adam, men like Hitler, Stalin, Ted Bundy and Jeff Dahmer. John, according to Jesus, was the very best of Adam, but still just Adam.

Then Jesus said something even more astonishing. He said that even the least of us who are in this heavenly Kingdom is greater than John the Baptist! What an exalted position He has reserved for the members of His body, the citizens of His Kingdom! This means that even the least of the called out, the apprehended, the elect, the enChristed — whether a child, a day laborer, a janitor, educated or uneducated, rich or poor, when born from above, birthed into the spiritual world of God, transformed in

nature, renewed in mind, regenerated in heart, and invested with the power of the Spirit of the Son — we occupy a superior position among God’s people than John the Baptist and all the great heroes of faith and power that went before.

Mark’s Gospel says, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord...John came and preached...” Therefore, the scriptures themselves declare that “the beginning of the gospel” was not the preaching of Jesus Christ, but was the preaching of John the Baptist. There is no question about that. That is the beginning of the good news of the Kingdom. The gospel began when John came announcing the approach of both the King and the Kingdom. When John announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand, He called on the people to **repent** and believe the good news. By repentance the people would be delivered of the past with all its dead religious forms and ceremonies, laws and regulations, and would be free to embrace the new gospel of the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus. John brought a **baptism unto repentance** — unto the taking of a new mind, a new attitude, a new understanding of things. The record states, “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 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 from the wrath to come? I indeed baptize you with water **unto repentance**: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I...He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Mat. 3:5-7,11).

What a day of days it must have been for John the Baptist when He saw Jesus coming into the multitude gathered by the Jordan. He came into the midst, not as a spectator, but pushed His way through the crowd and presented Himself at the very water to be baptized by John. John was stunned, incredulous, and protested strenuously, having in mind to prevent Him, saying, “It is I who have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus replied to him, “Permit it just now, for this is the fitting way for (both of) us to **fulfill all righteousness**” (Mat. 3:14-15). The burning question in John’s mind is the same unresolved question in many a believer’s mind today, and there are mostly unenlightened and erroneous answers supplied by the teachers and preachers in the church systems.

The question is just this. If Jesus, because He was the Son of God come in human flesh, was able to walk perfectly without sin, and did so, why then did He publicly submit to John’s baptism **unto repentance**? If He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and obedient in all things to His heavenly Father, **what did Jesus need to repent of**? Why would the Son of God, heaven’s Lamb without blemish, and the King of the new Kingdom, subject Himself to be baptized by a mere prophet under the passing order of the law? Why would He make an open demonstration of **repenting**? The shallow and tradition-bound answer most commonly given is that Jesus was baptized AS AN EXAMPLE TO US THAT WE ALSO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED IN WATER!

The true answer is found in His response to John the Baptist. “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is becoming us to **fulfill all righteousness**.” That has nothing whatsoever to do with serving as an example to believers today that we should be baptized in water. That is not what Jesus said at all. To say that is to create a fable,

a myth, and religious folklore. The key word is “fulfill”. Jesus used this word again in Matthew 5:17. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to **fulfill**.” Many people think that “fulfill” means to “keep,” that Jesus was saying that He came not to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to *keep* the law and to give us the power to keep the law. But that is not what it means at all! That is a flagrant misrepresentation of the words of the Lord.

The Greek word for “fulfill” is PLEROO meaning “to make replete” by accomplishing, consummating, and bringing a thing to its ultimate purpose and intent. By “fulfillment” truth rises from one glory to a greater glory, each glory ascending above the one preceding it. Let me illustrate. When Jesus “fulfilled” the law of the sin-offering, did He “keep” the law or did He **end it** by raising it up to a higher level of reality? In order to fulfill the law of the sacrificial lamb Jesus didn’t go out and select the most blameless lamb available and bring it to the priest to be slain. Nor did He do so as an example to us that we should bring a lamb to the priest to be offered up. No — a thousand times no! He didn’t fulfill the law of the lamb by *keeping* the law in the ordinary way; He *fulfilled* the law by HIMSELF BECOMING THE LAMB OF GOD that takes away the sin of the world. He became within Himself the very substance and reality to which the old shadow only faintly pointed. He became the lamb on a higher level, abolished the old observance, and forever delivered us from the necessity of doing the thing by the “letter”. That is what it means to “fulfill.” Jesus didn’t come to destroy the law, He didn’t come to say that the sin-offering was a mistake. He came to reveal the eternal spiritual reality to which the symbol pointed, to bring it to its ultimate purpose and true intent. He raised every jot and every tittle of the law up to a new and heavenly glory, the glory of an **inward life** merely symbolized by the outward type and shadow. Oh, how we marvel at the ever progressing purpose and ever increasing manifestation of the ways of the Lord!

With the above truth gaining access and radiating in our hearts, let us investigate further the divine significance of our Lord’s words when He explained to John concerning His baptism unto repentance, “Thus it is becoming us to **fulfill all righteousness**.” There are two kinds of righteousness revealed in the scriptures, both of which were ordained by God. Paul by the wisdom given him has set forth the truth in these words, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the *righteousness of God without the law* is manifested, being witnessed (foreshadowed) by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe...therefore we conclude that man is justified by faith **without the deeds of the law**. What shall we say then? That the nations, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the **law of righteousness**, hath not attained unto the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it **by the works of the law**. For they being ignorant of **God’s righteousness**, and going about to establish **their own righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto the **righteousness of God**. For Christ IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS to every one that believeth” (Rom. 3:20-22,28; 9:30-32; 10:3-4).

Let us discard the silly doctrines of men and the ignorant traditions inherited from the dark ages. There are only two kinds of righteousness that God has declared unto men — the righteousness of the *law*, attained by an outward keeping of the law, and

the righteousness of *Christ*, which is by faith. The righteousness of the law pointed forward to Christ who brought us true righteousness by the Spirit. Christ is thus the end of the law to all who believe. To have the mentality of keeping law is to deny Christ. His righteousness is the *true righteousness*, and to keep the outward letter of the old law is treason against the Kingdom of God. The only man ever to attain to the righteousness of the law was our Lord Jesus Christ. He submitted Himself to the law, and kept it perfectly, but only that He might redeem and buy out of the slave market them that were under the law, that we might receive placement as the sons of God. Legalists are always striving to keep laws, rules, regulations, codes, traditions, commandments and outward observances. Sons, on the other hand, are made partakers of the nature of their Father. That is just the difference! The son doesn't commit adultery, but neither does he stone the one who does! It is a higher and totally different kind of righteousness that is only revealed by the Spirit in our hearts. It is not bound by any outward code, but is lived out by the dealings and leadership of the Holy Spirit within. It has nothing in common with the Mosaic law or any man-made set of requirements. God doesn't even always require the same things of everyone, just as parents do not always require the same standards for each of their children. The Father knows every heart and deals according to His own purpose to reveal His grace, power and holiness within each vessel. We cannot demand of others that they live by the standard raised up by the will of God in our life. The moment we do, we have departed from the spirit of sonship and are now justified *by law!*

Having beheld these wonders in the spirit, can we not now understand the words of Jesus to John the Baptist. "Thus it becomes us to *fulfill all righteousness.*" It had nothing to do with water baptism or Jesus being an *example* to New Testament saints that they should be baptized in water. Let us come out from the childish and foolish pratings of the teachers of Babylon that we may receive the wisdom of God and become His sons and His daughters. The natural mind will never understand it, but the Holy Spirit, who knows all things and reveals the secrets of God to the spiritual mind, will unfold it to you, if you have a longing to understand.

Jesus did not come to earth in the form of a baby already fully aware of who He was. He didn't wave at the shepherds from His manger-cradle and coo, "Hi, fellows, I was expecting you!" Jesus had to discover His identity, and I may be mistaken, but it is my opinion that He received the understanding of who He was progressively. In seeking the Father, loving the Father, being taught of the Father, and obeying the Father Jesus became conscious of the Father within as being His very own and only parent. When He became fully Father-conscious, He became fully aware of His sonship. He discovered who He was! Because Jesus came to do the Father's will, His ear was opened to hear the Father's voice within. God awakened Him morning by morning (from one dawning of understanding to a greater dawning of understanding), until He was fully awakened from His identity as an exceptional Jew under the law, to find Himself to be the creature of another realm. As He beheld the face of His Father He did not try to hold on to His natural identity, but was willing to give it up for the realization of His true identity — His sonship to God. Jesus awoke fully to the knowledge of who He was. He no longer knew Himself as Jesus of Nazareth, as the son of Joseph and Mary, but as the Word of God made flesh. Jesus came to know Himself as He was known by the Father. Jesus no longer looked in the mirror of the law that gave only a dim and blurred reflection of reality, but He saw face to face. Jesus knew that nobody else really knew who He was. He set Himself

to be about His Father's business. And it was this understanding, fully developed and matured in Jesus, that brought Him to the Jordan that blessed day two thousand years ago!

There was only one sane and sensible reason in the world for Jesus to come to John that day and submit Himself to the baptism of **repentance** — He was **repenting!** If He was not Himself repenting, He had no business standing there before the multitudes of Israel being baptized unto repentance. And He said that by His repentance John and He were **fulfilling all righteousness** — that is, accomplishing righteousness, consummating righteousness, bringing righteousness to its true intent, ultimate reality, and full spiritual power by raising righteousness from one degree of glory to a greater level of glory. Jesus came to the baptism of John because He sought to fulfill all righteousness. Only HE could do that. The question is, How could He do it. He did it by repudiating the righteousness of the law (although He had kept it perfectly) and revealing unto men the righteousness of God through sonship. Jesus **repented** of the law, took a new mind about the law, embraced a higher reality concerning the law, in order to reveal a new realm of life and the nature of the Father in the sons of the Kingdom. Jesus experienced a change of government in His life when He came to John to be baptized! As soon as John had baptized Him, He came up out of the water, and while He was praying, behold, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. And lo, a voice out from heaven said, "This is my Son, my Beloved, in whom I delight!"

Let's look at the spiritual significance of this experience. A change was taking place. Jesus' baptism by John marked the point of crossing over from a life lived under the law to a life that revealed the glory of the Father. Jesus as the perfect man had kept all the law, but by the law He had no power to be the Son of God. Under the law system of the Old Testament the idea of sonship to God was veiled. It is not altogether strange that men could not know God as their Father until the Son of God appeared. The words of our Lord are true in their strictest sense, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He revealed the Father, led Him forth to view where He could be seen. He could say in all truth, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

Only the Son could bring men into relationship with the Father. Only the firstborn Son could pioneer the path of sonship. Though Jesus was made of a woman, and made under the law, He could never redeem us from the bondage of the law to the liberty and glory of sonship until He Himself once and forever and for all **REPUDIATED THE LAW** and stepped forth to live only and wholly by the Father. He had to abandon the righteousness of the law in order to reveal the righteousness of God by the Spirit. **Jesus repented of the law.** Other men came to John's baptism repenting of **sin**. But Jesus had done no sin, therefore He could not repent of sin. But He was baptized **unto repentance**. Jesus repented! The only thing He could repent of was the Old Covenant Father had subjected Him to. It was a hindrance to His sonship, for it was an inferior order that was ready to pass away. Jesus was baptized unto that repentance and came out of the water in the power of the Spirit of His Father. He buried the law and was invested upon by the glory of the Father. He came forth in public recognition by His Father. He was recognized as **THE SON OF GOD** for the first time when His heavenly Father recognized a Son who no longer was under the tutelage of the schoolmaster of the law. He had turned from being ruled by the law to being ruled by the Spirit of Life! He turned from the natural to the

spiritual! He turned from the human to the divine! He turned from the earthly to the heavenly! He received the Holy Spirit and from that time on He was led by the Spirit. His life changed dramatically! He did all these things to *show us the way to the Father and the Kingdom* — as the Pattern Son for us.

From that blessed moment forward Jesus began to preach and testify to spiritual and heavenly things. Luke tells us, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). Jesus received the witness of His sonship from the Father, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and from that moment His ministry of *manifested sonship* began. He was no longer a law-keeping Jew — He was the Son of God with power! No more was He a subject of the kingdom of Israel — He was a Son of the Kingdom of Heaven! More than once during His sonship ministry Jesus stated that He never acted on His own. “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise...I can do nothing on my own authority...I seek not my own will but the will of Him who sent me...I always do what is pleasing to Him...I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has Himself given me commandment what to say...what I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me...the words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does His works.”

I think that it is wonderfully significant that the first miracle Jesus performed, which launched His sonship ministry, was that of turning water into wine. It was indeed, the “beginning of miracles.” Consider carefully the fact that the *water* was turned into *wine*. What else could have taken place because of His presence at the wedding, once the power of the Kingdom was released within Him after coming out from under the shackles of the law? The firstborn Son of God was now changed — raised from the old covenant into the new, from the letter into the spirit, from the form into the essence, from the type into the reality, from the shadow into the substance, from limitation into omnipotence, from the temporal into the eternal, from the natural into the spiritual, from the outward into the inward, from the human into the divine. All things would now be quickened when He drew near. The law disappeared and the power and glory of the Kingdom were found instead, filling the vessels of human purification to the brim. The good wine of the Kingdom had been kept until now!

That’s when His troubles began. No longer did Jesus observe the law, but only the word of His Father. No longer did His conduct conform to the customs of Israel, but He lived His life by the principles of the Kingdom of God. He healed on the Sabbath day. He silenced and put to shame the self-righteous who would stone the adulteress according to the commandment of Moses. He associated with harlots and publicans and sat at meat with sinners at their feasts, where undoubtedly they ate meats not prescribed by the law, because the Spirit led Him there to seek and to save. His disciples plucked corn on the Sabbath in violation of the Sabbath commandments, and He justified them by appealing outside the law. He refused to identify with any of the various Jewish “denominations” and sought the favor of no man or group. He taught not as the scribes and Pharisees who emphasized and embellished every precept of the law, but as one having authority of His own. “It was said by them of old time, but **I say unto you...**” and He flatly contradicted Moses. He did miracles beyond the comprehension of any of the religious leaders. The elders, chief priests, scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees were His greatest opponents! Many

of these were zealous for the law. The Pharisees opposed Him above all others, even to the extent of accusing Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. They acted as if they were the only ones who knew God or truth. Oh, how they loved the law! But when Jesus taught the Kingdom of God and did the marvelous works of God, they had it in their hearts to kill Him. They tried to push Him off of a cliff, they took up stones to stone Him, and continually plotted how they could get rid of Him.

REPENT YE!

Now we understand that when Jesus went to the Jordan river, His repentance consisted of turning away from the law and following after the Spirit. All who enter the Kingdom must repent, just as Jesus and the people of Israel were called upon to repent. When God asks us to repent in order to enter the Kingdom, He is not primarily talking about getting rid of all our weaknesses and sins of the flesh. That is important too, but the essential issues of the Kingdom are much higher and greater than that. After the sin issue has been settled by grace, forgiveness, and cleansing, what a world of *religious* things must be repented of and turned from in order to walk in the ways of the Kingdom! Even if we are cleansed from all our sins we cannot walk as sons of God in the Kingdom until we have abandoned **every other order** that has ruled in our lives. Cleansing from sin enables one to inherit eternal life, but there are many other requirements to qualify for rulership and dominion in the Kingdom of God. I know many precious saints who have been thoroughly converted and cleansed from sin, but I could not trust them with even a Sunday School class because they are not qualified for such responsibility. Many people think that all believers are going to sit on thrones and rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom, but that is another of the childish fables of religious Babylon. To rule and reign with Christ requires wisdom, understanding, character, experience, testing and stringent qualifications for handling awesome, omnipotent power. Any Christian who could not handle a Sunday School class, the oversight of a church, the governorship of a state or the presidency of a nation is hardly qualified to rule the nations with a rod of iron! To learn to know the voice of the Father, to walk in the wisdom of God, to understand the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven, and to qualify for power and dominion requires not only deep experience with God, but thorough repentance as well.

Just as Jesus repented of a thing so divine and marvelous as the law of Moses, so must we repent of our bondage to religious systems, baptisms, doctrines, church laws, and much, much more. If any of these are our master, we must remember that no man can serve two masters. Will we believe Christ or will we believe human institutions and traditions? All these things have served a purpose for a season, just as the law did for Jesus, but now we have received another teacher, the Spirit of Christ within. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge and understanding and the strength and power to do all the will of the Father. From the Father's *only begotten Son* there comes forth a *vast family of sons*. Today our God is not the Father of an only begotten Son, but the Father of *many brethren*, all of whom are born into His family by the Holy Spirit and all of whom shall be manifested in the full glory of sonship. When you realize that you have been placed into the family of God's very own sons, it will move you to repent of any other allegiance or attachment other than the mind of Christ, the will of the Father, and the ways of the Kingdom. I do not hesitate to tell you that in order to become the **manifested sons of God** we will have to repent of the old-order church systems we have lived in and

functioned by. The former things are passing away and a new day is dawning for all who have received the call to sonship. The call to sonship is not the call to eternal life and heaven, it is the call to THE THRONE OF THE UNIVERSE.

Repentance is the key that unlocks the riches of Christ and the treasures of the Kingdom of Heaven! If you have a broken and contrite spirit, and are repenting of the old order of the past, you may be sure that Christ will reveal Himself to you in the fullness of the Light that He is in due time. God is again calling for the repentance of all who are called to the Kingdom. As it was in John's day and in Jesus' ministry, so is it in this significant hour. The old order is passing away. The religion we have called Christianity is passing away. The man-made systems that are falsely *called* "the church," with all their fleshly programs, carnal methods, man-made organizational structures, human promotions and efforts, false doctrines, soulish worship, man-centered and flesh-oriented gospel is passing away. Babylon is fallen, is fallen. God is doing a new thing and leading a people in new and strange paths of His choosing. And repentance is God's way of bringing us into the new.

We are progressing in God and in His Kingdom. The Christ within is growing and expanding in ever-increasing glory. His light is arising within our hearts to dispel all the darkness in us. We are beholding new things in the Spirit and by the Spirit. The Lord is bringing us to repentance from realm to realm, to a changed mind, which allows us to embrace these new realities in the Spirit. The Lord is changing our thinking and understanding, renewing us in the spirit of our mind, and transforming our mind that we may enter all the way into the life and glory and power of His Kingdom.

REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND is the message now being heard from Zion's holy hill. This message of truth and life is a proclamation of a new and greater manifestation of the rule and government of God in the earth. "Of the **increase** of His government and peace *there shall be no end*," the inspired prophet assures us. That increase of the Kingdom is from purpose to purpose, from dealing to dealing, from one stage of growth, development and manifestation to another, and from one age to another. I declare to you today by the word of the Lord that we are now standing at the end of an age, and the Lord is introducing A GREATER MANIFESTATION OF HIS KINGDOM by calling us to repentance. The old "church order" is fastly drawing to a close, and the day for the manifestation of the sons of God is rapidly approaching. The next step in the unfolding of God's Kingdom plan for the world is now dawning.

We have progressed from the age when God has been meticulously forming His body of sons by establishing His rule in their minds and hearts, to the age when that body shall begin to fulfill the great and grand *purpose* for which God has prepared them. We have come to the time when the Kingdom shall accelerate into a further and greater manifestation of the rule and dominion of the Kingdom over all nations and all mankind, answering the cry of the groaning creation to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. This transition requires repentance, *first on our part*, and afterwards on the part of all the rulers and inhabitants of the nations. The maturing sons of God may now boldly declare, as Jesus did in His generation, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the good news!"

The gospel message proclaimed in the days of the firstborn Son of God, the twelve apostles, and Paul, was the good news of the *first stage* of the Kingdom development in the earth — the formation of the church, the body of Christ, which is the Kingdom *in our hearts* phase. Now the next phase is wonderfully nigh at hand, which is the greater phase or period of the outpouring of the Kingdom life, deliverance and rule through the younger brothers of Jesus, the manifested sons of God. It is important for everyone who reads these lines to see that *the time is fulfilled*. The fullness of time, relative to the past age and the new age, *has come!* The hour has dawned for the revelation and manifestation of the *next stage* of God's ever-increasing and ever-expanding triumph and dominion of the Kingdom of God over all the earth.

By repenting we let go of the old order of the church-systems of the past age, and become pliable in the hands of the Father, so that we will be able to make the transition into the greater glory of the new order of manifested sonship. That is why the Lord is calling us to repentance. We may not be guilty of sin, but we must become fluid in the hands of the Father in order for His new and glorious purposes to be fulfilled in and through us. We **must** change all our thinking and our religious practices, believe the present truth word of God, and walk in the light being revealed. We may not be harboring any secret or hidden sins, but we need to repent of yesterday's obsolete order, yesterday's ways of doing things, yesterday's "in part" knowledge and glory, of carnal church works, of our own self-will, of the former ways and ideas and promotions of man, to embrace the dealings of this new day as the Spirit reveals them.

The Lord is inaugurating a new age, and is setting forth a new order with new understanding, new methods, new power and new requirements for this new day of greater light and glory. As wonderful as the workings of the Spirit were in the past, they are not good enough for the new order of manifested sonship. Even though we have made some progress, we must have something more from God to be able to rule the nations and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. And we can only receive this change by repentance.

How shall we know that the old order is passed away? What sign shall be given that the old order is ended and a new has dawned? The truth is, no sign shall be given except the word of God within ourselves. In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus no outward sign was given to show a change in ages. There was no blinding light, no burning mountain cast into the sea, no comet streaking across the heavens, no mighty earthquake, no shaking of kingdoms or collapse of empires, no world war, no world-wide economic collapse, no pouring out of apocalyptic judgments upon the earth. When Jesus departed from Galilee and came into the wilderness of Judea to be baptized by John and begin His sonship ministry, it was by the ministry of a prophet of the Lord, wearing strange apparel and crying for repentance, and by the ministry of a Son of God that the old age passed away and a new began. The world knew nothing about it! Rome received no notification of it! There were no news headlines heralding it! Only John and Jesus knew the significance of what they did and the impact it would eventually have, and they knew it, not by any outward sign, but by the revelation of God within them.

Thus Jesus said, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied *until John*" (Mat. 11:13). God spoke to an age through the law and the prophets who gave the word of God to Israel until John the Baptist came on the scene preaching repentance and the

Kingdom. This means that the prophets and the law revealed God's will for that age and were in effect until John began his ministry. The Lord ended the previous age by removing His blessing and authority from the previous order, and then spoke a new order into existence purely by His word. And by a similar unrecognized word of authority, Father shall conclude this age of the *formation* of His body of sons and inaugurate the new age of the *manifestation* of the sons of God on earth. When the Lord changed the order two thousand years ago, did He send a mighty cataclysmic upheaval and judgment to eliminate all the Old Covenant laws, rituals, sacrifices, feast days, synagogues, and religious forms? Did He move to completely wipe them out and abolish it all from the face of the earth? No —not at all! The old Jewish order remains in the earth today as an abiding and unimpeachable testimony to the blindness of unanointed, uninspired, unspiritual religion!

When Father changes the order in this day, replacing the church order of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers with kings and priests after the Order of Melchizedek, will He then eliminate and obliterate off the face of the earth the Baptist order, the Methodist order, the Lutheran order, the Episcopalian order, the Presbyterian order, the Mennonite order, the Pentecostal order, the Charismatic order, the Catholic order, and all the other religious, organizational, denominational, and ministerial orders of the church systems of today? Not by any means! He will simply remove what is left of His anointing from that order. But many will not discern that the anointing has lifted from that old realm. It will be just as John the Revelator prophesied of Mystery Babylon, "And the voice of harpers and musicians (spiritual praise and worship), and of pipers (prophets), and trumpeters (announcers of new things in God), **shall be heard no more at all in thee**; and no craftsman (spiritual ministry), of whatsoever craft he be, **shall be found any more in thee**; and the sound of a millstone (grinding flour for bread — the word of God) **shall be heard no more at all in thee**; and the light of a candle (the little light left in Babylon) **shall shine no more at all in thee**; and the voice of the Bridegroom (Christ the Head) and of the Bride (of Christ) **shall be heard no more at all in thee...**" (Rev. 18:22-23). They will continue on with their fellowships, activities, programs, ceremonies, rituals, crusades, and religious works, for they will be as yet unawakened to the new phase of the Kingdom this day brings. **AND THEY WILL BE THE GREATEST OPPOSERS OF THE SONS OF GOD!** For a season, until the time appointed of the Father, all will continue to function without Father's authority or the precious anointing of His Spirit, until at last the glory of God penetrates through the walls of ignorance and unbelief to bring deliverance to the captives of Babylon.

Thank God! There is a remnant, a chosen company, a firstfruit, a people with a purpose, called to be the *sons of God*, who have now been awakened to this new day and enter into its holy purposes by the Spirit of God. These have already received the call of the Spirit to repent, because a new and greater manifestation of the Kingdom of God is at hand. This call has come from the SPIRIT HIMSELF, confirmed by many thousands of saints in all parts of the earth, in practically every nation under heaven. It is not a matter of the interpretation of scripture, to prove from holy writ that *this is the time* for the next stage of the Kingdom to come. It is a matter of **hearing from God**. Those who reject this vision reject the voice of the Lord from the heavens. Now God has called us to repent of the old — to repent of all our religious backgrounds, to repent of our doctrines, creeds, and beliefs; to repent of our denominationalism and our non-denominationalism; to repent of our carnal religious methods, our dead works, and all the baggage we have brought with

us into this Kingdom walk, from the systems of man. Just as Jesus repented of the law in order to be placed as a Son to fulfill His sonship ministry, so we must repent of our religious heritage and every vestige of that order that is now passing away. Only as we repent, becoming invested with a *new mind*, a new vision and a new reality, can we enter into this new and higher and more glorious dimension of the Kingdom of God revealed through **sons**.

If we are receiving the mind of Christ, we are then able to see the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven and understand the coming of the next phase of the Kingdom. Many do not understand that there is a progression of the Kingdom from realm to realm and from age to age. Some hold to the erroneous notion that the church and the “church age” *constitute* the Kingdom and that there is nothing more beyond this except heaven at last. Others believe that the Kingdom has not yet come and are *waiting* for its arrival and the so-called “kingdom age”. Both ideas are wrong. The wonderful reality is that Jesus brought the Kingdom two thousand years ago! But the Kingdom, Jesus said, is like a man who sows seed in his field and it springs forth out of the earth, first the blade, then the stalk, and finally the full corn in the ear. Just as the seed passes through various stages of development to eventually arrive at harvest conditions, so does the Kingdom grow and develop through various stages and manifestations until ultimately God is all-in-all. The Kingdom develops in this way both within each of us individually, and in its subjection and dominion of the world and all things.

There shall be **no end** to the increase of the Kingdom as it grows and develops first in the earth that *we are*, secondly in its dominion over all the peoples and nations of the earth as the kingdoms of this world *become* the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and finally unto the farthest extremities of all the unbounded heavens (Isa. 9:7; Heb. 2:8). This age is not the last age by any means, nor shall the next age bring the final consummation; for it is in the **ages to come** that God shall clearly demonstrate and fully put on display *through us* the immeasurable, unlimited and surpassing riches of His grace and goodness of heart toward all His creation (Eph. 2:7). Neither is the coming age the “kingdom age” as so many say. Every age since Jesus is, and shall be, the Kingdom age! There is no singular “kingdom age”. The Kingdom began with Jesus. He proclaimed the Kingdom and brought the Kingdom. The Kingdom is now revealed in the lives of those who are walking in the Spirit and are filled with the righteousness, peace and joy which are the Kingdom. ALL ages are now Kingdom Ages. The age now dawning is the age of the beginning of the manifestation of the sons of God — merely the **next step** in God’s great ages-lasting Kingdom program.

Here is God’s program. In the age now ending God has been meticulously forming His body of sons, the manchild birthed out of the woman church. In the furnace of affliction and by the power of His indwelling life the nature and ways of the Father have been inworked in a vast family of sons. In the new age now upon us God shall, through these sons, deal with and subdue unto Himself all the *living nations* of earth. That is the next step in His Kingdom agenda. There are vast numbers of ages of Kingdom increase beyond that. God must yet deal with the billions of men who have lived and died upon earth throughout all past generations and ages. Earth, however, is only the launching-pad of God’s Kingdom plans and purposes. His program extends unto and through all the billions of galaxies with their billions of trillions of stars and suns and planets and moons — all the works of His hands. All these things

were made by Him, and for Him, and for His pleasure and purpose, to reveal His glory and to be gathered into His Christ. In that blessed dispensation of the fullness of times all things in the heavens, and all things in the earth, are to be gathered together into one in God's Christ. And God's MAN shall subdue and rule it all! "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him for a little while lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst **set him over the works of thy hands**. Thou hast put ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. For in that He put ALL in subjection under Him, He left **nothing** that is **not** put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:6-8). This passage is a quotation from the eighth Psalm where the Psalmist identifies the *heavens*, the *stars*, the *sun*, and the *moon* as the "all things" that are to be put under God's man.

Each new stage of the Kingdom will require repentance on the part of those who are called to participate in its glory, power and purpose. Without repentance we will never know the mysterious ways of the Kingdom of God. But when we repent and turn away from the old church systems and their time-honored traditions, we then become as little children to receive the Kingdom and walk in its Light. When we repent, the Spirit then reveals to us the increase of the Kingdom of God within ourselves. When we repent and humble ourselves, we become prepared by our Father for the new order of the Kingdom. We then "see" the new Kingdom plans and purposes, and are strengthened to enter into its new principles to become pioneers of its new order and administration. Repentance and childlike faith prepare us to enter into the new and higher realm of Kingdom manifestation. As Jesus had His day of baptism by John, and the early disciples had their day of Pentecost, so shall we have our DAY OF TABERNACLES when the full blazing glory of manifested sonship shall erupt upon a humble and prepared people, and startle an unconcerned, unsuspecting and unbelieving world. Everything of the old order is passing away. Therefore, we repent of it, and embrace the new thing God is speaking and doing among His elect. When we have fully repented to receive the mind of Christ, we shall then make the transition into the transformation, glory and power of this NEW DAY.

There is no sin so damning as the sin of hearing the word of the Kingdom, being close to what God is doing, and then fail to repent and thus reject it. Jesus knew the hearts of the chief priests, scribes, and elders of Israel. He saw that they were set in their ways and their minds were closed against further revelation of truth. They were in no attitude to *repent of Moses* in order to receive the *Son of God* who offered them the Kingdom. They were so hardened and calloused in their minds and spirits that they were foreign to the higher order of the Kingdom that stood in their midst. Having spiritually discerned their stubborn and unrepentant attitude, Jesus said to them, "Verily I say unto you, That the **publicans** and the **harlots** *go into the kingdom of God before you*. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, *repented not* afterward, that ye might believe him" (Mat. 21:31-32).

What an astonishing word for Jesus to deliver to those lettered doctors of the law and chief priests who had studied the scriptures and were esteemed leaders of the religion of the past! Just as those religious leaders could not discern the day of their visitation and refused to relinquish the old in order to apprehend the new, so are there multitudes today who will fail to make the transition by repentance, and will reject the new thing God is about to do in the earth. Only by repentance do we

receive the mind of Christ. The one distinguishing mark of a son of God who is chosen as a ruler in the Kingdom in this day when the sons shall be given power over the nations, is repentance. All others will be set in their ways, too calloused in their hearts, too attached to their cherished traditions, and too indifferent to the voice of the Spirit to lay hold upon the greater glory.

If the events surrounding the manifestation of the first Son of God are repeated in this hour of the unveiling of the younger sons of God, then undoubtedly the word of the Lord to the religious leaders in the church systems in our day is just this: "Verily I say unto you, that the **loan sharks** and the **hookers** *go into the kingdom of God before you.*" I do know firsthand that there is a vast company of so-called religious mis-fits, church order rejects and castaways, spiritual nobodies, and precious people who have been beaten, wounded and broken by man's carnal interpretation of the word of God and his harsh application of the law of God, who have repented and do repent and are following on to know the Lord. These have suffered with Him, and they shall reign with Him.

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).