

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

By J. Preston Eby

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN-13:978-1502405647

ISBN-10: 1502405644

Scripture Quotations taken from

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Emphatic Diaglott, Fowler & Wells Co., Publishers, 27 East 21st St. New York

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New Testament – A New Translation by James Moffatt, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 1994

Rotherham's Emphasized Bible , by Joseph Bryant. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1994)

The New Testament by Wuest, Kenneth Samuel Wuest, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994

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Chapter 1

To Be The Lord's Prayer

The subject of prayer is one of universal interest. No one is able to answer all the questions that might be asked concerning it, but the instinct of prayer is so deep-seated in the human psyche that all men pray at one time or another, consciously, sub-consciously, or unconsciously. Prayers differ in scope and quality, according to the spiritual experience of those who pray. During World War II reports circulated from the front lines indicated that there were no atheists in the foxholes. Passengers on a hijacked plane, campers whose camp is invaded at night by plundering and pillaging bears, office workers stranded on an elevator by a power failure, parents pacing the hospital corridor outside the operating room, business men eager for an important contract to be theirs—all these people resort to prayer. When we come to the end of ourselves, when life piles up problems beyond our ability to cope, when crisis strikes our hearts with fear and terror we do not hesitate to pray. After all, what else can we do?

There's a story about a rancher who wanted nothing to do with God. He disliked churches and Christians, he despised preachers, and he made sure that his sons, Tom, Dick, and Harry, felt the same way. One day, though, the local minister was called out to the ranch. A rattlesnake had bitten Tom, and the doctor had done all he could. "Please, will you pray for Tom?" the rancher pleaded. So the preacher prayed: "Lord, we thank you for sending this rattlesnake to bite Tom, for it is the first time that he has ever admitted that he needs you. And Lord, we pray for two more rattlesnakes to bite Dick and Harry, so that they 'too' may receive this blessing. And, Lord, we pray for an especially big and ornery rattlesnake to come and bite the old man so that he, too, will know what it means to need you."

Someone has said that prayer "is helplessness casting itself upon power; it is misery seeking peace; it is unholiness embracing purity; it is hatred desiring love. Prayer is corruption panting for immortality; it is the eagle soaring heavenward; it is the dove returning home; it is the prisoner pleading for release; it is the mariner steering for the haven amid the dangerous storm; it is the soul, oppressed by the world, escaping to the empyrean, and bathing its ruffled plumes in the ethereal and the divine."

Prayer has sometimes been considered as either a mark of superstition or as something mysterious. It is neither! Prayer is a dynamic reality and fundamental principle in our universe, and is no more superstitious or mysterious than life itself, the atmosphere, the law of gravity, or the beating of your heart. It is amazing how science is discovering the fact that the realm of the unseen is the realm of power. When electricity was discovered no one saw it; they only saw the effects of it. When the atom was discovered and the ability to split it, no one saw it; they only saw the effects of it. And what an awesome effect it was! Today the scientists are talking about splitting an electron, one of the infinitesimal parts of the atom, which they say will release even greater power. One wonders just how much farther the research must go until, in the realm of the unseen, science at last breaks through the invisible barrier between the natural and the realm of the spirit, the very presence and power of God, the source of all the cosmic powers of the universe. One thing we already know - the realm of the unseen is the realm of power. "Prayer has divided seas and rolled back flowing rivers, it has made flinty rocks gush into fountains, it has quenched flames of fire, it has muzzled lions, disarmed vipers, neutralized poisons, it has marshaled the stars against the wicked, it has stopped the course of

the moon and arrested the sun in its race, it has burst open iron gates and recalled men from the grave, it has conquered the strongest devils and commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and chained the raging passions of men and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea and carried another in a chariot of fire to heaven.” That is not mere conjecture or exaggeration, that is historical fact. Prayer has done many other things as well. It is an awesome, mighty force in the world of men.

THE CREATIVE POWER OF PRAYER

Many times through my early Christian life I wondered about prayer. What is prayer, and why should we pray? God is omniscient—He knows all things. He knows the end from the beginning; in fact, He ordained both the end and the beginning and all that transpires between. He is conscious of all our needs and problems at all times. Jesus said, “Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.” You cannot tell God anything new. Do you, precious friend of mine, really believe that God knows what is best for you, or must you try to “figure out” what is best and then tell God about it? Do you know something about yourself that God does not know and must be informed of? Is it possible that God, having created you and ordained all your steps, does not know how to care for the works of His hands without a request from you? As I meditated upon these questions I also understood that God “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” and that I couldn’t change His will no matter how hard I prayed. The only prayers that God can answer are those according to His will, He cannot act contrary to His own will nor can He deny Himself; so if I wasn’t telling God something that He didn’t already know, and I wasn’t going to make Him change His mind about any matter, what was the object and purpose in praying? I knew God wasn’t going to move contrary to His will and plan just to satisfy my desires and indulge my wishes—so why pray? This puzzled me for some time until He gave me an understanding of what true prayer is.

As we are taken through this process of transformation into the image of God we begin to realize that God really does know what is best for us and HE WILL DO THAT. We begin to know God really does know all about us and we have nothing to tell Him. We begin to learn that God does care for us in the most abundant way and we need say nothing to Him about it. We find out that God’s judgment concerning us lacks nothing and we can add nothing to it. The God I worship and love and obey must be the God who does know everything, who needs no counselors, who has all power and has complete control over my life and everything in the whole vast universe. I do not care to worship a God who has to depend upon me to advise Him what to do in any situation, or suggest the solution to any problem. If God does not know what is to be done in any and all circumstances, I am certain no mere mortal can enlighten Him.

Let me give you an illustration. In John 6:5-13 we find the story of Jesus feeding the multitude. Before the miracle Jesus asked Philip, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” It appears that Jesus needed help to find a solution. But in verse six we see the principle I am talking about, for it says, “And this He asked TO PROVE (TEST) HIM: FOR HE HIMSELF KNEW WHAT HE WOULD DO. This one single work of Jesus is the whole work of God in miniature. Just as Jesus knew in this instance what He would do, just so does God know in all instances what He will do. The question Jesus put to Philip was only to show Philip the difference between what he possessed and what Jesus possessed. I cannot worship a God who has to be told about my body needing healing, or needs to be reminded about my financial needs, or informed about my loved one’s spiritual condition. My God must be One who knows all and can do all.

Once when the Lord was walking this earthly sod there came unto Him a Roman centurion whose servant was sick. “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but **SPEAK THE WORD ONLY**, and my servant will be healed” (Mat. 8:5-8). Jesus spoke the word and the servant was healed that same moment. The Lord wasn’t near the place, but He spoke and a healing took place. How did this happen? When He spoke His Spirit went forth and did the work. God speaks, His Spirit goes forth and things are created. The Christ speaks, His Spirit goes forth and people are healed, the dead are raised, the blind see, the lame walk, lives are transformed, and great and mighty things are accomplished for the Kingdom of God. The Lord speaks and mighty empires rise and fall. Did you ever notice that the Lord never did any great works without speaking. To the man with the withered arm He said, “Stretch out your hand.” To the paralytic He said, “Arise, take up your bed and walk.” To the dead He said, “Come forth!” He spoke the word and marvelous things happened. We are to do the same. When we speak, whatever kind of spirit we are speaking by, we transmit it to others. When we pray in the spirit we are not just asking God to do something He is reluctant to do, we are sending forth His Spirit to do the work we are asking God to do, for it is by His Spirit He does the work. We are actually answering our own prayer by releasing His Spirit within us to do the work. We are beginning to understand what it means to speak the word. But let us be sure it is the word of God that we are speaking by the Spirit of God. Jesus said, “I do only those things which I see my Father do...I speak what I hear from my Father.” If we are praying out of our own hopes and desires little or nothing will be accomplished. If we speak by a wrong spirit we tear down and do damage to the work of God. We can only speak that word with authority **WHICH WE HAVE HEARD FROM OUR FATHER**. That is the secret. If we hear nothing, we speak nothing. What we do hear, that we speak. When we pray and speak by the Holy Spirit tremendous things will take place. We have experienced this only by measure at the present time, but soon, very soon this old earth is going to see something it has never seen before when God has His sons ready and sends them forth speaking the word by His Spirit. When praying in the spirit we are not trying to stir up a reluctant, uncaring God to do something for His suffering creatures, not by any means; we are entering in to be laborers together with Him in doing the things His loving, caring heart longs to do for His own. There is an enemy to be defeated, there are prison doors to be opened, there are captives to be set free and this is how it is going to happen—by prayer, real prayer, prayer in the Spirit of God.

DOMINION THROUGH PRAYER

When God placed the world and all things under the dominion of man, made in His own image, it was God’s plan that man should do nothing but with God and by God, and God Himself would do all His work in the world in and through man. In that long ago beginning Adam was in very deed the owner, master, and ruler of the earth and all creation.

In this connection Andrew Murray has penned some powerful and instructive words. “‘Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest’ (Mat. 9:37-38). Strange, is it not, that He should ask His disciples to pray for this? Could He not pray Himself? And would not one prayer of His avail more than a thousand of theirs? And God, the Lord of the harvest, did He not see the need? And would He not, in His own good time, send forth laborers without their prayer? Such questions lead us up to the deepest mysteries of prayer, and its power in the Kingdom of God. The answers to such questions will convince us

that prayer is indeed a power, on which the ingathering of the harvest and the coming of the Kingdom of God in very truth depend.

“Prayer is no form or show. The Lord Jesus was Himself the truth; everything He spake was the deepest truth. It was when ‘He saw the multitude, and was moved with compassion on them, because they were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd,’ that He called on the disciples to pray for laborers to be sent among them. He did so because He really believed that their prayer was needed, and would help. The veil which so hides the invisible world from us was wonderfully transparent to the holy human soul of Jesus. He had looked long and deep and far into the hidden connection of cause and effect in the spirit world.

“Man’s destiny appears clearly from God’s language at creation. It was to fill, to subdue, to have dominion over the earth and all in it. All the three expressions show us that man was meant, as God’s representative, to hold rule here on earth. As God’s viceroy he was to fill God’s place: himself subject to God, he was to keep all else in subjection to Him. It was the will of God that all that was to be done on earth should be done through him: the history of the earth was to be entirely in his hands. In accordance with such a destiny was the position he was to occupy, and the power at his disposal. When an earthly sovereign sends a viceroy to a distant province, it is understood that he advises as to the policy to be adopted, and that that advice is acted on: that he is at liberty to apply for troops and the other means needed for carrying out the policy of maintaining the dignity of the empire. If his policy is not approved of, he is recalled to make way for some one who better understands his sovereign’s desires; as long as he is trusted, his advice is carried out. As God’s representative man was to have ruled; all was to have been done under his will and rule; on his advice and at his request heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on the earth. His prayer was to have been the wonderful, though simple and most natural channel, in which the intercourse between the King in heaven and His faithful servant, man, as Lord of this world, was to have been maintained. The destinies of the world were given into the power of the wishes, the will, the prayer of man.

“This had been man’s destiny from the first. Scripture not only tells us this, but also teaches us how it was that God could entrust man with such a high calling. That was because He had created him in His own image and likeness. The external rule was not committed to him without the inner fitness: the bearing of God’s image in having dominion, in being lord of all, had its root in the inner likeness, in his nature. There was an inner agreement and harmony between God and man, an incipient Godlikeness, which gave man a real fitness for being the mediator between God and His world, for he was to be a prophet, priest, and king, to interpret God’s will, to represent nature’s needs, to receive and dispense God’s bounty. It was his bearing God’s image that he could bear God’s rule; he was indeed so like God, so capable of entering into God’s purposes, and carrying out His plans, that God could trust him with the wonderful privilege of asking and obtaining what the world might need. Prayer still remains what it would have been if man had never fallen: the proof of man’s Godlikeness, the vehicle of his intercourse with the Infinite Unseen One, the power that is allowed to hold the hand that holds the destinies of the universe. Prayer is not merely the cry of the suppliant for mercy; it is the highest forth-putting of his will by man, knowing himself to be of divine origin, created for and capable of being, in king-like liberty, the executor of the counsels of the Eternal.

“What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam lost, the second has won back. What Adam failed in, Jesus Christ has demonstrated for us. In Christ man regains his original position, and the saint, abiding in Christ, inherits the promise: ‘Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ Those who walk in this power understand how the New Creation has brought them back to their original destiny, has restored God’s image and likeness, and with it the

power to have dominion. Such have indeed the power, each in their own realm, to obtain and dispense the power of heaven here on earth. With holy boldness they make known what they will: they live as priests in God's presence; as kings the powers of the world to come begin to be at their disposal. Church of the living God! Thy calling is higher and holier than thou knowest. Through thy members, as kings and priests unto God, would God rule the world. God would prove how wonderful man's original destiny was. As the image-bearer of God on earth, the earth was indeed given into his hand. When he fell, all fell with him: the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. But now he is redeemed; the restoration of the original dignity has begun. It is in very deed God's purpose that the fulfillment of His eternal purpose, and the coming of His Kingdom, should depend on those of His people who, abiding in Christ, are ready to take up their position in Him their Head, the great Priest-King after the order of Melchizedek, and in their prayers are bold enough to say through His mind what they will that their God should do. An Image-bearer and representative of God on earth, redeemed man has by his prayers to determine the history of this earth. Man was created, and has now again been redeemed, to pray, and by his prayer to have dominion"—end quote.

Prayer in no way involves a denial of God's omnipotence, omniscience, or changelessness. God's mind does not change and is not affected by any outside influence, either of saint or devil. We do not pray with the idea that we are going to alter what God has decided to perform, or coerce God into doing what He is reluctant to do. We pray in union with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus and we pray that we may obtain what the Father has decided shall come to pass precisely through our prayers! Prayer is a divine and spiritual activity, a function of the Kingdom of God. Adoration is the celebration of the sovereign, omnipotent God. Confession is the acknowledgment of the fallenness and limitation of our present earthly existence. Thanksgiving is the celebration of the in-breaking of God's love and power into humanity's sin and death. It is the offering of gratitude for the reality and experience of Kingdom power. Petition is the cry for the presence and action of Kingdom power in each life situation. It is also the cry for the coming of God's rule in its fullness. Through prayer, the sons of God move history toward that day when the Kingdom will triumph in all realms, consummating God's work in the world, that God may be All-in-all. The act of praying is participation in the process of creation, the re-creation of the world. To be effective partners with God in the creative process, the minds and hearts of God's sons must be attuned to the divine program. We must catch the vision concerning the power and glory of the Kingdom, and creation's hope in the manifestation of the sons of God. In prayer you align yourself to the purposes and power of God's Kingdom, and God is able to do through you manifold times more than He could do otherwise. God is the Saviour of all men. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In sonship prayer we align our will with God's will and creatively speak the word that brings it to pass—for no man, in this life or the next, is beyond the power and grace of God to save. Hallelujah!

GOD WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED—THROUGH PRAYER!

There is a beautiful and most meaningful passage of scripture in I Timothy 2:1-6. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

It is not our purpose to address at this time the differences between supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks—but would point out that there is a double purpose for all these. First, for our own welfare in this present world, so that “we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” Second, that the will of God shall be wrought out in the salvation of ALL MEN. God will have all men to be saved— delivered, set free, restored, redeemed from the tyranny of sin and death—and to come to the knowledge of the truth—to the full experiential knowing of all that is reality in Christ, transformed into His image, filled with His fullness, that God may be All-in-all. THIS IS HIS WILL, and for us to pray on any level beneath this is to pray out of harmony with His purpose. How narrow sometimes our prayers can be! “Bless me, bless my wife, my son John, my daughter Susan, we four, no more.” We should pray broadly for everyone to be saved—we have God’s Word for it! We are not to pray just for the narrow confines of our own interests, but for ALL MEN. I think this is tremendous. When we come before the throne of grace there must be a universality about our prayers—on behalf of all creation. We stand before God as representatives of a needy creation. It takes the enablement of the indwelling Spirit of God for us to identify ourselves with such heartbreak and sorrow, and then to bear that need before the throne of grace. Not to tell God how to order His purpose, but in faith in His mercies and grace, to present ourselves, and all creation, in surrender to Him for His will to be wrought in us all, unto salvation. This is the ministry of the sons of God, the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. We care, we have compassion, not with carnal sympathy, but with that divine love that ultimately will see a total restoration of all to God.

The text quoted above is one of rare beauty. It is indeed like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart. It is a joy forevermore and a challenge to everyone who reads it with an understanding heart. It should be engraved upon the heart of every saint of God. There is so much depth to that text that I am afraid that we often do not even perceive it. It is like beautiful sky of deep rich blue and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth above us. So it is with this passage!

When we think of and seek the will of God we should not limit ourselves to concern about our individual lives and needs, but rather learn His will for all men and use this as a guideline for our behavior and feelings toward them. Reread I Timothy 2:1-6 and note what we are taught— God wills “all men to be saved.” He wills “that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth.” What effect should this will of God have on us? And how must we become participators with Him in the fulfilling of His will? First, accept what His Word teaches; believe in His love; and leave it to God to someday fulfill all that He means. Your task is to prayerfully accept God’s will and to receive it into your heart. Believe what is written: GOD WILLs that all men be saved. Let faith in those beautiful words take possession of your heart; allow God’s will to BECOME YOUR WILL and inspire your life. If we accept this will of God, taking it into our hearts and making it truly ours, how will our lives be affected? The first result will be just what Paul commands—prayers and intercessions FOR ALL MEN. We will learn to see each man be the proper light, not the light of who he is, what he does, or what he deserves, but in the light of God’s love and God’s will for him. If God so loved miserable and unworthy creatures and so desired to help them that He sent His Son to die for them, and if our will is one with His, we will be inspired to love them and pray earnestly for them.

You will note that the command to pray for all men is rooted in the fact that God WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED. We must ever distinguish between the fact of the salvation of all and the manner in which God brings it to pass. He condescends to work through human instrumentality. Since God purposes to save all men, He has a PLAN, a PROCESS, and an

INSTRUMENTALITY by which to accomplish this! Part of the process is the intercessory prayers of the saints. The men who are to be saved are held under the power of the devil. The saints are called as God's INSTRUMENT of salvation. On behalf of lost men they engage in spiritual warfare, claiming these men for God and His Kingdom, binding the enemy that enslaves them, bringing deliverance to the captives. That all men be saved is God's purpose. Intercessory prayer is part of the process. "I exhort therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...." To say that since God will save all men we need not pray for them, is to say that God has a purpose to save them, but NO MEANS BY WHICH TO ACCOMPLISH IT. That would be like saying that a contractor is going to build a skyscraper and, since he is going to build it, there is no need for nails, hammers, saws, heavy equipment, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, brick masons, etc. How ridiculous! All those things are the necessary instruments and means of accomplishing his will and plans. I meet some who call themselves sons of God who have no compassion or concern for lost and sorrowing humanity. They leave it all to fate or to God's sovereignty in some future time. Every thing and every one are "all right." There is nothing further to do, God will take care of it all. Yes He will! And He will take care of it through us, the body of the Christ who so loved and died, the Royal Priesthood after God's own heart.

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

Through many years the spirit of intercessory prayer has stirred within my spirit and I have been compelled to pray not only for my loved ones, but also for some of the most wicked, unbelieving, and treacherous men and women upon the face of God's earth. I speak not of an occasional weak, insipid little table-prayer, but of deep travail and intense spiritual warfare on behalf of the souls of these individuals. Among those for whom I have been moved to intercede have been world leaders such as Golda Meir, Nikita Khruchev, Leonid Brezhnev, Mickhail Gorbachev, and Fidel Castro. Must I now believe that my prayers shall never be answered because some of these persons have passed away with no evidence of conversion in their lives, and that the omniscient and omnipotent Holy Spirit who wrought so mightily in these supplications, failed? Not by any means! For I have seen dramatic results in the lives of some I have unceasingly prayed for, and there is no limitation of either time or space in prayer.

My heart is emboldened by the testimony of that great man of God, George Muller. George Muller was literally the "man God made," and whom God used to house, feed, clothe, educate and save thousands of orphans in England. The key to George Muller's triumphs of faith is to be found in the fact that George in his youth opened all avenues of his being to the divine

infilling. Henceforth he was a man who lived with eternity in view. He looked, after the shadow of God's glory rested upon him, beyond time and limitation and saw God. From that time forward he was never again to ask man for body or soul needs. He realized that God alone was able, and in that realization the puny supplies of man dwarfed beside the reservoirs of God's grace which he tapped by faith. He learned the secret of getting things from God, the simple expedient of boldly coming to the throne to receive. He practiced this daily for seventy-three years, and in coming he never found the throne vacant nor the supplies exhausted. He learned not to bind God by the limits of his own faith. He asked, knowing that God, who heard, was able. Muller has been called "the apostle of faith." When there was a vision to be fulfilled never once did he announce his plans in advance, nor even once did he appeal to men for help. He shut himself up in solitude and prayed to his Father who saw and heard in secret. George Muller's faith was grandly rewarded, for God furnished in response to his prayers approximately seven and a half million dollars. From a most insignificant beginning the work grew until it became the leading supporter of missions, distributor of Bibles and religious literature, as well as the outstanding "father of the orphans."

When George Muller arrived at the twilight of his life, God, he estimated, had answered over fifty thousand of his prayers, many thousands of which were answered on the day he made them and often before he arose from his knees. Some of his petitions, however, lingered across the decades. Here is a sample of such asking: "In November, 1844, I began to pray for the conversion of five individuals. I prayed every day without a single intermission, whether sick or in health, on the land or on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be. Eighteen months elapsed before the first of the five was converted. I thanked God and prayed on for the others. Five years elapsed, and then the second was converted. I thanked God for the second, and prayed on for the other three. Day by day I continued to pray for them, and six years passed before the third was converted. I thanked God for the three, and went on praying for the other two. These two remain unconverted. The man to whom God in the riches of His grace has given tens of thousands of answers to prayer in the self-same hour of the day in which they were offered has been praying day by day for nearly thirty-six years for the conversion of these individuals, and yet they remain unconverted. But I hope in God, I pray on, and look yet for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be"—end quote. This was the faith that carried him through every straitened place. He met emergencies by asking and in due time God supplied whatever the need might be. Those prayers? you ask. In 1897, those two men, sons of a friend of Mr. Muller's youth, were not converted after he had entreated God on their behalf for fifty-two years daily. But after his death God brought them into the fold! Such was this man's triumphant faith, whatever the difficulty.

And I would add—would God that he might have prayed for the salvation of ALL MEN! He prayed for five—and they were all saved. Praise God for that! But we are commanded to pray, supplicate, intercede, and give thanks for all men... "For God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it." What awesome power! Ah, we know it works for needs, money, jobs, healing, problems,—carnal things. But does it work for the SOULS OF MEN? Dare we ask for the salvation of men with the same confidence that God will grant our request as when we ask for a new pair of shoes? The Holy Spirit answers, "Yes!" "For God will have all men to be saved." And I answer, "Yes!" For I have personally seen: God-moves sovereignly and powerfully in men's lives in response to my prayers. As with George Muller, it sometimes took years but I never fainted and God never failed.

Those foolish people who in their willful and petulant ignorance dare to say, "If God is going to save every one, why need I bother?" really do not deserve either recognition or an answer.

Since my eyes have caught a vision of the supernal glory of the will of God to save all men, and my ears have heard the Word of the Spirit commanding, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for ALL MEN," my heart responds with the greatest eagerness, for the greatness of His infinite love and purpose for every man who has ever lived, sets aflame the love of God in my heart until every breath I breathe is a fervent prayer, "THY WILL BE DONE! THY WILL BE DONE!" This is the hope that consumes my life and all my waking hours, and beside it all else is the grossest and lowest vanity. Stir yourself in repentance and in prayer and in consecration, ye carnal minded, blessing-seeking souls who think you shall enjoy the glories of heaven while billions for whom the Christ died writhe in the tormenting flames of hell, possessed by the devil forever.

Prayer is irreplaceable. Nothing can take its place. Substitutes are readily available for almost everything else. A prosthesis is a good replacement for a lost leg. A hearing aid is an excellent device for the hearing impaired. Organs of the body can be replaced by man-made gadgets and machines. If telephone communications break down, the fax machine, overnight express mail, the automobile, or the airplane can serve in its place. One could even carry the message on foot. A poor substitute is better than none. Not so with prayer, however. It has no replacement. There are no substitutes. Ask God to form afresh the Lord Jesus in all His beauty and power in your innermost being, that you might think His thoughts, desire what He desires, love as He loves' and pray His prayers. This is the secret of sonship prayer. Oh, that God would raise up a mighty army of priests after the order of Melchizedek so able to cooperate with Him, so willing to be yielded, that He might perform His perfect will and work through them. He does and He shall, praise His name!

Prayer is not a little habit pinned on to us while we were tied to our mother's apron strings; neither is it a decent little fifteen-second grace said over an hour's dinner, but it is a most serious work in the Unction of the Kingdom of God. The little estimate we put on prayer is evident from the small amount of time we devote to it. How poor and pitiful our petty, childish praying beside the example of the firstborn Son of God—He who prayed in the mountains, symbolic of the high places of the Spirit, and continued in prayer all night—until the New Day dawned! To holy men of God who think praying their main business and devote their energies to it according to this high estimate of its importance does God commit the keys to His Kingdom, and by them does He work His spiritual wonders in the world. Prayer is co-operation with God. When we are moved to speak with God it is only because God is already speaking with us. God's promptings are the earnest of His answer. The spirit of prayer is God-awakened, God-evoked, and God-propelled. Prayer is supernatural. "The Lord worked with them" (Mk. 16:20) is a succinct history of the early saints. There are many ways to "work" with God—but He wants to bring you into His inner circle where you can hear His great heart beating for creation. Furthermore, He has created you in Christ Jesus with the awesome ability to speak TO Him, FOR Him, and AS Him!

If you programmed a talking robot to pray, would God listen? Suppose the robot prayed without ceasing, suppose he prayed earnestly, suppose he prayed articulately and with a sob in his voice. Let's say he used all the available aspects of prayer—praise, supplication, intercession, giving of thanks—would God pay any attention to the robot's prayers? Of course not! But wait a minute. If we say that God will not hear or answer a robot's prayers, we have accepted a startling proposition—prayer is more than words! You see—it is not mere words that cause things to happen, but the authority behind the words, the power within the words. In the beginning God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. The Word issued out of divine BEING and NATURE—therefore there was power in the words. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (Jn. 6:63). Paul wrote, "For the kingdom of

God is not in word, but in power” (I Cor. 4:20). A robot would have no power with God in prayer because he has no union with God in life, and no authority out of that union. I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that it is also true that a living man, moving apart from union with God, has no more power in prayer than an automated robot!

The God of all grace, the God of love, the God of kindness and tender mercies, seeks the welfare of His creation and His creatures everywhere. His love is boundless, His power omnipotent, and His purpose immutable. Nothing that we ever dreamed of good for any man or any race or any nation has touched the garment’s hem of the good He purposes or the blessing toward which He works. He is not like the pagan deities, who, like Baal, must be awakened from his sleep and besought to do good deeds for men. His great and eternal purpose sweeps unceasingly through creation, comprehending every child of His and working toward the goal of a world wherein sin, sorrow, pain, limitation, and death have forever been banished from the minds and experience of men. When men go up to such a God in prayer, their intercession must mean casting themselves in with the eternal purpose of the Father, “laying hold upon God,” not to call Him to action, as though He needed that, but to be carried along with Him in His program for the redemption and restoration of all into harmony with Him. God wants men to be made one in Him in prayer, aligning their desires with His, until their intercession becomes the effective expression and vehicle of His will. As in an irrigation system, with its vast network of channels, the sluice-gate would not plead with the reservoir to remember its forgotten power of blessing, but rather, feeling the urge of the flowing water, would desire to be opened, that through it the waiting stream might find an entrance into all fields and the will of the reservoir be done—so should the sons of God respond to the love of God in prayer. In prayer something creative is being done. Again, as in the beginning, the voice of God sounds forth, piercing the darkness that hangs like a shroud over the human soul, commanding, “Let there be light!” Prayer is the heart of God expressed, His creative fiat through His body by which the New Creation is called into existence.

Speaking of this wonderful and divine principle in prayer, Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote: “When a mother prays for her wayward son, no words can make clear the vivid reality of her supplications. Her love pours itself out in insistent demand that her boy must not be lost. She is sure of his value, with which no outward thing is worthy to be compared, and of his possibilities which no sin of his can ever make her doubt. She will not give him up. She follows him through his abandonment down to the gates of death; and if she loses him through death into the mystery beyond, she still prays on in secret, with intercessions she may not dare to utter, that wherever in the conscious universe he may be, God will reclaim him. As one considers such an experience of vicarious praying, he sees that it is not merely resignation to the will of God; it is an urgent assertion of a great desire. She does not really think that she is persuading God to be good to her son, for the courage in her prayer is due to her certain faith that God also must wish that boy to be recovered from his way. She rather is taking on her heart the same burden that God has on His; is joining her demand with the divine desire. In this system of personal life that makes up the moral universe, she is taking her place alongside God in an urgent, Creative outpouring of sacrificial love. Her intercession is the utterance of her life; it is love on its knees”—end quote.

DIVINE TRANSMISSION

When we enter into the ministry of prayer in earnest, two questions confront us. First, How can I, with all my weakness, imperfection and limitation, influence God through my words? How does prayer work? Why is it needed? And second, How can I bless others by prayer? We do not need to understand just how prayer works in order to use it, any more than we have to

understand electricity before we can use it, but it may at times help us at our task if we understand. Someone has given the following comparison: "You have a piece of meat which you want to preserve until the next week. You take it to the refrigerator where there is a freezing unit. When the meat is placed within its sphere of influence, or within the radius of its power, it takes on some of the quality of the low temperature: extreme coldness. As long as it remains there it retains these ice qualities and is preserved from decay."

There is some person who you are moved to help. The compassion of Christ in you reaches out to him to bring the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God into his life. You lift him in prayer—and by so doing you actually place him within the sphere of God's influence, within the radius of His power. In due time this individual becomes aware of the dealing of God in his life and begins to take on some of the attributes of God: love, joy, peace, faith, righteousness, strength, wisdom, victory. In prayer we bring a person or situation within the sphere of God's activity and hold him there. "But," someone asks, "is not God everywhere, and is not all creation within His sphere of influence? Does not God know all the needs of the world far better than we, and does He not love all people more perfectly than we? Is He not in control of all things, and cannot He reach them sovereignly—without our help?" Certainly God is everywhere, and His power is unlimited. But I cannot emphasize too strongly the principle that God has a means, a method, a channel through which He conveys His power, through which He does His work. Just as electricity flows through wires, so the energy of God flows through the body of Christ—the temple of God. His power is transmitted from spirit to spirit.

If a person is, in their consciousness, wholly of the earth, earthy, and bound up by the outward world of appearances, he is unconscious of God's reality and power. As prayer flows out on behalf of this person, and the will of God is decreed toward him, the energy of God is channeled like a laser beam, the Spirit breaks through the carnal, material wall and God penetrates man. If you, by faith and love, catch a man up with your spirit and bear him to God, he is brought within the influence of the Spirit, and is transformed. God's love is pouring out all the time: it is man who is estranged, alienated, and dead (unresponsive) to God. It is our ministry as sons of God to respond for man, to make that upward and outward reach which man cannot make for himself, to complete the circuit, releasing the transfiguring life-flow of God.

It is wholly a secret service. There are people today who are doing the most in the Kingdom of God who have never preached a sermon or publicly done anything for God. We do not know oft times who these people are, but they accomplish more for God than a hundred who would claim more attention and thought. Prayer opens a whole planet and the universe to a man's activities. I can be affecting men for God in far away Russia or Africa or China through prayer, as if I were there. A man may turn aside today, and shut his door, and as truly spend an hour in Russia—as though he were there in body. Is that true? Without any doubt he may turn his key and be in the power of the spirit in Russia as though he were there in actual bodily form. In the power exerted upon men he is truly present at the objective point of his prayer. He is there in the spirit and by the spirit.

Some dear soul objects, "If you were there bodily you could influence men more by your personal contact, your living words." So you could. If you were in Russia you could add your personality and the audible preaching of the Gospel to your prayer. That would be a great thing to do. Would that there were many times more going for that blessed personal ministry! We praise God for those He is sending around the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom in this important hour. But whether there or here, you must first win the victory, every step, every life, every group, every situation and circumstance, every principality and power, in secret, in the

spirit-realm. This SPIRIT-TRANSMISSION called prayer puts the saint of God in closest touch with the world, wherever he is. Prayer knows no limitations. It ignores space. It spans time. It travels beyond the speed of light. It surpasses physical strength and ability. It goes straight, by the transmission of spirit, into men's hearts, quietly passes through walls, and past locked doors, penetrates beyond the prejudices of men's minds and all natural and religious barriers, and comes into direct contact with the inner heart and will to be affected.

Many examples of this power of prayer are to be found in the great revivals and moves of God throughout history. Dick Eastman records: "Finney's revival rocked America's Eastern states in the first half of the nineteenth century. One man, known as Father Nash, would precede Finney to cities scheduled for crusades. Three or four weeks in advance of meetings Father Nash humbly journeyed to town. No great crowds waited to welcome him and no bands played fanfares of greeting. Father Nash would quietly find a place of prayer. During the revivals countless souls were won and lives changed. Finney's name soon gained acclaim, and his sermons pierced the hearts of multitudes. Somewhere alone, however, knelt humble Father Nash. After revival came, he quietly left town for another crusade, there to labor on bended knees. He knew the meaning of intercession. Father Nash concerned himself with others, often sacrificing the finer things of life. He had no home, no church support, and often missed the taste of home-cooked meals. Nights were spent without a bed, and clothes became frayed. What did Nash receive for this? Little in this life, perhaps, but much in the Kingdom of Heaven. He owns stock in two and one-half million Finney converts. Few realize how many souls found Christ because of Father Nash. Finney had remarkable talent to preach. Certainly he had a special touch from God. But mark this fact—Every Finney needs a Father Nash!"

E. F. Hallock has written: "David Brainerd prayed in the wilderness of New York. Brainerd went to work among the Indians of the forests of New York back in colonial days. He was a young man of exceedingly poor health but tremendous devotion to God. His ministry was a ministry of intercessory prayer. It is said of him that he prayed kneeling in the snow until his body was wet with sweat. He had to preach through an interpreter and often times through an interpreter that was drunk on whiskey; but the Holy Spirit fell on the Indians in that area and multitudes of them came to know the Lord."

There is a saying of St. Augustine which gives deep insight into one of the blessed spiritual laws in prayer: "Without God we cannot: without us God will not." God has purposed to work in partnership with man. Prayer is our co-operation with the heavenly Father in His redemptive activity in men's lives; it is pleading God's will on behalf of the whole creation. It is man working together with God for the achievement of His purpose of the ages. In this significant hour there is a longing deep within to be able to pray in such a way that we become a part of the birthing of a new manifestation of God's grace and power in the earth which will establish His righteousness from pole to pole and His Kingdom from sea to sea, drawing all men and nations to walk in the light of the Lord. It is not another revival we want, not another healing meeting, not another evangelistic crusade, not another television network, but THY KINGDOM COME. Even while I pen these words, there is an inner sense that this deep prayer, inexpressible in words, is arising from the hearts of vast numbers of apprehended ones appointed for this Day. It is the cry of the Holy Spirit which proceeds from the Throne, into our hearts—that we be the expression of His reign in the earth - and it flows back to Him from our spirits. This prayer will be answered, because it is HIS OWN PRAYER—HIS WILL MADE FLESH IN US. A sovereign working of God! Man will never be able to take any credit, saying, "My prayers accomplished this." The cause is ALL HIS. Truly, "We are laborers together with God," but "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Prayer is work. There is struggle involved in praying. Paul speaks of this in Colossians 4:17-13. "Epaphras, who is one of yourselves, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. He is always striving for you earnestly in his prayers, pleading that you may—as persons of ripe character and clear conviction—stand firm and mature, convinced and fully assured in everything willed by God. For I bear him testimony that he has labored hard in your behalf." This kind of laboring in prayer has often been misunderstood. People have thought of it as a wrestling in prayer with God, the thought that it takes mighty fervor and persistence to persuade God to move in a situation. His gifts and graces must be wrung from him by great effort. Prayer is conceived of as a means by which God can be made to relent, and be moved to give us an answer to our prayers. And if we are successful in this endeavor, it is because we have fought with God, stormed heaven with our demands, convinced God by our crying needs, and, on the whole, persevered until He has yielded. I do not hesitate to tell you that such a crude and unscriptural notion is a wicked blasphemy against the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and the Christ who so loved the church that He gave Himself for it. Our labor is not to convince or persuade God, but to bring ourselves into union with His mind and penetrate the walls of resistance that oppose the rule of God. Prayer is work, and if we are to work with God we must know what God is doing and how He does it. History is full of pathetic instances of men and movements who supposed they could work for God by using carnal methods. But no one can work for God—we must work with God, yea, God must work in and through us. What is important is not what we are doing, but what God is doing.

I will tell you what God is doing. He is BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY! The purpose of God in this hour is sonship. All who have ears to hear must hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. The Spirit is saying today that He is preparing a people, He is preparing a body, He is preparing Souls who shall be conformed to the image of His Son, who shall be partakers of the divine nature, who shall have the mind of Christ, who shall be brought to glory and who then shall become the very express image of the Father. These shall become the brightness of the Father's glory. Even as the first Son, who went into the ground and died as a grain of wheat to produce other sons in His likeness, bearing His image—God sent Him to be the Saviour of the world. God is now preparing sons, God is now preparing a body for that first Son, we are the body of the first Son, the body of Christ. God is not talking to babies today. God is not talking to spiritual children today. God is not sending children today, He is sending sons, whose only desire is that the Father may be glorified, that the pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand, that the will of the Father may be done. We are the body of the Christ and in and through these sons, when all have grown up into His fullness, His salvation shall be manifested unto the ends of the earth. The Lord is saying unto His people today: "For this cause have I raised thee up and sent thee to be a light unto the nations, and thou shalt be My salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6; Acts 13:47).

The day of revivals is over. The hour has arrived when God's Kingdom shall triumph in all realms. The end game is here. The conclusion of the age, the grand consummation of God's purpose among the nations is at hand. The story is told of a little boy who couldn't play outside because it was raining. His father, who was trying to take an afternoon nap on the sofa, became annoyed. "Go to the other room, son; Daddy wants to sleep. Find something in there to play with." "Like what?" "Anything," snapped the father. "There isn't anything," replied the lad. Grabbing the newspaper, the man tore out a page with a large map of the world printed on it. With the scissors he cut it into dozens of odd-shaped pieces like a puzzle. "There, see if you can put that together, and don't bother me till you're done." The father settled down on the sofa thinking his problem was solved, but ten minutes later there was a tug on his shirt. "You can't be done yet! But there on the floor was the neatly constructed world. "How did you do it?" he

asked. “Easy,” said his son. “A man’s picture was on the back, and when I got the man together right, the world was right.” Ah, yes—when God gets HIS MAN put together in the fullness of Christ all the problems of the world will simply fall into place! Let us not expend our energies at this late hour trying to get the world straightened out and ordered aright. Let us give ourselves to apprehending that for which Jesus Christ has apprehended us—to grow up unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then the whole creation will fall into place. Let us not sell creation short!

It’s harvest time. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He may send forth laborers into His harvest.” That is what I am praying for in these days. I am praying for the sons of God. I am praying for you, my beloved. I am praying for the nations. I am praying for the New World Order brought by the Kingdom of God. Greater wonders than men have ever witnessed in all the revivals and movements of history shall be wrought in the earth at the manifestation of the sons of God. Sonship is the hope of creation, and how creation groans for release! “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. 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 children of God” (Rom. 8:18-21).

Who shall banish cruel oppression? Who shall drive savage war with all its horrors, from the face of the earth? Who shall stay the ravages of famine, pestilence, and disease? Who shall free the sad world from murder, suicide, hatred, and crime? Who shall release the prisoners of sin and death, and wipe all tears from off all faces, that there be no more crying, neither sorrow, nor pain anywhere in God’s beautiful earth? The moan of the world’s agony comes to me as the surge of the sea upon a rocky shore. Alas, Lord! for the sorrow, bondage, sin, suffering and death which all our efforts cannot undo, and all our sympathy cannot banish. What can’t Thou do for these, O Lord? And I hear the Lord’s whisper loom within my deepest spirit. “The sons of God are arising to set creation free. As the sons arise in the power of my peace—fear, hatred, and violence shall cease. As the sons arise in the authority of my victory—oppression and tyranny shall end. As the sons arise in the power of my righteousness—the bondage of sin shall be broken and mankind released into my holiness. As the sons arise in the intelligence of my mind—ignorance and superstition shall surrender to my wisdom. As the sons arise in the quickening of my life— death’s hold shall be broken and the way of life opened to all mankind. As the sons arise in the splendor of my light—the darkness shall flee away, the sorrowing shall be comforted, the meek exalted to reign, the broken-hearted healed, and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Let us pray!

Chapter 2

Teach Us To Pray

“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples. And He said unto them, when ye pray, say...”(Lk. 11:1).

This was not Jesus’ First lesson on prayer. He taught His disciples their first lesson in prayer by His own practice of prayer. That which first awakened their hearts and stirred within them the holy desire to pray was not what He said about prayer, but what He did about it. The setting of our text was late in His ministry. His prayer life throughout the whole time of their walk with Him had so profoundly impressed them that they sensed deeply that He knew prayer in a dimension they had not touched, and as they had never witnessed prayer in the life of any man. There was nothing formal, ordinary or “religious” in the prayer of Jesus. To hear Jesus pray would carry one into the Holy of Holies. How the disciples marveled and grew hungry-hearted as they heard Jesus pray! The disciples were good men and well-versed in Jewish praying, yet when they came into contact with the Son of God, instead of realizing they could pray well, they came to the conclusion that they could not pray at all. And when these disciples came to Him with this request, “Lord, teach us to pray,” Jesus did not turn them away. He did not rebuke them. He taught them to pray. And WE are taught the high art of sonship praying by none less than the firstborn Son of God!

The disciples remembered that John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. Now, a new ministry and a further demonstration of the presence, glory and purpose of God had been brought to them by Jesus. They sensed something new, something more powerful and sublime in the prayer life of the Son of God. A new day had dawned, the new order of the Kingdom of God was being established. With this new revelation came the realization that it demanded a new prayer life. So, then, they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray in this new realm of the Kingdom. We are not told that Jesus ever taught His disciples how to preach. They did not ask Him to teach them how to heal the sick, cast out devils, or raise the dead. He certainly never taught them how to perform a wedding or conduct a funeral! But He taught them how to pray.

We, like the disciples, have such a distorted conception of prayer. We have said prayers, we have listened to prayers being offered in church, we have cried out to God in pressing situations, we have even sought the Lord Himself and a deeper walk in the Spirit, and have sometimes offered thanksgiving to God. But when we live with Jesus we soon begin to realize that we know very little about prayer and we join the disciples in imploring, “Lord, teach us to pray!”

Occasionally I meet dear folk in this walk of sonship and the Kingdom of God who profess that there is no longer any need to pray, they have now attained to a higher realm of union with the Father where in Him all things are theirs, and prayer is no longer necessary. The Lord Himself is dwelling within them, they have found the God within, and they don’t need to pray. In the minds of these, prayer is a left-over relic from a by-gone age. It belongs to a lower plane of spiritual life than this high realm of sonship or Godhood to which we have come. But I do not believe it. I don’t know where they get this idea. It certainly isn’t scriptural, nor do they get it from the example of the Lord Himself. No man has been as close to God the Father as Jesus,

and no one has yet in this world been filled with the fullness of God as He was. The Father was in Him in a measure far greater than any of us is consciously aware of at this time. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me." "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (Jn. 14:10-11). The Father dwelled in the Son in an absolute fullness; He possessed the Son completely. It wasn't Jesus who spoke the words He uttered, it was God in Him, not hit-and-miss, but all the time. It was the indwelling Father who did all the miracles and mighty works wrought through Jesus. So if having God living fully and absolutely within us negates the need for praying, then Jesus certainly had no need to pray. But what was His attitude toward prayer?

The man from Galilee, the firstborn among many brethren, the Pattern Son, the Captain of our salvation, the proto-type of what the realm of sonship is all about, left us an example of the ways of God's Kingdom when His feet trod the pathways of earth. Not only did He dwell in and manifest out of that high realm of the Kingdom - He brought the Kingdom! He signed, sealed and delivered it with all authority. Not only did He come and establish the Kingdom, He demonstrated it. He showed us exactly how the Kingdom functions. And He prayed! HOW HE PRAYED! I doubt if any man ever lived who spent as much time in prayer as Jesus did. Every argument against sons praying breaks to pieces upon this rock - that Jesus, the Firstborn Son, the Pattern Son was a man of prayer. He knew more about God and more about life and reality than anyone else in history, and He prayed. His example and His experience set aside every objection, learned or ignorant, to the prayer life of the sons of God.

In Luke 3:21-22, we find the first occasion in the Gospels where Jesus prayed. "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice from heaven, which said. Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." It was while Jesus prayed that heaven was opened and He was anointed with the Holy Spirit. While He prayed, He was endued with all the power needed to be transformed from being a small town carpenter into the manifestation of sonship, proclaiming that the Kingdom of God had come.

The second time we see Jesus in prayer is in Luke 5:15-16. "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed!" At this time, in terms of Jesus' ministry, things were going extremely well. His fame had spread over the country. People were flocking to Him - the sick, the oppressed, the hopeless, the sinners. They saw the power of God in Him. He was the man of the hour. It was the hour of acclamation. He healed and delivered them all. Then, at once, He withdrew into a desert place - to pray!

The third recorded prayer of Jesus came during an hour of decision, when He must select His closest disciples. These are the men into whose hands He will place the destiny of the whole world. In that important and momentous hour, Jesus went into a mountain in the evening to pray. The hours passed by, and Finally the dawn arrived - Jesus had prayed all night. Time and time again, the emphasis is upon the fact that Jesus prayed alone, in the desert or on the mountain. At times He arose early in the morning, before the awakening sun had kissed the clouds in the eastern sky, and went apart to pray alone. He went often to the garden spots, to the wilderness of Judea, to the upper rooms of homes of friends, there to commune with the Father. He lived by prayer. He breathed prayer. We are told that people brought Him little children that "He should put His hands on them, and pray" (Mat. 19:13). In the garden of Gethsemane He said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder" (Mat. 26:36). "He went out and

departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mk. 1:35). “He went up into a mountain apart to pray” (Mat. 14:23). And most of us forget that when Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration, and was glorified before the disciples, He had gone there to pray, and “as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered” (Lk. 9:28-29). Most of us have forgotten that it was Jesus’ praying that led to the great confession by Peter that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Lk. 9:20-21). It is said of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, that “being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Lk. 22:44).

One Son has God had upon earth, who lived without sin - but God never had a Son who lived without prayer. The only sinless and fully manifested Son that ever graced the earth was its most prayerful life. Yea and even now He ever liveth to make intercession for us! Yes, the risen, ascended, glorified Jesus is now the great High Priest of the Melkizedekian order, and there after the power of an endless life He faithfully PRAYS FOR HIS BRETHREN! It makes me wonder why some have left prayer. Could it be that they believe that they are greater than their Master. Perhaps they are no longer Following the Master, who even now prays in the highest heaven at the right hand of God!

THE LAWS OF THE KINGDOM

I would speak to you now, in connection with prayer, of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Greek word for “heaven”, in the New Testament, is most often in the plural. When you read Jesus’ great parables of the Kingdom of Heaven it is really the Kingdom of the Heavens. Also, in the Lord’s Prayer, where Jesus teaches sons to pray He says, according to the King James Bible, “Our Father, which art in heaven.” But in Greek it is plural - “Our Father, which art in the heavens”. So, contrary to popular thought, there is more than one heaven. Paul spoke of being caught up into the third heaven, and God, our God, is the God of all the heavens. God dwells in every heaven. He fills every heaven. He rules in every heaven. And He is above every heaven, beyond every heaven, higher than all heavens, and greater than every heaven. The great King Solomon cried out, “Behold, I build a house to the name of the Lord my God, and the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him a house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I then, that I should build Him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before Him?” (II Chron. 2:4-6).

In other words, that heaven that is so vast, so expansive, so extensive, so all-inclusive that it embodies within itself all the other heavens - even that heaven cannot contain our God! And yet I hear some say that God is not omnipresent! God is the God, not of heaven, but of THE HEAVENS. And in our journey into God we pass through all these heavens. Jesus passed through all the heavens on His way into the glory of the Father. “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might Fill all things” (Eph. 4:10). In His ascension to the right hand of power He passed through - experienced - all the heavens. But not only did He pass through them. He has also FILLED THEM ALL so that God in Christ is the essence in every heaven. You will Find Him on a different plane, in a different dimension, in each heaven. Heaven is not a place, not a geographical or astral location -it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is a dimension of life. It is a level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is the dimension of being where God dwells. Heaven is also the realm in which God is revealed by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God is known by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be touched in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be experienced in the Spirit. God is the God of the heavens, and if ever you will see Him, if ever you will know Him, if ever you will touch Him, if ever you will experience Him - it will be in the heavens where He dwells.

Heaven means “height, eminence, elevation.” God is in heaven. God is Spirit. Heaven is the high and holy realm of the Spirit where God exists. To be in heaven is to be in the Spirit. To experience God spiritually is to experience heaven. Thus, heaven is the realm of spiritual experience. The heavens are the various realms or levels of spiritual experience where we meet and know God. When God is revealed to you by the Spirit, heaven is opened and you behold heavenly things.

In the lower heavens you know God in a more elementary way. It is wonderful to know God in His heavens. Each heaven bespeaks of a plane of relationship with God by the Spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life, wisdom and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. In the lower heavens you see and touch and experience God spiritually in limitation. As you pass through the heavens you come to know God in greater and grander measures. You experience Him in a deeper way. You come to know God more fully. In our progression through the heavens we encounter the laws, or order, or ways of God in each heaven. In the natural world there are laws - universal laws. One law that we all are acquainted with is the law of gravity. A “law” is something in nature that always, under the same circumstances, and with the same conditions, happens the same way. If there is no deviation, no exception to the occurrence or phenomenon -it is a law. When scientists observe that under the same conditions something always happens the same way, it is recognized as a law. The reason gravity is called the law of gravity is because we know that if you throw a rock off a cliff it is absolutely certain what will happen. There is no question about it. No one reading these lines would be willing to bet that the rock will shoot up into the atmosphere like a rocket!

In the natural realm man becomes familiar with its laws from earliest childhood. He orders his waking and sleeping by the rising and setting of the sun. He does not jump out of tall trees or off tall buildings because the law of gravity dictates that bones will be broken. Flesh will splatter, and serious injury or death will ensue. He doesn't put his hand on glowing metal because it will burn. He sees that two objects cannot occupy the same space. He observes the movements of the heavens and learns that the heavenly bodies travel in fixed and predictable paths. He watches the soaring of the eagle high above the earth and knows that he cannot fly like a bird. He learns that seed will germinate in the earth and with proper care will grow and produce a harvest. He learns that good food and exercise promote health, strength, and well-being. Above all he quickly perceives that he must accommodate his being to these laws if he is to survive on this planet and make his living here enjoyable and profitable. He conforms to these laws; they do not conform to him and he cannot break them with impunity or bend them to his will; but if he will cooperate with the laws great good and blessing can be his.

What is true in the physical realm is likewise true in the spiritual realm. The world of the spirit is governed by spiritual laws just as powerful and precise as the laws of the physical world. They cannot be discovered by the natural mind, nor by man's search or investigation through natural or scientific channels. They can neither be discerned or touched by the natural senses. They belong to the order of divine revelation and are revealed to man only by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. One cannot supplant these spiritual laws, nor nullify, nor break them with impunity any more than with the natural laws. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of law. That means that in the Kingdom of God there are precise principles that govern all its activities, administrations and manifestations. If you move in conformity with those principles you will meet with success - no question about it. The Kingdom of God operates by divine law. There is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death. The law of life in no way negates the law of sin and death - it supersedes it -just as the law of aerodynamics supersedes the law of gravity, enabling an airplane to soar into the sky instead

of crashing into the earth. No law can be broken - but any law may be superseded by a higher law.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is the law of the Kingdom - and it supersedes the law of sin and death. Many of us in our spiritual walk have been trying to “die” in order to live. We’ve had the idea that if we could overcome and conquer the death in us we would be able to live the life of Christ. But that is a contradiction of the law of life. You don’t die in order to live - you live in order to die. In fact, if you don’t live before you die, you had better not die! If you don’t have life before you die, there will be nothing left - not even a hope of resurrection. Do you know why Jesus was willing to die? He was willing to die because He could say, “No man taketh my life from me - I lay it down; I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again.” The one who lays down his life must have power to take it up again. If you have not the power to lay your life down, and take it back up, then may God help you not to die! You must live in order to die, so that when you die you can still live. Christ’s life was secure in death because He had life before He died, and by that life He arose. Someone says, “But, I’m not going to die!” Well, do you know what the proof of me having life would be? The proof would be for me to say, “Go ahead, kill me...pull the trigger, man, because I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again.” A lesser degree of life is required to live and not die, than to die and still live, and bring yourself back again. When I have a quality of life that IS, then I can lay it down and take it up. So the law of the spirit of life makes me free from the law of sin and death. It is Christ in me that enables Adam to be brought to death, yet I live. I live and then die, and still I live. I’m not going to conquer something so I can have the victory - I must get the victory so I can conquer something. It is not victory that gives you power, it is power that gives you victory. Get life, precious friend of mine, and all the death in you will take care of itself. Increase in life and you will increase in death. These are divine laws, the laws of the Kingdom of God.

God has dealt with me deeply over many years in the area of His laws. We are not an accident going somewhere to happen. And we will not just “saunter” into the Kingdom of God or “slide” into sonship. We will not stumble or fumble our way into the fullness of God. We will not accidentally enter into life. God has no “Honorary” titles or positions in His Kingdom. You will not just wake up one fine morning to discover that you are a manifested son of God. It’s not going to happen! There are laws - the whole economy of God operates by divine principles. There are prescribed paths and precise processes by which one apprehends the things of God. The tabernacle in the wilderness is the figure of this great truth. The feasts of Israel instruct us in God’s ways. All the types and shadows of the Old Testament instruct us in this wisdom and knowledge of spiritual law. Yes, there are laws. And if the laws can be revealed to us, if we can understand the laws that govern the Kingdom realm of God, if we will say “Yes” to the laws, if we can come into harmony with the laws, and let God apply the laws to our lives - the laws will work every time! The needed change will be wrought in us, the work will be accomplished, God’s will shall be done, there will be a mighty transformation into the image of God, and life will swallow up death - all will happen as we walk in conformity with the law.

THE FIRST HEAVEN - ASKING AND RECEIVING

There are divine laws in prayer. Imagine a man taking hold of a shovel, who has never seen one before, and beginning to use it as best he knows how, but upside down. After working awhile I can imagine hearing him say, “It is hard work to use a shovel, and I cannot accomplish a great deal with it either!” We would be most happy to be able to take the shovel into our own hands and show him how to use it. After trying again for a while, he will exclaim, “How easy it is to use a shovel, and how much one can do with it!” All life and all of God’s creation are

governed by laws. Where these laws are understood and obeyed, everything works well and is productive. The spiritual life, too, has its laws. If we do not apply these laws, our spiritual lives will be burdensome and fruitless. But if we can discover and follow the laws which govern our development in the Kingdom of God, we will grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ - changed into His likeness, imbued with His mind, quickened by His life in spirit, soul and body.

THREE LAW'S OF THE KINGDOM

When I speak of God's laws I speak not of the law of Moses. I'm not talking about any Old Testament law. And I'm not talking about church laws, traditions, or regulations. I'm talking about Kingdom law - the spiritual principles of the Kingdom of God. I want to share with you in this writing three law's of the Kingdom. They are not new. You have heard of them on some level many times. But I want to set forth these laws today that we might understand precisely the method God is using to bring us from where we are, and from where we were, unto the place to which He has appointed us in Himself. All three laws are found in Matthew 7:7 in connection with Christ's great teaching on prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." According to these laws, what happens when you ask? You receive! What happens when you seek? You find! And, what is the result of knocking? Why, it is opened unto you! Those are precise and immutable laws. They are not promises. There is a world of difference between a promise and a law. Promises may be broken. But a law is never broken. I'm not talking about a law like the speed law - you can break the speed law, although there is a penalty. I'm talking about cosmic laws, universal laws, natural laws like physics - and divine laws. These laws are inviolable. They are constant.

Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you: for every one that asketh receiveth" - there's the law! Not a promise - a law. How awesome, expansive, and all-inclusive! How glorious, positive, and absolute! EVERYONE THAT ASKETH, RECEIVETH. Someone has written: "Would it surprise you to learn that one of the basic laws of economics is also a basic law of prayer? It's the law of need (which creates what economists call 'demand') and supply. This law is operative in all business transactions. When a person applies to the bank for a loan to buy a new car, he is putting this law into operation. The buyer has a need; the bank has the resources to meet that need. Such transactions require two parties. Before a loan is contracted, there must be a borrower and a lender; before a gift is possible, there must be a receiver and a giver; before a legal will can exist, there must be an heir and a testator; before an organ is transplanted, there must be a recipient and a donor. Just as all these human transactions require a giver and a receiver, so does prayer. It's a sense of need that causes us to pray, but coupled with it must be a recognition of the abundant resources of God that are available to meet those needs."

When we think of asking, we may recall some dramatic experience we have had, similar to the experience of Captain Eddie Rickenbacher, who was lost at sea with seven other men. In answer to their prayers for food, God sent a sea gull who landed on the top of Rickenbacher's head; in answer to their requests for water, God sent rain. And after twenty-one days, God answered their prayers for rescue. All the basic and most needful things in life are given. They are not purchased or merited or earned or won or discovered - they are given. It is failure to realize this great truth that deprives many precious people of the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of Heaven. They cannot believe that salvation is free - they think they must beg for it, work for it, or labor and sacrifice for it. They cannot believe that God freely gives us all things and that He delights to give good gifts to His children. The way to get a thing that is purchasable is to pay for it. The way to get a thing that is to be earned is to work for it. The way

to get a thing that is to be given is to ask for it. "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Mat. 7:7). "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). "For every one that asketh receiveth" (Mat. 7:6). "Again I say unto you. That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 18:19). "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Mat. 21:22). "Therefore I say unto you. What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11:24). "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (Jn. 14:14). "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 16:24).

There are two primary words in the Greek New Testament translated ask. One is the word *EPEROTAO*, which means "to ask, to inquire, as asking questions." But the word used about prayer is *AITEO*, which means "to ask, to crave, to desire, to call for," always meaning asking for something. I have just counted about thirty times that this word is used about prayer in the New Testament. And it is properly translated "ask." We are invited to ask. Nay, we are even commanded to ask! What condescension! We are to ask of whom? We are to ask of our Father who is God and King and Lord of the universe. We are to ask of that One who is the omnipotent Ruler, not only of the nations of this world, and the planets of this system, but of all the starry heavens; that One who controls the galaxies in their orbits and also the atoms in the tiniest drop of water. We are to ask Him. Did you ever think about that? I might invite you to ask the President of the United States about anything or for anything. I would suggest that you lay this paper down and call him. What do you think would happen? You would not even get within four echelons of speaking to him. Try the vice-president. Same problem. How about the Governor? Give it a try. How about the President of General Motors? Or Ford? Or Chrysler? Try to get him on the phone. I challenge you! Yet, we are invited to ask the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

Said the robin to the sparrow, I should really like to know Why these anxious human beings Rush about and worry so! Said the sparrow to the robin, Friend, I think that it must be That they have no Heavenly Father Such as cares for you and me!

Now listen. I want to share with you an elementary truth of supreme significance. "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). Good things! T-H-I-N-G-S! Those who ask are given things. I draw your reverent attention to the two significant words: ask and things. If you ask, what do you get? THINGS! What kind of things? Good things! But they are, nonetheless, things. This realm of asking for and receiving things is the First heaven. If you are going to touch God, experience God, and know God in the realm of the Spirit, the very first dimension in which you will come to know Him is in the realm of "things". This is the external realm. It is the realm where we learn to know God as the great heavenly Santa Claus, as the great Godfather, the Blesser and Benefactor of His children.

This truth cannot be made plainer than in the words of the Lord Jesus wherein He says, "Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mk. 11:24). Is that a law? Absolutely! What do you get when you pray? Things! I want you to get this. You ask and you receive things. You pray and you get things. God says this is a divine law; it works and there is no qualifying. Getting things is contingent only upon our asking. There are no other conditions, no stipulations, no disclaimers, no hidden clauses or fine print. He doesn't say that if you last for ten days you will receive things. He doesn't say that if you never get angry, curse, lust, or act like the devil. He will give

you things. He doesn't say if you never fail or miss the mark you can get things. Nor does He say if you pay tithes, attend Church, and read the Bible you will get things. There are no other prerequisites. The law is the law of asking in faith - plus nothing!

You will understand a great truth when you understand that a gift is not given because of the goodness of the recipient, but because of the goodness of the Giver. That's why salvation is a gift. Salvation is the gift of God to poor, undone, unworthy sinners. Faith, saving faith, is a gift, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 3:8). The Holy Spirit is a gift. Healing is a gift. Divine provision is a gift. The gift realm involves areas where there is no qualifying. That is why we have seen men with great sign-gift ministries, who could preach like Paul, prophesy until the hair stood up on your neck, and perform mighty signs, wonders and miracles, yet their lives were sadly lacking in character. The blind would see, the deaf would hear, the lame walked, prophecy flowed like a river, they could tell you your street address, your phone number, reveal the secrets of your heart - and the next afternoon be caught at a motel in bed with another man's wife. Why is that? Because they are moving in a gift realm. Gifts of the Spirit. And when God gives gifts He requires no qualifying. No one in the New Testament had more gifts than the saints at Corinth. Yet they were perhaps the most carnal, licentious, and corrupt Church in the early Church. But, you see, gifts are given because of the goodness of the Giver - not because of the goodness of the recipient. That is the law of the gift realm.

But it is a realm in which you can know God. In fact, I do not doubt for one moment that the vast majority of those who read this message first became acquainted with God in that realm - the realm of God's goodness, the realm of His loving kindness and tender mercies, the realm of answers to prayer, blessings, miracles, and supernatural supply. It is the spiritual world all the starry-eyed, effervescent Charismatics live in! It is the realm of need consciousness, and our heavenly Father's faithfulness to provide. Multitudes of believers never follow on to know God beyond that realm. They are heaven dwellers - the FIRST HEAVEN. It is a great fact, if you could eliminate people's prayers for "things" and "needs" you would immediately reduce their prayer life by at least 90%. "Oh, God, do this. Oh, God, do that. Oh, God, help me here, bless me there, give me a better job, increase my Finances, supply a new car, heal my body, help my children, do something for Grandma..." Oh, how "need" conscious are God's children! Some years ago I was in a meeting and a brother expressed the mentality of the vast majority of Christians today. He asked the congregation, "How many have a need tonight?" Every hand in the building shot up. The brother continued, "If you don't have a need, then you ought to!" How many of us have our center in our "needs"? The truth is, if you removed the saints "needs" from the average Church meeting or prayer group, they wouldn't know how to conduct the meeting! Most meetings are conducted with a basic consciousness that we need God. Very few meetings are conducted with the consciousness that WE ARE FILLED WITH GOD!

In the first heaven of spiritual experience we are conscious of "needs" and the "things" that meet the need and we touch God on that level. And God is faithful there! "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Mat. 6:6-8). Here we have it again - things and asking. And this is the heaven that the great majority of Christians have ascended to. That is the realm in which they know and experience God. All the faith and prosperity message today - two BMW's in every garage, the best jobs, the finest homes, the largest bank accounts, the most luxurious cars, the finest clothes, and all the amenities of life - God wants to bless and prosper you! God will make you successful and wealthy! And I'm not opposed to that. I can surely use all He sends! But what I'm saying is that this is the lowest heaven - the lowest

spiritual level one can know and experience God on. It is the knowledge of God on the external, physical, material world of things. And this realm is real! It is one of God's heavens! Thank God for that realm!

I've known preachers that have never met God in the first heaven reality. There were a couple of lady ministers that came to the Church where I was minister in Sarasota, Florida back in the 1960's. I had known this one sister for several years and had a great respect for her ministry - she had a beautiful prophetic flow and a real word of the Kingdom. But I had not seen her for a few years. She contacted me about a meeting. I opened the door for her to come our way - but a little red flag went up in my spirit while we were conversing on the phone. I shoved it aside because of my confidence in the ministry I had known in her. She began telling me about her co-worker who traveled with her. She said that God had given her co-worker a special ministry in Finance. They would pass out miracle envelopes and the people would give as they were led by the Lord - but they would not let the people give for nothing. They were to expect a miracle, and to every one who passed in their "miracle offering" they would give a "Word". Well, the Lord was teaching me some fundamental lessons in those days. When they arrived the co-worker had a white robe that she said God told her to wear. The First night they passed out the miracle envelopes and instructed the people to pray and ask God how much they should put in it; then return the envelope on any night during the meetings, at which time they would pray over them for a miracle and prophesy the Word of the Lord.

The Lord quickened a scripture in my spirit: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20). Brother, you had better believe, the next day I presented myself at these sisters' motel room. I said, "Sister, that's not going to work in this Church. Our people don't think that way, they don't operate that way, they don't know God that way, and you're not going to get anything out of this people by those methods." I said to her, because she professed to be a Kingdom preacher, "Sister, don't you know the principles of the Kingdom of God? Jesus said that if you have a need you should enter into your closet, shut the door, and pray to your Father in secret. Your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you openly." And I'm here to testify today that it works! All through the years of our walk in the Kingdom realm God has not permitted us to ask for money, or send out letters to solicit funds. And we have no gimmicks, no miracle envelopes, no book offer for an offering of dollars or more! We neither have to ask or beg for money, because our heavenly Father has revealed to us a higher law. You see, GOD IS OUR SOURCE! Yes, God uses people, but we do not look to the people, we look to God our source. When I was in business, God was my source. Many years ago in my business, if things weren't going well, I prayed - and God answered! He showed me what to do. He put me in contact with the people who needed my service, and were glad to pay for the quality of work we did. God blessed the business because of this principle: "Your Father knows what things ye have need of before ye ask; and if you ask, you will receive." I have proven that principle thousands of times. We have never gone hungry. We have never been stranded anywhere, though in years past we traveled extensively, often with our whole family, at home and abroad. We went to the mission fields for several years with no committed support. We have never defaulted on a payment. We have not, except for one six-month period, received a salary in the ministry. And in twenty-five years of publishing KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES, having mailed out well in excess of a million papers and books, we have never solicited funds in any meeting or by mail - but we have spent some quality time in the closet! We have tried the law, we have tested the law, we proved the law, and the law works! Some people entertain the notion that only preachers "live by faith." Not so! We all live by faith. The same law worked for me in business that works for me in ministry. God is our source - whether we work at the corner convenience store, own a business, or are in full time ministry. If you are struggling to raise five kids, pay the rent, and put food on the table -

our Father still knows what things you have need of before you ask. He still opens doors of provision. He still makes a way where there is no way. He still performs miracles for ALL who call upon Him. There is no difference. God is God and the law of His Kingdom is His law for all who live in His domain.

Oh, that God's precious people would learn that this is just the FIRST HEAVEN! We get so involved with, and centered in, our needs, until we miss the fact that God has a need. Can we comprehend the idea that God has a need? You see, the scripture reveals that God created all things "for His pleasure" (Rev. 4:11). Sometimes we have sinned, we have missed the mark, and come short of God's glory and failed to bring pleasure to the heart of God. God has a need for the fellowship of sons, of like ones unto Himself. That was His plan, His purpose from the beginning. "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." God's heart was the same as the hearts of parents today, to reproduce Himself, to have a great family, to populate the universe with an Elohim company, the extension and projection of Himself- gods in the likeness of God. "The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (Jn. 10:33-36). Yes, God has a need - involvement with His sons in His great creative purposes. In the path of sonship there comes a time when our need becomes dwarfed in the higher light of God's need, and we discover that when our overwhelming objective becomes not to get, but to live unto the Father, satisfy His heart and fulfill His purposes - then our need IS MET IN THE OVERFLOW!

THE SECOND HEAVEN - SEEKING AND FINDING

In this glorious transition from realm to realm we hear a voice saying, "Come up hither," and are translated from the first heaven to the second. This brings us into relation to the second spiritual law, and law number two is the reality of heaven number two. How well we know the law of the First heaven: "Ask, and you get things." That's the BMW realm! Now, let me present to you the law of the second heaven: "Seek, and ye shall find" (Mat. 7:7). I would draw your attention to the difference between receiving and finding. These two terms are not the same at all. There is also a world of difference between asking and seeking. These words are not synonyms, nor is seeking simply an intensification of asking. These two principles do not work the same way. I could ask a friend for \$100.00 and he might give it to me. But that is not the same as seeking it. Let us suppose I hear about a treasure hidden in the Franklin mountains by El Paso. I decide to seek for the treasure. If I should seek for it, and find it, it would not be a gift, no one gave it to me - I found it! It is a discovery!

The difference between asking and seeking, and between receiving and finding, is that in the first heaven you ask for things and receive things, but in the second heaven you seek for God and His Kingdom and you find the Lord Himself. The line is drawn between these two realms in the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-33. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for the body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye need all these things. But seek ye the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

May the blessed spirit of Truth give understanding to all who read these lines! The Gentiles seek. You mean they don't ask? No, the Gentiles don't ask for things. The heathen don't ask

for things. The unbeliever doesn't ask for things. Why? Because it is in their nature to seek things. "After all these things do the Gentiles seek." Sons of God, on the other hand, do not seek things. When they have need of things they ask - and receive. God graciously and generously gives things in response to asking. What divine simplicity! But the heathen do not know this wonderful privilege of receiving simply by asking the heavenly Father - so they seek, search, pursue, and actively strive to acquire "things". They devote themselves to it. They work at it. They expend all their time and energies for the acquisition of things. How busy they are! They burn the midnight oil and work themselves into the grave in the pursuit of things that perish with the using.

Children of the heavenly Father, who know God in the First heaven, learn to ask their Father and their Father delights to give them everything. I don't mean they don't work - but they rest in their work for they have found God as their source. But the unbeliever knows not the heavenly Father. The man outside of God does not come boldly and confidently to ask the Father for things, therefore he moves in another principle and seek things. Any of you that are in the business world know what I'm talking about. That's what this whole "greed" economy is all about. All the push and shove and dog-eat-dog mentality - I will trample everybody in my path, I will use everyone I can, I will cheat, lie, abuse, grasp and scratch to get to the top. The salesman who convinces you that you need something you can't afford and don't even want - do you know what principle he is working on? You've got a dollar and he's seeking it! The whole spirit of the economic system of the world is based on the "greed factor," and it's the principle of seek things at any cost. So Jesus says that the Gentiles seek things because they never learned about asking. They have never been translated out of the lowlands of the earthy into the first heaven of spiritual experience. If you're in business with God, you've got it made, my friend. You don't have to push, shove, sweat, misrepresent, lie, cheat, use hard-sell tactics, take advantage and all the rest. But those outside this Kingdom are busy burning the rubber on the road trying to make it by seeking things. Hear now the word of the Lord! "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE A-D-D-E-D UNTO YOU." Here is the law of the second heaven: "SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD...and all these t-h-i-n-g-s shall be added unto you!" Oh - I like that law! I love this second heaven!

Let me tell you something about the word seek. In the Old Testament Hebrew, where it appears most frequently, it is the word DARASH which is derived From a root meaning "to tread, frequent, chase, pursue relentlessly and unceasingly." In the New Testament Greek, seek comes from a word that means not simply to "desire" something, but to "require" it. In other words, it indicates that you will not take "No" For an answer. That is something more than asking! Asking means requesting. Seeking is demanding. The Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given; seek (the Kingdom), and ye shall Find." And it is a great fact that in all the pages of the Bible God never instructed a Gentile, or an unconverted man, to seek God. Did you know that? Every scripture within the pages of God's Book - and they are numerous - that says, "Seek ye the Lord," is addressed to the people of God.

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near...and our God...will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7). We used to preach that evangelistically. We hung those poor sinners over the Fires of hell until they could hear the flames crackling, they could feel the heat blasts from the pit, they could hear the fiendish cackle of the devil's laugh - and

we exhorted the sinner to seek the Lord while He may be found, to call upon Him while it is still the day of salvation, because life is uncertain, death is sure, and he might die before the sun rises and go out into eternity to meet God. That makes good evangelistic preaching - but it's not scriptural. Furthermore, it's a lie. God never said to the sinner, "Seek the Lord." I've got news for you - there is no sinner that can seek the Lord!

I do not believe that the Bible anywhere teaches that man is a "free moral agent" and can "choose" or "reject" the Lord of his own volition. That teaching is a figment of the imagination of the harlot church system. In fact, the Bible teaches the exact opposite. It tells us, "It is NOT of him that WILLETH or of him that runneth but of GOD that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). The biggest lie that ever was told in human language is that all men are born free moral agents. They are not born free. Be honest! Is that child free who is born in the slums, the child of a harlot and a whoremonger; a child without name, who grows up with the brand of shame upon his brow from the beginning; who grows up amidst vice, and never knows virtue until it is steeped in vice? Is such a child a free moral agent, free to act intelligently, as he chooses, upon all moral and spiritual questions? Is that child free who grows up amidst falsehood, and never knows what truth is until it is steeped in lies; that never knows what honesty is until it is steeped in crime? Is that child born free? Is that child free who is born in a communist land and in a godless home: who is told by its government and taught by its teachers that there is no God in heaven, and never knows even a verse of scripture until it is steeped in unbelief and infidelity? Is that child born free? Is he a free moral agent? It is a sham, a delusion, and a snare to say it. It is not true. All are not born into this world with freedom of choice in all things. The truth is much stronger than that, for the fact is, that NONE is a free moral agent!

It is a wicked and cruel lie to say that the unregenerated man is a "free moral agent" and can voluntarily or by persuasion "seek the Lord." He is no such thing! He is a slave. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am a creature of the flesh (carnal), having been SOLD INTO SLAVERY UNDER THE CONTROL OF SIN" (Rom. 7:14, Amplified). The unregenerate man is a slave to sin and the devil. He is a slave to his own carnal mind and deceitfully wicked heart. He is a slave of his own, vile passions. How can a man who is a slave and a captive of the devil be a free moral agent and deliberately seek the Lord? Impossible! Adam sold us out. Adam gave us no choice in bringing his progeny under the workings of iniquity. When Adam went into sin, he did not consult with any one of us as to our desire concerning anything he did. None of us had any power or any choice in the condition in which we entered this world. "WE WERE NOT SINNERS BY CHOICE, as we have erroneously been told. We are "born in sin, and shapened in iniquity," with the carnal nature in us from the moment we leave the womb. Being "dead in trespasses and sins," dead to God, dead to truth, dead to purity, dead to reality, the Adamic race was no longer capable of making a choice or decision for God or salvation. How truly the apostle wrote in Ephesians 2:2-3, "And you...were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and WERE BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH, even as others."

The message is clear - we were not sinners by choice. We were sinners by NATURE! We were born into this condition, simply because the first man, Adam, put us all into slavery to sin. We had nothing to say about it. We did not in any way will it, consent to it, or choose it, for we were born into it. There is no fact more self-evident than the fact of the total depravity of man, or his total inability to deliver himself from bondage to sin, and this is rooted in the fact that he is spiritually dead (unresponsive to the spirit) from birth. Total depravity means that man in his

natural state is incapable of doing anything or desiring anything pleasing to God. Until our spirit is quickened by His Spirit we are slaves of the flesh and the devil and are enemies to God. When man contends that he is a free moral agent and can seek after or spurn the Lord out of his own will, the Word of God contradicts him, declaring, "There is none righteous, no not one! There is none that understandeth, there is N-O-N-E THAT SEEKETH after God" (Rom. 3:10-11).

Total depravity means that man, of his own free will, will never make a decision for Christ. Our blessed Lord bluntly says, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (Jn. 5:40). Why does our Lord say this? Because the will of the carnal man is bound by the bands of sin and death to the world of the spiritually dead. The natural man is completely incapable of discerning Truth. In fact, the carnal mind thinks of the things of God as being ridiculous! "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). Man cannot see or know the things that pertain to the Kingdom of God, without first being quickened by the Holy Spirit. Hence the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3). Unborn children do not see the light. Dead men do not see the light.

Natural men cannot comprehend even that they should come to the Light. They are the unborn dead who know only darkness UNTIL GOD SEES FIT TO GIVE THEM LIFE and understanding. Faith follows the giving of Life. The giving of Life is by the will of God. Notice the order: "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ (by grace are ye saved)" (Eph. 2:4-5). Man is not saved by some mythical act of his own free will. He is saved by grace, the divine enablement of God who first gives him Life and then imparts faith into his heart as a free gift. Paul continues, "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the Gift of God. It is not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

Wise men standing by the grave of Lazarus might pronounce it an evidence of insanity when the Lord addressed a dead man with the words, "Lazarus, Come forth." Ah, but He who thus spake was and is Himself the Resurrection, and the Life, and at HIS word even the dead live! Just as Lazarus would never have heard the voice of Jesus, nor would he have ever "come to Jesus," without first being given Life by our Lord, so all men "dead in trespasses and sins," must first be given Life by God before they can "come to Christ" or "seek the Lord." Since dead men cannot will to receive Life, but can be raised from the dead only by the power of God, so the natural man cannot of His own volition will to have Life and seek after the Lord. If Jesus had had no more than an "invitation" for Lazarus to receive Life, He could have knocked at that tombstone door for a long, long time. But Christ spoke the Life-giving Word and that Word brought Lazarus to life and caused his heart to begin to beat and his lungs to work, and Lazarus heard the voice of his Master and received the faith to arise and walk out of the darkness of that tomb of death.

Chapter 3

Teach Us To Pray

(continued)

In this article we continue our thoughts on prayer in connection with the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Greek word for “heaven”, in the New Testament, is most often in the plural. When you read Jesus’ great parables of the Kingdom of Heaven it is really the Kingdom of the Heavens. Also, in the Lord’s prayer, where Jesus teaches sons to pray, He says, according to the King James Bible, “Our Father, which art in heaven.” But in Greek it is plural - “Our Father, which art in the heavens.” So, contrary to popular thought, there is more than one heaven. Furthermore, heaven is not a place, not a geographical or astral location - it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is a dimension of life. It is a level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of Spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is the dimension of being where God dwells. Heaven is as omnipresent as God, for God is omnipresent and God is in heaven. If our Father is in you, then heaven is within you, for our Father is the Father in heaven. If you are in the Father, then you are in heaven. Heaven is the realm in which God is revealed by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God is known by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be touched by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be experienced in the Spirit. God is the God of the heavens, and if ever you will see Him, if ever you will know Him, if ever you will touch Him, if ever you will experience Him-it will be in the heavens where He dwells.

In the lower heavens you know God in a more elementary way. How wonderful it is to know God in His heavens! Each heaven bespeaks of a plane of relationship with God by the Spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life, wisdom and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. In the lower heavens you see and touch and experience God spiritually in limitation. As you pass through the heavens you come to know God in greater and grander measures. You experience Him in a deeper way. You come to know God more fully. In our progression through the heavens we encounter the laws, or order, or ways of God in each heaven. What is true in the physical realm is likewise true in the spiritual realm. The world of the spirit is governed by spiritual laws just as powerful and precise as the laws of the physical world. They cannot be discovered by the natural mind, nor by man’s search or investigation through natural or scientific channels. They can neither be discerned nor touched by the natural senses. They belong to the order of divine revelation and are revealed to man only by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God.

God has dealt with me over many years in the area of His laws. I continue to share with you in this writing three laws of the Kingdom. They are not new. You have heard of them on some level or in some context many times. But I want to set forth these laws that we might understand precisely the method God is using to bring us from where we are unto the place to which He has appointed us in Himself. All three laws are found in Matthew 7:7 in connection with Christ’s great teaching on prayer. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” According to these laws, what happens when you

ask? You receive! What happens when you seek? You find! And, what is the result of knocking? Why, it is opened unto you! Those are exact and immutable laws. They are not promises; there is a world of difference between a promise and a law. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you: for everyone that asketh receiveth"-there's the law! Not a promise - a law. How awesome, expansive, and all-inclusive! How glorious, positive and absolute!

EVERYONE THAT ASKETH, RECEIVETH.

Now listen. I want to share with you an elementary truth of supreme significance. "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). Good things! T-H-I-N-G-S! Those who ask are given things. I draw your reverent attention to the two significant words: ask and things. If you ask, what do you get? THINGS! What kind of things? Good things! But they are, nonetheless, things. This realm of asking for and receiving things is the first heaven. If you are going to touch God, experience God, and know God in the realm of the Spirit, the very first dimension in which you will come to know Him is in the realm of "things". This is the external realm. And the vast majority of Christians are content to remain in that first heaven of spiritual experience. They are satisfied with the forgiveness realm, the blessing realm, the gift realm where all is received by free grace through faith. Everything in those elementary realms is free! It is yours for the asking. There are no conditions, no qualifications, no price, neither is there any great attainment in God. It is the realm of children, of babes in Christ. But the realm of children receiving gifts from their parents is a blessed world indeed!

A minister once asked one of the young boys in his congregation if he had prayed the night before. The quick response was, "No, I couldn't think of anything I needed last night." A little black girl came to her preacher one day and joyously exclaimed, "I prays every night before I gits into bed." "That's wonderful," was the preacher's commendation, "but do you also pray in the morning?" Her immediate reply was, "Oh no, I ain't sceeded in the morning." We know that many children, and some who have passed childhood years, pray for a good day for the picnic, to pass examinations, to win the ball game, for a new doll, or a new coat. Their prayers are centered in themselves and their wants. Many times they ask God to do for them something they are not willing to take the time or the trouble to do for themselves. Perhaps all school term one drifts along, doing little studying, often missing classes, and then he asks God to pass the examination for him. Such praying is understandable in the lives of youngsters, and we know that our loving Father hears and answers prayers born of distress. Like earthly parents, out of His love He sometimes "bails us out.?" But there is a blessed realm beyond the childish prayers prayed, not just by little children, but by the vast majority of believers who are only little children in the Spirit.

In this glorious transition from realm to realm we hear a Voice saying, "Come up hither," and are translated from the first heaven to the second. Now, let me present to you the law of the second heaven: "Seek and ye shall find" (Mat. 7:7). The difference between asking and seeking, and between receiving and finding, is that in the first heaven one asks for things, whereas in the second heaven one seeks for God and His Kingdom and finds the Lord Himself. The line is drawn between these two realms in the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-33. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for the body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye need all these things. But seek ye the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The second level in knowing and experiencing God is denoted by this word “seek”. You cannot think of what it means to seek without understanding that an element of time is involved. You can ask in a moment-but seeking is not a single act. It is a process, a series of acts. Every mother knows that husbands and children think of seeking as a single act. They will stand in the middle of a room, or pull open a drawer, and cast one sweeping glance around it, looking for a lost object, and then call for help. “Mom, where is my red sweater?” And mother opens the drawer or the closet door and lifts the clothes and there it suddenly appears right in the place where Susan just looked for it. Searching involves a process.

It is instructive to note that throughout the scriptures the term seek is always related to the Lord. One of the very few places where things are associated with seeking is in Matthew 6:22 where Jesus states that the Gentiles seek things. But unto His own He speaks of seeking the Lord. “This is the generation of them that SEEK HIM, that seek THY FACE...” (Ps. 24:6). This speaks of the generation-a people generated or brought forth- to seek the Lord. There is a generation, a people generated out of Himself, that can only find their fulfillment and destiny in Him, so they seek Him. As the salmon seeks out the place of its spawning, so these return unto their God. “Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction and sayest, Return, ye children of men” (Ps. 90:1-3). There is something within us, when our spirit has been quickened by His Spirit, whereby we recognize that there is a realm, there is a God, there is a Father out of whom our life has come, and we have known and experienced that realm in our origins. The Psalmist proclaims that God has been our dwelling place before the mountains were brought forth, or ever God formed the earth and the world. Suddenly, when God reveals Himself in our life, we remember; we were somewhere before, there is a reality to which we are drawn to return.

Some years ago I made a trip to Italy because my forefathers came from the valleys of the Alps in northern Italy, very close to the French border, in what is called the Piedmont. Long centuries ago they were French speaking, Celtic Italians, who by religion were Waldensian. The Waldensians were non-Catholic evangelical Christians that inhabited these valleys of the Alps for centuries before the Protestant Reformation. There had always been something in my heart that wanted to return to where my forefathers came from, just a natural desire to see the land, to investigate the present state of the Waldensians, and find out whether any of our family is still there. It was my desire because of my biological and spiritual roots in a godly people in a far-away land. I was aware that my family has a long and rich spiritual heritage, traceable back to the days of the early apostles. We have a history of our family, and I know exactly which Papal Inquisition forced my forefathers to flee Italy in the year 1540. They crossed the Alps into Switzerland, where eventually they became Mennonites. All of this, of course, is in the natural. There is another spiritual heritage and origin higher and greater far than this.

There is a passage in the book of Hebrews that speaks of those great heroes of faith under the Old Covenant, and it says, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:13-16). These men of God were seeking a country- Abraham knew that the ground he walked on in the land of Canaan was not the true land of

God, for “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” He was searching for the City of God and knew that he was only a pilgrim and stranger in the land of Canaan, though God had led him thither. “If they had been mindful”—that is, if they had remembered that country from whence they came, that celestial realm, that heavenly kingdom, that spiritual reality from whence they were lowered into this earth-realm; if somehow the veil could have been removed from off their minds, from the limitations of their earthiness so that they could have remembered that country from when they came—they might have had opportunity to have returned. But instead, they died in faith—still looking for the City of God, the Kingdom of God—spiritual reality.

Blessed be His name! God has provided some better thing for us and now we can return. The way has been opened into the presence of God, into the life of God, into the Kingdom of God, into the City of God, into the Holiest of all. That’s what this journey into God is all about—a return to the Lord. It is our return to the heavenly; our return to the spiritual; our return to the image of God; our return to Eden; our return to the Kingdom; our return to the incorruptible. There’s 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 passed the point of no return. There is no turning back from this Quest for God. 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 the powers of the world to come. There is no turning back because my heart has returned 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 entered in to behold the transcendent glories of that land from whence we came. By the blood of Jesus we have been granted the opportunity to return.

Do you know what it takes to discover and appropriate all the glorious and eternal reality of this land—what is required? It takes some seeking. You don’t just glide into the Feast of Tabernacles. You don’t slip into God’s glory. You don’t coast into the fullness of God. You don’t accidentally enter into life and immortality. You don’t just wake up one fine morning to discover yourself a manifested son of God. There are laws that govern our ascent. There is a prescribed order for entering into the Kingdom of God. There is a pre-ordained path of progression. “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple” (Ps. 27:4). David said, “I’ll seek this.” Let me assure you, precious friend of mine, you don’t get this glory by asking. You get things by asking. But the fullness of God is not acquired by asking.

Childishness in prayer is chiefly evidenced in an over desire to beg things from God rather than desiring above all else the LORD HIMSELF. The same growth must take place in the life of every son and daughter of God that occurs in a normal relationship between a child and his parents. At first the child wants the parents’ gifts, and thinks of the parents primarily in terms of the things that they do and provide for his pleasure and comfort. He is not able yet to appreciate the value of the parents’ personalities. A sure sign of a wholesome maturity is found in the child’s deepening understanding of the parents themselves—his increasing delight in their fellowship, thankfulness for their care, acceptance of their ideals, reliance on their counsel, and joy in their approval. The child grows through desiring things from his parents into love of his parents for their own sakes. He is then able to enter into a partnership with them in their business with all the respect and responsibility called for.

Sons desire the Lord for Himself, for His intrinsic excellencies. The Savour of the ointment of Christ's graces draws the virgins' desires after Him (S. of S. 1:3). "With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early" (Isa. 26:9). We desire the Lord not only more than the world, but more than heaven. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" (Ps. 73:25). If God should say to the soul, "I will put thee in heaven, but I will hide my presence from thee, I will draw a curtain between, that thou shalt not behold my glory," we would not be satisfied. "Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there," are the inspired words of the old hymn. Truly, "as the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after Thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1). As a drop of water is not enough for a thirsty traveler, so the "first-fruits of the Spirit" are not enough for the sons of God. A glimpse of Christ through the lattice of the gifts and blessings of the Church age is sweet, but sons of God will never stop hungering and thirsting until they see HIM face to face. We would be swallowed up in God, and be ever bathing ourselves in those perfumed waters which flow from the throne of God.

[George Hawtin](#) wrote: "As a boy I was raised on a farm, an experience that has been a lifelong blessing to me. As little boys we made games of the work we saw the men do. When the giant threshing machines came around in the fall, we played threshing machines. We concocted our engines and separators. We imitated the shouting of the men, the hissing of the steam, the fire in the boilers, the turning of belts and the whirl of pulleys, and the clanging of the giant monsters as they waddled about. We even changed our names to names that seemed more suitable for threshermen, such as Bill and Jack, Ray or Chet. But for all our threshing and all our noise not one kernel of grain ever trickled from our toy machines. The people of God have become like this. They are interested in sound effects and fanfare more than in reality. They are more concerned about the noise that follows the train than about the train itself. They are far more concerned about the signs following the believer than about the true state of the believer that the signs follow. They are more interested in the conglomeration they call doctrine than they are in the fullness of Jesus Christ who is the truth. They are more interested in redemption than in the Redeemer, more enthused about the work they are doing for Christ, than they are about Christ Himself, more worried about the tradition of assembling together than whether or not He is in the midst of them, coveting earnestly the best gifts but giving neither thought nor heed to the more excellent way."

"Seek ye the LORD," saith God. That is, seek His Lordship, seek His Kingship, seek the Dominion of God. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Ps. 63:1). Many years ago Alexander Whyte wrote: "'Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat' (Job 23:3). Is it 'even to His seat,' that you would fain come? Well, know you not where His seat really and truly is? What! Know you not that His seat is within you-even in your heart? 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.' It was when Israel was a child that God came down, and sat upon a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, with the cherubim stretching forth their wings on high. But, finding fault with those childish days, God has now said, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and which ye have of God?' And again-'Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.'

“At the same time, it is the last thing we are willing and able to do-to cease to be children, and to grow up to be men, in the things of God. To learn and know that God is a spirit, and that He dwells not in temples made with hands; but that His true and only temple is the temple of the penitent, contrite, holy and loving heart- that takes much time for most of us to learn. My brethren, be no longer children in understanding; but in understanding be men. Think, my brethren, think! Think your greatest and your best, your most magnificent, your most deep, and inward, and spiritual, about God, and about man, made in the image of God. Think with all your heart, and soul, and strength, and mind about the Divine Nature. Blessed be the glory of the Lord out of His place. Glory be to God for His Godhead, His mysteriousness, His height, His depth, His sovereignty, His almightiness, His eternity, His omnipresence, and His grace! But it is in the heart of man that God establishes His temple. His high throne is prepared and set up in the heart of man. His holy altars are builded and kindled in the heart of man. The sacrifices that alone please God are offered continually in the heart of man. There, the Holy Ghost ministers in prayer and praise without ceasing, making intercession within us with groanings that cannot be uttered. There also is the golden mercy-seat with the two cherubim above it. And there the Great High Priest speaketh peace, and pronounceth His great Benediction, because He continueth there forever.

“Seek thy God, then, in thyself! Oh, ye sons and daughters of the Most High, seek Him whom ye have lost, and seek Him in your own hearts, for ye have lost Him only because ye know not where He is. Come, O prodigal son, come to thyself. Enter into thyself. Enter deep enough into thyself, and thou shalt come unto His seat. For He still sits there, waiting to be gracious there to thee. Oh, what a glory! Oh, what grace! Oh, what a God! Oh, what a heart! To have thy God in thine own heart, and to have Him wholly there for thee. His whole almightiness, His whole grace and truth, His whole wisdom, life and power, His whole redemption, His whole salvation! Arise, then, and enter into God’s holy temple, order your cause before Him there, and fill your mouth with your best arguments there. Till you fall down before Him in your own heart, and say, ‘I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee!’ Are you, then, one of those who are this day saying, ‘Oh that I knew where I might find Him: that I might come even to His seat!’ Then seek Him where Job sought Him and at last found Him. Seek Him in a humble, broken, believing heart. Go on seeking Him in a still more, and a still more, humble, broken, believing heart. Seek Him deep enough, and long enough; seek Him with your whole heart; and sooner, or later, you too will find Him. Seek Him like David, seven times a day. Like David also, prevent the night watches and the dawning of the day seeking Him.

“My beloved brethren! What are you living for? What is your life yielding you? If you are not finding God in all parts of your life-what a fatal mistake you are making! And what a magnificent reward you are forever missing! But, when all is said, it is not to be wondered at that so few of us seek, and seek out, God. For His greatness passes all comprehension, and imagination, and searching out of men and angels. It is only one here, and another there, who ever get the length of crying out with Job, ‘Oh, that I knew where I might find Him.’ And with Isaiah, ‘Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself.’ And with Paul, ‘Dwelling in light which no man can approach unto: Whom no man hath seen, or can see.’ ‘Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!’”-end quote.

Oh, I want to seek the Lord! I will never truly know who I am, or what are the riches of this treasure which I have in an earthen vessel, until I have fully sought out the Lord God, sanctified in my heart. What does “seek” mean? It means “to pursue, to chase, to follow after relentlessly and unceasingly.” It means to be unwilling to take “No” for an answer! It means to be the way I was with the young lady who became my wife. I only knew her a few days before I was convinced in my deepest heart that she was the one for me. So I went after her. The Bible

says, "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the spirit do mind the things of the spirit." Do you know what it means to be "after" the spirit? It means to be about the spirit the way I was about my wife. I went after her! And I chased her until she caught me! That's what it means to seek the Lord. This is the hour for all who have received the call to sonship to seek the Lord, seek the Kingdom, seek the righteousness of His dominion and authority. Let it work in us in every situation of our lives -let HIM be Lord. Make Him Lord in our thoughts. Make Him Lord in our words. In all our attitudes, crown Him Lord. In our actions, let Him be Lord. Seek the LORD. Seek the Lordship of the spirit of His life within. Let Him speak and rule out of the temple within the heart. Crown Him King that He may reign in all that we are.

The absence of His Lordship is why we had so many preachers that went bad back during the great healing and miracle revivals of the 1950's. There were men of great fame who received the power of God without the corresponding righteousness of God. They had the power of the Kingdom apart from the righteousness of the Kingdom. Hence the command of the Pattern Son: "Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..." Seek- until you find and put on the righteousness of the Kingdom. Pursue it relentlessly. Settle for nothing less. That is the pathway to sonship! In the "gift" realm you can receive a measure of power without righteousness. That dispensation of power is free, by pure grace. But the sonship that God is raising up in the earth in this hour, to set creation free, will not and cannot receive the omnipotence of God apart from the righteousness of God. Should the sons of God receive unlimited power without corresponding righteousness, the Kingdom of God would be forever shipwrecked upon the shoals of carnality and self. The Pattern Son who came in the fullness of the power of Divine Life was also pure and undefiled, holy and harmless, sinless and separate from sinners. His is the nature and ability given to the sons. Seek and ye shall find-the Lord! That is the second heaven. There is the second spiritual dimension wherein the Lord may be found, touched, experienced and known.

There is a beautiful footnote to the second heaven. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU." Let me present to you today an experience that will fully take care of that 95% of your prayer life that is spent asking for things. It will greatly help you-releasing your prayer life to accomplish something more constructive and profitable. Are we not always asking for the next pay check, for a way to get the car fixed, pay the bills, healing for the body, blessings for the family. How much time and effort are spent asking for things! But the Lord Jesus says that when you move into the second heaven, the law of that heaven is just this: As you seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness you will find them-and then, ALL THESE T-H-I-N-G-S SHALL BE A-D-D-E-D UNTO YOU!

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 blessings supplied automatically-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 Lord of the Kingdom will see to it that you shall not lack earthly bread, water, or raiment. We appreciate so little, sometimes, the value of the heavenly things until the poor little physical things seem great to us. We must be weaned from the "blessings" of God to desire only the "Blesser". As children of God, it is true that we cannot live without the blessings-God blesses this, God blesses that, God blesses us, God blesses our loved ones, God blesses our business, our projects, our church, our work for Him. If God does not bless, then we are concerned and cry out! When He blesses we say, "Isn't God good!" Would He be good if He didn't bless? Ah-a son comes to that place in maturity where God can withdraw His good supply of things and the son will yet

trust His wisdom and love and lean heavily upon Him and look into His face and be content simply and solely because HE IS THERE. Sons love Him for who He is, not for what He can give. The mark of sonship was upon Job when he cried out, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust Him!"

Ray Prinzing has aptly written: "Some years ago we used to sing the simple little chorus: 'He's all I need, He's all I need, all that I need, He's all I need, He's all I need, all that I need.'

"Then one day a preacher made the remark that the chorus was not true, that we also need groceries, clothes, place to live, etc. and with a smirk on his face indicated that he would balance out this 'super-spirituality' that claimed 'He's all I need,' by making us face up to natural needs. What an insidious attack of carnality! If our expectation is in what SELF can provide, obviously we are not centered only in the Lord. But when HE is FIRST in all of our thoughts-we see every provision that comes as from HIM. How sovereignly HE can make a way where there is no way. 'I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert' (Isa. 43:19). It is GOD who provides the job, it is God who gives strength for the day, and we have come to see that 'without Me ye can do nothing'" -end quote.

It's like a girl who marries a rich man-she gains a husband, but she gets the money, too. Before she is married she may benefit in some measure by her fiancé's wealth, but married to him all that he has is part of the package. If it is true love, it is HIM she desires, not the money. The money is a fringe benefit included with the man. In like manner, seek the Lord and all the "things" of God come along with Himself. I do not hesitate to tell you and I say it as a testimony to having tried and proven this great law of the Kingdom. I have come to the place in my personal experience where I seldom ask for anything. When I discovered this law working powerfully in my life I almost got "under conviction" about it! My mind said, "You haven't spent time before the Lord asking Him to meet your needs in months." As I meditated upon it I realized God had been meeting all my needs! True, sometimes He supplies at the very last minute; and seldom does He supply a great abundance beyond what is needed. But He does supply almost entirely apart from my asking. And why? Because He has led us in paths of seeking the Kingdom, seeking the Lord, and finding righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is the law, just as precise, exact and constant as the law of gravity. It works. I tell you it WORKS! Now, I do ask. I ask for others. I ask of God blessings upon thousands of people, small and great. I pray over every prayer request that comes across my desk. I ask for His Kingdom to come, for His will to be done in earth as it is in heaven. But I ask very little for myself. There is a blessed realm where you will never again need to pray about your needs. But you will pray for others. Would that not release you from a world of anxiety and spent time? Would it not enlarge your capacity to intercede for other people, to bless humanity, to participate in a prayerful way in the redemptive and reconstructive activity of the Spirit on behalf of creation? This truth is beautifully expressed in the little chorus we sing:

"True worshippers of the King,
His worthy praises we now sing;
In earthen vessels here to dwell,
and we ask nothing for ourselves."

As we move from "things" to seek the reality of the Christ within 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, 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. 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. The inward man is the invisible man of spirit. The former is of earth, the latter is of heaven. The former is the first Adam, the latter is the last Adam-Christ.

To choose or seek anything in the outer world, whether it be a job, money, relationships, or possessions, must be for the divine purpose of expressing the inward through the outward. Anything that does not fulfill that purpose has nothing eternal or of God-substance or life in it. It is void. It is vanity. It is temporal. It is death. So choosing a vocation is not for the purpose of making money, but to fulfill the will of God, to express His life and bless the world. The carnal mind says, “If I live for God and bless the world, then I get nothing for myself.” But that isn’t true-because the real world is not the one out there, it’s the one within. The world within is one of love, life, light, joy, peace, grace, righteousness and blessing. Therefore the inner world delights to bless all men on whatever level they are, asking nothing in return. But the outer world is one of selfishness, ego, pride, avarice, greed, stinginess and meanness. The resources of the inner world are unlimited; the resources of the outer world finite. People who live only in the outer world feel they have a right to cheat one another, take advantage of one another, use one another. You can’t trust anybody in the business world today, everybody is out for themselves. They are not for the people they serve, they are in it for what they can get out of it, and they will lie, misrepresent, cheat or steal to come out on top. Men will do that to you because they believe that when they do that to you they are not doing it to themselves, because that’s the way it is out in this world. They are living by the spirit of the world. They know nothing of the reality, power and glory of the inner world, so their perceptions of the outer world are distorted.

All our choices in the outer world should serve to extend 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 fulfillment is. And that’s where success is! Because that is where the Kingdom is, that’s where life is, that’s where reality is, that’s where heaven is. So many people work on their job just to make money, to pay the 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 “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. “She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.” You will know true joy when your inward man lives through your outward man, your inner world is expressed through your outer world. Matters not what you do outwardly, where you live, what your job is, what your responsibilities are-when your inward life is dominant all outer things are affected, transformed, swallowed up. As sons of God we 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 peace, our stability, our substance. And that is what we are seeking. We are seeking-THE LORD!

THE THIRD HEAVEN- KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED

Notice the order and meaning of these words: ask, seek knock. “Ask” is first. A child asks its father for a toy or a suit of clothing. It is an admission of helplessness. The child cannot earn it

or provide it for himself. And before God there are many times we can do nothing for ourselves, there is no way out, and we can only come asking. We are His children, and that gives us the right to ask without shame. "Seek" is the next word. Many things in life do not come merely by asking. The old prospectors were looking for gold-and there was no use in asking. One must diligently search for a place where he has reason to believe there is gold and stake a claim. The ore must be dug out of the earth. The gold is there, but awaiting man's effort. That is as it should be. We don't want to go through life as mere beggars.

This brings us to the final, the third heaven. In the first heaven you ask your Father for things and you receive from His hand all things. In the second heaven you seek the Lord and find the Lord Himself; and all things come with Him without asking. The second heaven includes the first heaven in such a way that it is unnecessary to function any longer in the first heaven. The two become one, The provision of the first heaven is met in the overflow of the second heaven. But there is another heaven, a higher heaven in which we can meet God, touch God, experience God and know God-and the law of that heaven is knocking. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." There is a distinct difference between seeking and knocking, just as there is a difference between asking and seeking. What happens for the man who knocks? "It shall be opened unto him." I may find a box of chocolates. But that is not the same as opening the box and eating some. In these three words the Lord uses, ask, seek and knock, there is an obvious difference of meaning. These words are often treated as though they were synonyms, alternative words for the one prayer. We have supposed the Lord is saying the same thing three ways. He's not! He's saying three different things. They refer to a progression-each more intense and demanding than the last. They represent an ascending scale, stages of increasing intensity moving toward a climax. ASK refers to the things we pray for. But I may ask and receive the gift without the Giver. SEEK is the word scripture uses of the Lord Himself-"And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). But it is not enough to find God, even the God within.

KNOCK speaks of admission into His realm, to dwell with Him and in Him. Asking and receiving the gift leads to seeking and finding the Giver. Finding the Giver leads to the knocking and opening of the door into that high and holy realm where HE DWELLS. So the Lord says, "Knock." Knocking is more intense than seeking. Here, both time and intensity are involved. Knocking is not a single rap; it is a series of raps. It is a request for admittance, repeated if necessary. Those who hunger and thirst deeply enough for entrance into the power and glory of the Kingdom of God will give themselves to knocking. Asking is a polite request. Seeking is a diligent search, involving greater effort. But knocking is yet more demanding and insistent. And the reward is higher and greater as you move from one to the other. When you knock you don't find anything-but a door of entrance is opened unto you. Nothing comes into you, but you enter into something. A realm is opened before you and you are bidden to enter, to experience, to participate, to become. Do you know what that realm is? It is entrance into HIM, into the Kingdom, into life and fullness forevermore.

Let me put it this way. When you seek you find the Lord, and you find Him within that temple which you are. The experience is internal. But knocking admits you into a realm beyond yourself where it's no longer Christ in you, but it's YOU IN CHRIST. When Christ is in me, people see more of me than they do of Him. Because the treasure is in the earthen vessel, men see the vessel before they perceive the treasure. When you have jewels in a jewelry box, is it not true that the box is seen more than the jewels? When the Lord is in me, do you not still see more of me than you do of Him? The incorruptible seed of His life is planted within the earth of the outer man and there germinates, bursting forth into visible manifestation. It is a wonder, a great and glorious mystery; but it is still "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

There is a place where we must enter into Him, swallowed up into Him, until all that is seen is HIM, not us. It is here that we “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ. It is here that we “put on” the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is here that we “put on” our house from heaven. It is here that this mortal must “put on” immortality, and this corruptible must “put on” incorruption. You see, the purpose, the goal, the consummation of God’s work is that we become what we contain. Multitudes of Christians are content to be merely containers of God. This mystery of God is entirely beyond our being containers of God. We have had the notion that we are containers of God, in the way a bucket is a container for water, and that God is a great container for us. But when we see God in us as that which fills a container there is still a separation from God. When you fill a bucket with water there is no mixture, no commingling, no union, no oneness between the bucket and the water. The two touch one another, there is a relationship and association, but no change or blending of substance. The water is still water and the bucket remains the same. Each is separate and distinct from the other. When we see ourselves as a container for God and God as a container for us, we remain one element while God remains another element. And, therefore, THERE IS NO NEW CREATION.

The law of the New Creation demands a change, a transformation-everything that God puts within us, WE MUST BECOME, until we are what we contain. The transition is from mere possession to a state of being. We have quoted the scripture, “Christ is made unto us righteousness,” and we have confessed, “Christ is my righteousness!” We have talked about imputed righteousness, imparted righteousness, and how Christ within us is the righteous One. That is a great and blessed truth. But the scripture also says, “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM” (II Cor. 5:21). You will know a great truth when you understand the difference between Christ made righteousness unto us, and we made the righteousness of God in Him. In the second heaven I seek the Lord and find Him as my righteousness. But in the third heaven I knock and a realm is opened to me-I press my way into the fullness of God and discover that all He is, which has been credited to my account by grace, I MAY NOW EXPERIENTIALLY BECOME! Entrance into Him brings transformation into the image of God. It is union with God in His personality, and participation with God in His ability.

Let me illustrate. In the process of a chicken being formed the egg must first be fertilized. In the moment the egg is fertilized the new little chick comes into existence in the egg. A tiny speck of blood appears in the yoke of the egg. That speck is the embryonic life of the chick formed in the egg. You still have the egg- the white, the yoke, the shell-and within the egg is that little germ of life living and growing. But the egg is still the egg and the chick is the chick. Each is separate and distinct from the other. The marvel of it is that as the chick develops the Creator has wonderfully provided for the chick to live off the egg. Both the yoke and the white of the egg are drawn upon by that life, consumed by that life, absorbed into that life, completely swallowed up by that life. One of the laws of nature is that what you eat becomes you. It has been said that you become what you eat, but that is not correct. What you eat becomes you. Over the years I have gained and lost weight from time to time-sometimes in significant amounts! When I weighed fifty pounds more than I do now, every one of those pounds was me. They were one and all J. Preston Eby. They came from eating steak and potatoes, and, of course, many other things. The steak and potatoes became Preston Eby. The beef that once grazed contentedly in the pasture was now raised up into the human family. Out from the vegetable kingdom, the lowly potato had now by transformation been raised up into the kingdom of man. That beef and potato had truly BECOME A HUMAN BEING. They were-me! When I waddled down the street no one exclaimed, “Look at that 180 pounds of steak and potatoes!” It wasn’t steak and potatoes walking-it was me. You could examine that paunch

around my middle under a microscope or with the most sophisticated medical tests and you would not find one milligram of steak, nor one molecule of potato. What I eat becomes me. What I drink becomes me. What I contain becomes me-and I become it. I take it in and contain it to this great end-that it become me. In the same way, the life of the chick in the egg consumes the egg, and when that little chicken finally pecks his way out of the egg-where is the egg? It's walking on two feet! There it goes! Isn't it cute! Why, the egg now has feathers! The egg is the chicken, whereas before the chicken was in the egg. The egg has been changed -metamorphosed-and has become the chicken. What a beautiful figure of what is spiritually transpiring in our lives in this day of the Lord! God puts Himself into us, the hidden man of the heart. We seek Him and discover the riches of the glory of the divine deposit within. But we are not content to just contain this life-we are drawn by the Spirit to truly enter into Life. So we knock, and a door is opened unto us, the way of Life is revealed, and we find an entrance into God. As we follow on the heavenly swallows up the earthly and we become what we contain, Christ is raised up in us-AS US. We become what we contain; yea, rather, what we contain BECOMES US! Hallelujah!

If you ask, what do you get? Things! When you seek, what happens? You find-the Lord! And then you begin to knock. And what is the result? God opens Himself to you and YOU gain an entrance into the personal appropriation of all that He is and has! There is a beautiful footnote to the reality of the third heaven. When you come up into this highest realm of the knowledge of the Lord, you don't seek anymore. Neither do you find anything, because now you ARE. I've known brethren who moved in prophetic ministry and a powerful word of the Lord flowed through them. I've watched these brethren prophesy and never miss-they hit the nail on the head every time. I've sat in astonishment as the secrets of men's hearts have been revealed, when these prophets had not met a soul in the congregation and knew absolutely nothing about anyone. But in a couple of instances I've had the experience of having these same brethren come to me in confidence-and I discerned that their own lives were utterly confused. They were uncertain about the will of God, they didn't know where God wanted to plant them, what city they should live in, what fellowship they should be joined to-and they asked me to pray or asked me for a word from the Lord. I've seen these brethren a year, or two, or more later, still just as confused, perplexed, unsettled and concerned about their own situation, still asking for prayer, still seeking a word from the Lord. I thought, "My God, what's going on here? Here's a man that has a word for everybody, but he has no word for himself." Do you know what the problem is? He sought the Lord and found the Lord, and the Lord flowed through him. He became a container, a channel for the outflow of blessing from the Christ within. But he failed to knock until the Lord was opened, that he might gain an entrance into the heart and mind of the Father, to become what he contained. The message and the messenger must be made one. It is one thing to minister peace, another to be peace. It is one thing to minister knowledge, another to be knowledge. It is one thing to have the will of God to flow through you in a word, and another thing to be His will in the earth. It is one thing to contain something of God, to possess a gift or manifestation of God, to be a channel for God to flow through-and another thing altogether for all that we contain to BECOME OUR STATE OF BEING.

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. But finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:7-10).

God says that He made a covenant with Israel. A covenant is made between two parties, as a mutual agreement. I promise to do this, you promise to do that-that's a covenant. If either party breaks the covenant the covenant becomes null and void, no longer binding upon either party. So God says, "I made a covenant with Israel, but they broke it. They didn't keep up their end of the bargain." God didn't break the covenant-Israel broke it. Israel broke it simply because they were in no condition to keep it. Israel began well, accepted the covenant, and promised obedience. But there was no power to continue, to fulfill it; no power to conquer temptation, or overcome the evil heart; to remain faithful. At Mount Sinai they agreed to the covenant, saying, "ALL that the Lord has spoken, we will do." But they promised something beyond their ability to perform. When a carnal mind commits to acting spiritually, you've got problems. So Israel broke the covenant. The Lord said, "Alright, I'm going to fix it. I will make a new covenant. This is how I am going to do it. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

The contrast is between the law written and engraved in stones and the law inscribed in men's hearts. The law of God is the revelation of the nature of God. For instance, when God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," He is not merely trying to prevent us from "enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season." He is telling us something about Himself-how He is. 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 to all His responsibilities. He will not cheat on you, lie to you, deceive 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. THAT IS HOW HE IS! He is love, He is good, He is faithful, and His nature is fixed and unchanging. He is not adulterous, with a roving eye and a lying, cheating heart. 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. And when His law is written in our heart, His nature-how He is-is inscribed upon the tablets (genetic code) of our inner life. From the redeemed and transformed heart the law (nature) of God flows forth as a river of life. This is not the nature of God within you as a seed, it is not merely the heart feeling the impulses and the power of His Life within, but it is the heart being fashioned and molded into the divine image. There is a complete transformation, a complete change, a divine metamorphosis, out of the natural into the spiritual, out of the soulish and into the divine. This is BECOMING WHAT WE CONTAIN! This is knocking until entrance is granted into the very fullness of the life, character, mind, nature, wisdom, knowledge, power and glory of God-to be all that He is. There it is HE that is seen, for it is no longer "Christ in me, the hope of glory," but "I in Christ"-the glory!

Chapter 4

Teach Us To Pray

(continued)

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And if ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (Jn. 14:13-14). “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn. 16:24).

How often a passage of scripture seems to be a sealed treasure. You read it time after time but it never yields its riches to you. No light breaks from its words as you search its depths. But one day, all unexpectedly, it suddenly leaps like flames of fire from the page and shouts its beauties, even as a jewel box might unclose under the touch of a secret spring and lay bare in an instance all the radiance and loveliness of the priceless gem that lies within. In just the same way, as you let the spirit of Truth lift out from the heart of this passage, the deep blessedness contained within the phrase “in my name,” note the precious jewel of truth that is laid bare thereby.

R. A. Torrey has written: “This is one of the most familiar, most wonderful, and at the same time most commonly misunderstood promises in the Bible regarding God’s willingness to answer prayer. Here our Lord Jesus Christ Himself tells us that if a certain class of people pray in a certain way, He will give them the very thing that they ask. Look at the promise again. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, that will I do.” These words are plain, simple, positive, very precious and cheering. They tell us there are certain people who can get from God anything that they ask for, if only they will ask for it in a certain way. According to Jesus, prayer in the name of Jesus Christ prevails with God. No other prayer does. But just what does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? I have heard many explanations of this. Some of them were so profound or mystical, or so mixed, or so obscure, that when I finished reading them or listening to them I knew less about it than when I started.”

What does the word name imply in the meaning of scripture? What does it mean to pray “in Jesus’ name”? Prayer in the name of Jesus is a multi-faceted privilege. To pray in the name of Jesus is the deepest mystery in prayer. The name of Jesus is the greatest mystery in heaven and on earth. In heaven this mystery is known; on earth it is unknown to most people. The word name, as it was used in the time of Christ, implied three principal things. First, the name is the person. To praise the name of Jesus is to praise Jesus Himself. To love the name of Jesus is to love Jesus Himself. To exalt the name of Jesus is to exalt Jesus Himself. To deny the name of Jesus is to dishonor Jesus Himself.

THE NAME-THE NATURE

Second, the name represents all we know of the person-his nature, character and personality. When Moses hungered to draw closer to Yahweh, to know Him as He really is, he asked to see His glory. God replied that no mere mortal could survive such a divine encounter, for “there shall no man see Me, and live” (Ex. 33:20) and truly no man can see God face to face

and live, that is, he cannot live as he lived before, for the glory of the Lord will bring death to all that is carnal, earthly, soulish, natural and corrupt. No man can see God and remain the same. He will live, but he will live on a higher plane, for what was once life to him will be consumed in the blazing glory of our God who is a consuming fire. God promised to reveal Himself partially to Moses. That is what the Law, the Old Covenant, is—a partial revelation of God. Yahweh said, “I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee” (Ex. 33:19). Then Yahweh ordered Moses to stand in the cleft of a rock, and covered him there with His hand. When the glory of the Lord passed by in front of Moses, He removed His hand for a second only so Moses could see the glory that lingered after God had passed by. The record states: “And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with Moses there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord” (Ex. 34:5). When Yahweh proclaimed His name, it was a revealing two-sentence name: “And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty...” (Ex. 34:6-7). To know God was to know all that His name represented—all He IS. To understand the name was to see God.

The name of Jesus represents all that Jesus is revealed to be. It includes His love, His mercy, His goodness, His transforming power, His quickening life, His wisdom, His knowledge, His righteousness, His holiness, His redemption and salvation. In our day, in ordinary life, names bear no great significance. They are a mere legal and social convenience. In our modern society we are obligated to bear a mark of identification of some kind. In a large prison, where only numbers distinguish one prisoner from another, the unhappy man finds the humiliation of being reduced from a name to a number. There is some warmth and color in our names, and they add a flavor to our personalities. There is even much history in them, as when a child is named Martin Luther, George Washington, Abraham, Sarah, Mary, or even named after some beloved grandfather or grandmother, uncle or aunt. Many of our names are revered with the life of the centuries, and rich with quaint or hallowed memories. But all the same, they have no real power in our lives.

Names do not, in most cases, describe the person whom they indicate. They tell us nothing of his character, or power. They do not represent or embody the attributes of his nature and being. A man may be called Hunter though he has never seen an animal wilder than those at the petting zoo nor looked at a gun except on someone’s wall or in a glass case at the store. He may be called Baker though he knows nothing of bread except that he eats it. Mary, notwithstanding the meaning of her Hebrew name, is not always bitter, and John is sometimes quite different from a visible embodiment of the grace of God. Not so with the Biblical treatment of names. A name stood, in the Old Testament life, for the sum total of the characteristics and attributes of the person who bore it. In the Bible many names were given because of something that had happened, or because of what was prophesied to happen. A good illustration is that of Jacob, born with his brother Esau as a twin. He was holding on to Esau’s heel during the birth process. They called him Jacob, which means “heel grabber,” “supplanter.” For ninety years he bore that name and, from his history, seemed to do his best to live up to it. Taking advantage of his brother’s great hunger, Jacob obtained Esau’s birthright. Later on, with the aid of his mother, he robbed his brother of his blessing. Some years went by, and there came a great time of crisis in his life. In that crisis he spent a night wrestling with God; and when the morning broke, he obtained his blessing and God gave him a new heart, a new nature, and a new name, Israel. God said to him, “As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Gen. 32:28). This was the meaning of his new name, and henceforth he lived in the divine power of what that name meant. Our Lord gave names to some of His disciples to indicate the characteristics of their nature. “In the

name of..." means nothing less than ALL of which we think when the person is named. It is the description of what he is, his kind, his nature and character. The names of God were thus invested with a peculiar sacredness. And the phrase "the name of God" denotes the majesty, the authority, the personality, and the revealed character of God.

Why is so much promised through the name of Jesus Christ? A name is the value of the person it represents. When I mention or hear a name it calls up before me the whole man or woman, what I know of him or her, and the impression the person has made on me. For example, if someone says, "Althea," I do not react, or if they call out the name "Fiona" still there is nothing. I have no close friends or acquaintances with those names. But when they say, "Lorain," immediately there is a response-for there is the image, the love, and all the personality of my wife. That is the name of the one I love. The name "Lorain" is not any prettier or any more meaningful than Angelica or Nicole, but what the name implies to me is different. When someone says, "Billy, the Kid," I see an image of a wild and murderous youth who once rode the old West, but when someone says, "Billy Sunday," I think of a great evangelist of yesteryear.

Names create an immediate image in the mind, and regardless of the actual meaning of the name, it stands for the character of the person to whom it is given. For instance, would you name your daughter "Jezebel"? Would you name your son "Judas Iscariot"? Of course not. But Jezebel is just as good a name as Jane or Jessica, and actually means "chaste," and Judas is just as good a name as Jude or James, but its meaning to us is not as acceptable because of the actions of an ancient person who bore that name.

Let me give you another example. Were I to go to State National Bank in El Paso and hand the teller a check for one million dollars bearing the signature of J. Preston Eby, she would look at the check and laugh and push it back through the window. You see, my name is not worth a million dollars there or anywhere else, for I am not worth a million dollars. But let me present a check for one million dollars bearing the signature of Ross Perot and immediately I will be a rich man. The money will be credited to my account because the check does not stand on my merit, my worth, my name, but I present it upon the basis of the merit of one who is worth a million dollars many times over. A name stands for the total character and resources of an individual. My name is all that I am and all that I have, your name is all that you are and all that you have. Whatever you are and whatever you possess, that is what your name means to others, it is the value of your name. The name of a king includes his honor, his power, his wealth, his kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. So each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. And the name of Christ is the expression of all He has done and all He is and all He lives to do as the firstborn among many brethren and the Captain of our salvation. The work of Jesus Christ during those thirty-three and a half years of His earthly life was to unveil to us the total authority and resources of the Father, to manifest His name, so that we might discover what a tremendous, unending resource we have in God. We can never get to the bottom of the barrel. The supply is infinite for the supply is HIMSELF.

What if I want a million dollars not for myself, but for Ross Perot. Supposing that he is my friend, and I want to give him a very impressive gift. It is for his sake, not mine, that I request a loan from the bank. I say to the loan officer, "For Mr. Perot's sake I request one million dollars." I will not get the money. Why? Because it cannot be "for his sake"-it must be "in his name." Now, for some who read these lines the meaning is the same, but the meaning is not the same. We are nowhere told to pray "for Jesus' sake" or "for Christ's sake." There is not one word in the Bible about that. We are not promised to receive anything from the Lord by asking

“for Jesus’ sake.” It must be in Jesus’ name. There is a significant difference between asking something for Jesus’ sake and asking it in Jesus’ name.

R. A. Torrey related the following incident. During the Civil War there was a father and mother in Columbus, Ohio, who had an only son, the joy of their hearts. Soon after the outbreak of the war he came home one day and said to his father and mother, “I have enlisted in the army.” Of course, they felt badly to have their son leave home, but they loved their country and were willing to make the sacrifice of giving their son to go to the war and fight for his country. After he had gone to the front he wrote home regularly, telling his father and mother about his experiences in camp and elsewhere. His letters were full of brightness and good cheer, and brought joy to the father’s and mother’s lonely hearts. But one day at the regular time no letter came. Days passed, and no letter. Weeks passed, and they wondered what might have happened to their boy. One day a letter came from the United States Government and in it they were told that there had been a great battle, that many had been killed, and that their son was among those who had been killed in battle. The light went out of that home. Days and weeks, months and years passed by. The war came to an end. One morning as they were sitting at the breakfast table the maid came in and said, “There is a poor, ragged fellow out at the door and he wants to speak to you. But I knew you did not wish to speak to a man like him, and he handed me this note and asked me to put it in your hand.” And she put in the hands of the father a soiled and crumpled piece of paper. The father opened it, and when he glanced at it his eyes fell upon the writing, then he started, for he recognized the writing of his son. The note said:

Dear Father and Mother: I have been shot and have only a short time to live, and I am writing you this last farewell note. As I write there is kneeling beside me my most intimate friend in the company, and when the war is over he will bring you this note, and when he does be kind to him for Charlie’s sake. Your son Charles.

There was nothing in that house that was too good for that poor tramp. “For Charlie’s sake,” and there is nothing in heaven or earth too good, or too great, for you and me “for Jesus’ sake.” You say-“So we can ask for Jesus’ sake!” Not at all. Notice-it was not the friend who asked “for Charlie’s sake”-it was Charles himself that asked his father for his sake. We do not ask “for Jesus’ sake,” but THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF HAS PETITIONED THE FATHER FOR US “FOR HIS SAKE,” and that is why we can now ask “in Jesus’ name”! God has delivered all things to us for His Son’s sake, for His Son’s glory, for the increase of His life and power and wisdom in His body-therefore we are able to ask whatsoever we will in Jesus’ name.

Christ’s name is the revelation of Christ’s character and to do a thing in the name of another person is to do it as his representative, as realizing that in some deep and real sense we are one with Him. And it is when we know ourselves to be united to Christ and one with Him, representative in a true fashion of Himself in the earth, and we draw near, that our action and our prayer have power. When we so pray we get an answer. The reason such multitudes of prayers never travel higher than the ceiling, and bring no blessings to him who prays, is because they are not prayers in Christ’s name. “In Jesus’ name” is not a magic formula of faith. “Name” means nature. “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake,” means, “He leads me in right ways because that is His nature.” “His name shall be in their foreheads,” means, “His nature shall be expressed through their minds.” When we ask in Jesus’ name, we ask in His nature, in His identity, and out of His mind and will and purpose. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name”-that is, in my nature; for things with God are called according to their nature. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, not when at the end of some

request we attach the phrase, "This I ask in Jesus' name," but when we pray according to His nature, which is love, which seeketh not its own, but only the will of the Father and His purpose of blessing for all creation. Such asking is the cry of His own Spirit within our hearts.

Here, I am convinced, we are often "forgers," putting Christ's name to a prayer He would not pray, using His name to secure things He would not endorse! The Lord Jesus did not promise to answer any prayer we say is in His name, but rather any prayer that is prayed in His nature—because that is what He wants, and what He would ask for. All of us are familiar with the phrase, "in the name of the law." Policemen do their business in the name of the law. Now, let's suppose a policeman is sent into an inner-city ghetto about noon one day because some violence, including gun shots, has been reported. When he arrives at the designated address, he knocks at the door and calls out, "Police—open in the name of the law!" After knocking repeatedly without getting any response, he draws his gun, kicks open the door, and makes his arrest.

Now, let's shift the scene to the dark hours of early morning, about two o'clock. That same policeman is traveling through a residential area, only now he's off duty and has spent most of the night drinking in a bar. In a drunken stupor he staggers up the steps of a house, knocks on the door, and shouts, "Open up in the name of the law!" The inhabitants of the house hear the commotion and it is plain that there is a drunk at the door, so they refuse to open up. In a belligerent rage the policeman breaks down the door, and when he does, the police are called, and this time it is the policeman who is arrested and carried off to jail. What's the difference? It is the same action, the very same words, and exactly the same man. Ah, the action at noon the previous day was done in the name of the law, whereas the scene at night was done outside the law. One was authorized activity, done according to the rules, with all authority, the other was unauthorized. That is what Jesus means when He says "in my name." When we ask in Jesus' name we are to ask within the realm and scope of His mind and will and nature. Whatever He is interested in having done on earth, we, as the instruments of His divine life, are involved in accomplishing. "Whatever you need," He says, "ask for it and it shall be done." Whatever! Anything! If it is by His mind, His will, and His nature you can ask for it and it shall be done without fail. When we ask out of our own carnal desire and attach the phrase, "in Jesus' name," we are acting exactly like the drunken off duty policeman calling out, "Open up in the name of the law!" The words are right, but there is no authorization. The action is outside His nature and His purpose. It is a bastard request. It is a forgery of His name! We say "in Jesus' name" as a commonplace term, a part of formal ritual, in prayers that get no answer, and that proves they were not really asked in His name, for the promise is sure, "If ye ask anything in My name, I will do it" (Jn. 14:14). If we ask and do not receive it can only mean one of two things—Jesus lied, or we somehow failed to ask "in His name."

IN UNION WITH CHRIST

Acting, praying, or doing anything "in Jesus' name" means doing it in union with Him. Many prayers go unanswered because they are not prayed in union with Christ. People have prayed for fair weather, and it has rained in torrents. People have prayed for healing, and the sickness has become chronic. People have prayed for protection, and danger has brought hurt or disaster. People have prayed to live, and they have died. Recall Huckleberry Finn's account:

Miss Watson she took me in the closet and prayed, but nothing come of it. She told me to pray every day, and whatever I asked for I would get it. But it warn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fish line, but no hooks. It wasn't any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three or four times, but somehow I couldn't make it work. By and by, one day, I asked Miss Watson to try for

me, but she said I was a fool. She never told me why, and I couldn't make it out no way. I set down one time back in the woods, and had a long think about it. I says to myself, if a person can get anything they pray for, why don't Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on pork? Why can't the widow get back her silver snuffbox that was stole? Why can't Miss Watson fat up? No, says I to myself, there ain't nothing in it.

Praying "in Jesus' name" does not mean praying by a formula. It means praying in union with Him. Huckleberry Finn, obviously, was not praying in union with Jesus! When a woman marries a man she gets a change of name. Whereas before she was Mary Brown, now she is Mary Jones. But why does she change her name? Is it because she didn't like the name Brown, or because the name Jones sounds more exotic? Not at all. She takes the name Jones because she and Mr. Jones have become ONE. She has come into union with him. That's what using the name of Jesus means. Hear now the poignant words of God spoken through Jeremiah to the nation of Israel: "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of His harvest...I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following Me" (Jer. 2:2-3; 3:19). Because, in the beginning, they had surrendered themselves as a bride of trust and depended on His loving power for everything, a unique power had been created in that relationship between them and God. They were, indeed, a "holy people," because the word "holy" means set apart for special purposes. They truly walked in union with God. And what wonders He performed in their midst! But whenever Israel turned away and broke the bonds of love and trust, their special relationship with their Source of being was betrayed and the special power was broken.

Eventually there was born into our world and history a man named Jesus, who was so utterly surrendered to the Father that there was no obstacle, no barrier at all between him and God. A power such as the world had never seen before sprang into existence because of this perfect relationship between the Son and the Father. This power is what we call the Holy Spirit. It is an incredible torrent of living energy let loose into the world. It is a shaft of light that has penetrated all darkness and depth and bondage. When called upon in spirit and in truth it can overcome anything-disease, fear, despair, ugliness, pain, sorrow, death, all the black, cold chains that have kept us from the glory of the Father.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in union with Me, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in union with Me, I will do it" (Jn. 14:13-14). "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in union with Me 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; and they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover" (Mk. 16:17-18). You say, "But brother Eby, don't you think we should use the words, 'In Jesus' name'?" Certainly. But never forget, there are a lot of Mrs. Jones' that use the name, they call themselves Jones, until Mr. Jones puts a notice in the paper, saying, "All debts incurred by that woman calling herself by my name -I refuse to pay them because she is no longer living with me." Have you ever read a notice like that in the paper? She still uses the name, but she is out of union with him, and he renounces her.

There were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, who thought they could cast out devils by using the name of Jesus. They said, "We adjure you by the name of Jesus whom Paul preacheth." But the devil replied, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? We don't need to recognize you-that name doesn't mean a thing to you-you are not in union with Him. His authority does not back up your words." "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that

house naked and wounded” (Acts 19:16). That is what sonship is all about, bringing us into union with God in Jesus Christ. In Christ we have a right to use His name.

So we begin our prayer by saying, “In the name of Jesus I pray,” or most often we conclude our prayer by saying, “Father, I ask this in Jesus’ name.” In view of this let us quickly run through the only prayer the Lord Jesus taught us to pray. How does it end? “For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever, in Jesus’ name-Amen!” Does it end like that? No! Of course, I have suspected that it isn’t a true prayer. I knew all along that God wouldn’t answer it because it doesn’t have the right words at the end! Do you think perhaps God will answer it anyway, even if it doesn’t say, “In Jesus’ name”? Let me ask you a question. If Jesus was the only One who had a right to call God “Father,” how could you or I possibly call Him “Father”? Is it not by virtue of our union with Jesus Christ-THE SON? “In Jesus’ name” simply means being in union with Him. So-you don’t have to say “in Jesus’ name” at the end of your prayer. All you have to do is say at the beginning, “Our Father,” and you know that the reason God receives you is because of your oneness with, and your identification in, Jesus the Son. This is what sonship is all about-Jesus is the Head and we are the members of the body of the Christ. There is but one Christ, one Son, and there are many members.

“In Jesus’ name” is not a prescription. It is not a sort of magical Alladin’s lamp that we can rub and ask for anything in the world. Nor is it a talisman or an “open sesame,” turning on the spigot of heaven. It is not writing a letter to Santa Claus. There are many sincere believers that think it is necessary to end every prayer with the stereotype, “In Jesus Name.” This is a perfect example of how we deny the spirit of Christ’s teaching on prayer by adherence to the letter. That Jesus Christ meant every prayer of the younger members of His body to end in the same way is an absurdity, for this is but to use “vain repetitions.” If the phrase is used as a necessary cliché it is absolutely indefensible, and is closer to the Tibetan prayer wheel than it is to the spirit of Jesus. It is nowhere said that we are to put such a phrase in our prayers. Saying it does not make it so. The early Christians did all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, but I do not recall a single Bible prayer in which people told God they were asking “in Jesus’ name.” God would know without our saying. The Father knows all who are in Christ. We do not need to tell God that it is in Jesus’ name. He knows. The great apostle Paul has several prayers recorded in the New Testament and he did not put “in Jesus’ name” either before or after a single one of them.

I know this will shake some people up, because they are theologically oriented to repeating the phrase, “in Jesus’ name.” But remember, precious friend of mine, the Lord Jesus Himself also warns us that “many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Mat. 24:5). Some popular evangelist comes to town and draws a crowd with the spectacular, but it doesn’t bear witness in your spirit. Something is not right. Yet it all seems so right because all he does he does using the name of Jesus. That doesn’t prove a thing. He may use the name of Jesus with his mouth, but his whole life and ministry may be out of union with Jesus. Out of union with Jesus he is a fraud-using the name of Jesus to promote his own kingdom, to build a name, and for financial gain. It is not the formula of His name, but doing it in union with Him.

“Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Mat. 7:21-23). There is another most significant passage in Mark 16:17-18. You know how it reads...”These signs shall follow them that

believe; in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." It should read, "These signs shall follow them that believe in My name; they shall cast out devils, etc." You see, there is no punctuation in the original, and the way we have all learned this passage is the way the translators punctuated it in the King James Version of the Bible. "These signs shall follow them that believe." Then you add, "In My name they shall cast out devils." That's how we have understood it. But that's not what it really says. It's not, "These signs shall follow them that believe." It is, "These signs shall follow them that believe in My name."

It is just as the Holy Spirit records in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." It is not believing that saves you. The Philippian jailer cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul didn't answer, "Only believe." He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is not FAITH that saves-it is faith in the Son of God.

George Muller left a lifelong record of his prayers and their answers-more than twenty-five thousand of them. On one occasion, when asked by a friend to explain his secret, Bro. Muller replied, "Have faith in God." If I interpret George Muller correctly, he was not placing the emphasis on the word faith, but rather on the word God. George Muller knew God, so his faith was not in his own boldness or daring or positive thinking, but in the living God. It is the object of our prayers that makes the difference. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). God has freely given us all things by Jesus Christ. Omit Christ as the Center and the Source and the whole cause is lost. The faith that moves mountains is always faith in Jesus Christ. A person might have faith in a doctor, in a bank, in a business scheme, in his guru, in an Ascended Master, in the Buddha, or in his own power of believing, but such faith has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. When we pray we do not need confidence in ourselves, nor in faith, nor in prayer, but in Jesus Christ. There is a self-induced attitude of confidence and assurance that is self-deception and not faith at all. When we read that Abraham "believed the Lord" (Gen. 15:6), we can translate it correctly that he "Amened" God. When God told Abraham that He would give him innumerable seed, Abraham said, "Amen, Lord!" "So be it!" Abraham believed God because He knew God and had received a word from God. We talk sometimes as though it is our great faith, or just the power of believing, that does great things for us, but such "faith" is mere auto-suggestion. But faith in God is a personal relationship between the heart and God, to which all that God wills, and all the surrendered heart desires, becomes gloriously possible.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Today everybody says, "All you have to do is believe." Preachers talk about the power of positive thinking and possibility thinking as though the power were in the way you think, in believing, in faith itself, instead of in Jesus Christ the Lord. How many who read these lines "believe"? I will tell you whom you keep company with. James stated it succinctly: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble" (James 2:19). If you "believe" you are in company with the devils! The devils also believe, and do something more than you do-they tremble. So believing doesn't do a thing so far as relationship with God is concerned. It's not believing-it's believing in His name-IN UNION WITH HIM! So, "These signs shall follow them that believe in My name"-in union with Me.

If you have a problem with this, let us do it your way first and see if you won't prefer it mine. "These signs shall follow them that believe. In My name they shall cast out devils"-so if there is a devil there, how do you get him out? You say, "In the name of Jesus, come out!" That's we

way we feel it should be. But now you are in trouble. What else are we supposed to do in Jesus' name? "They shall speak with new tongues." You see, each of these actions is something done "in Jesus' name." Have you spoken in tongues? Have you spoken in tongues today? This week? Within the past month? I do not hesitate to tell you that it wasn't real-if the popular interpretation of Mark 16:17-18 is true! How can I say this? Because when you spoke in tongues you did not say, "In the name of Jesus-ra ha she ka lame tie!" If it is necessary to say to a devil, "In Jesus' name, come out," in order to cast out devils in His name; if it is necessary to say, "In Jesus' name, be healed," in order to heal the sick in Jesus' name; is it not also necessary to say, "In Jesus' name I speak with new tongues," and then break out in tongues? If you spoke in tongues today and did not say, "In Jesus' name," before you spoke in tongues it was false-if repeating the phrase "in Jesus' name" is what it means to do something in His name!

You see, what we do is use the name as a formula or magical incantation. What is your magic word? "Abracadabra" It's not that at all. It's not believing in a formula or employing a magical phrase, but believing in HIM-coming into union with Him, standing in His nature, will, purpose and identity as sons of the living God. If His life is in me I speak with tongues by the indwelling of His Spirit and I don't have to use the formula, the fact that it is the Spirit of the Son within me, the spirit of sonship, makes it in His name, His nature, His identity. If His life is in me I will heal the sick by His indwelling power and I don't have to use the formula, for the compassion and power of Christ within make it in His name, His nature, His identity. If His life is in me I cast out devils by His indwelling authority, and I don't have to use the formula, for the authority is the authority of the Christ within and it is thus in His name, by His authority, in union with Him, in His nature, character, and identity.

Jesus said, "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (Jn. 10:25). This settles it once and for all. One of the first miracles Jesus did was the healing of the leper. The leper came to Him and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (Mat. 8:2). And Jesus answered, "In the name of Yahweh, be thou clean!" Did He? No! He touched him, and the leper was healed. Later, when a devil manifested himself in a man, Jesus said, "In the name of El Shaddai, come out of him!" Did He? No! And again, when Lazarus was dead, He said, "In the name of El Elton, come forth!" Is that true? See-you've got to use the right name-if doing something in a name means saying the name. God has various names in the Old Testament and if you will listen to Jesus and find out which name He used in healing leprosy, which name He used in casting out devils, and which name He used in raising the dead, and if you use them, it will work. Is that right? Absolutely not! Whenever did Jesus mention His Father's name when He did a miracle? Never. Not once! You will not find any place where Jesus pronounced the name YAHWEH either in our English Bible or in the oldest Greek or Aramaic texts. Some people have published Bibles inserting the name "Yahweh" where God or Lord are used in the New Testament, but such are spurious man-made fabrications, adding to the Word of God. Yet Jesus claimed to have done all His works IN HIS FATHER'S NAME! What did He mean by that, then? If He didn't mean a formula or a magic word, what was Jesus' secret? "I and the Father are-ONE." "The works I am doing in union with My Father, in My Father's nature, in My Father's identity-for he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "I do only those things that I see My Father do." "As I hear from My Father, so I speak." "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." Everything the Son did was in union with His Father, without using the formula. Jesus said, "If you believe in My name-if you have come into union, unity, and identification with Me, if I am the Head and you are the body, the works that I do shall ye do, and greater works than these shall ye do."

If one is at all acquainted with Latin American people or Spanish speaking people, you will know that thousands of the men are named Jesus. It is a common name. The name they bear has absolutely no power or authority in heaven or with God. God will not receive them in any special way just because they bear a name that is made up of the five letters J-E-S-U-S. But He will willingly and gladly receive them in the name or nature of HIS SON who is called Jesus. Also in the New Testament we read of others who were named Jesus, for it was a common name in Bible days, too, but they had no special place or power in the work of God. And if today you say, "In the name of Jesus, be blessed!" the question follows: In the name of which Jesus? For there are millions of people named Jesus in the earth!

The "name" of the Lord is thus something far beyond and greater than a series of letters in the alphabet and their pronunciation. The true name of God is not YAHWEH. The true name of God is the nature signified by the meaning of the word YAHWEH. Yahweh means "the self-existent-the One who IS." "The name of Yahweh is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (Prov. 18:10). That doesn't mean that the man who uses the letters Y-A-H-W-E-H, and trusts in his use of that word, has run into the name of the Lord and is safe. In fact, most people who constantly use the name Yahweh know absolutely nothing about the name of the Lord! The one who recognizes God as the self-existent, eternal, all-sufficient One and trusts in His all-sufficient nature is the man who has found security and provision in the name of Yahweh. He may never verbally articulate the word YAHWEH, as the Jews have not for millenniums, but he certainly knows the name or nature of Yahweh.

Again we remind ourselves that we have all prayed hundreds of prayers that have not been answered, yet we sprinkled all of them thoroughly with the phrase, "in the name of Jesus." The sick came to be healed and we prayed a powerful prayer, placed oil upon them, repeated that phrase, "in the name of Jesus," perhaps a dozen times, and nothing happened. Yet Jesus said that if we asked in His name it would be done for us. Can we not see THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG! There must be something we have not learned, for Jesus surely spoke the words granting us whatever we ask. We are to do and say everything in Jesus' name. God has given Him THE NAME that is above every other name in heaven and in earth. Does that mean that if I take my sick neighbor a bowl of soup I must say, "In Jesus' name I give you this soup?" Not at all. The fact that the loving nature of the Christ within compels me to take the soup makes it in Jesus' name. The name of Jesus is not the word Jesus. It is His nature, His character, His authority. Repeating the five-letter word JESUS, JESUS, JESUS, before and after will not get our prayers answered. We must stand in a position before God. We must be in the same position before God that the firstborn Son occupies. We must know that we are the sons of God and must ask out of the nature of sonship. When the spirit of sonship within motivates, directs and births all our praying, there will be one hundred percent results. The only things God grants are the things prayed in the name of Jesus. The prayers we have had answered are the only prayers we have prayed that were prayed in the name of Jesus. All others were prayed outside His name. If they would have been prayed in His name, we would have received the thing we asked for, for the promise is true and unfailing: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, I will do it." This can be achieved only through union with Him. Only then will we get ALL of our prayers answered.

"And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 16:23-24). Paul Mueller has written: "Jesus set the pattern for the ministry and function of all true, divine, kingdom ministry. All who will follow Him, doing those 'greater works', will be obedient to the example He provided for us in His life and ministry. When the Jews sought to kill Jesus because He violated their Sabbath,

He told them He did only that which He saw of the Father. He also said to them: 'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive' (Jn. 5:43). The contrast here is established between those who come in the Father's name and those who come in their own name. Those who come in the Father's name will manifest the fruits and blessings of that name, while those who come in their own name will manifest nothing but confusion, resulting in bringing forth religious proselytes. The Greek word 'name' throughout the gospels is ONOMA and means authority and character as well as a name. Therefore, when Jesus said He came in the 'Father's name', He was coming with direct authority of the Father, and was also manifesting the Father's character. Jesus plainly pointed out the difference between those who come in the Father's name and those who come in their own name. Those who have spiritual discernment can readily see the vast difference between someone who has learned the value and benefit of doing the Lord's work in the Father's name, and those who come to do His work in their own name or in man's authority. In every instance where Jesus referred to His name or used the words in 'My name' or 'in My Father's name', He had reference to the authority and character of the Father.

"A brief study of the use of the term 'in My name' will help us understand the divine principle by which all true sons of God are to be guided in their approach to the work of the Lord. When Jesus taught on the matter of gatherings, fellowship and ministry, He said, 'For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them' (Mat. 18:20). The word 'name' from the Greek means authority and character as we have already stated. Therefore, when we gather together, whether it be two or three or more, if that gathering takes place with the Lord's authority, then He has promised to be in the midst. On the other hand, if the Lord's people have a gathering without His authority, they cannot expect the presence of the Lord to be there, since He is not obligated to bless that gathering with His presence. The divine kingdom principle is: Obtain the Father's authority to have a gathering, and then He will be there.

"If we would do those greater works, then we will have to come under the proper authority and discipline by which those greater works shall be manifest. The time is coming and now is when all the Lord's elect will learn to function by a new and greater principle, even the divine principle of ministering and functioning in the name of the Lord. We can no longer function in our own name, for we have seen the constant futility of man's works. Now the Lord commands repentance and a sincere turning away from all of man's past fruitless efforts, for He would lead us to the divine principle whereby we will witness those greater works.

'When Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a great multitude of people went before Him, spreading their garments and crying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.' No doubt the multitudes of Judea had seen the utter futility of the old priesthood and of others who came with a counterfeit message. But when Jesus came, they recognized the presence of this One who came 'in the name of the Lord,' for He manifest the authority and character of God Himself. And this is what all the sons of God are called to do. Therefore, we must begin to apply the divine, kingdom principles to the work of the Lord, obtaining His authority in advance of all that we would do on behalf of His kingdom. When the Lord's elect are functioning 'in the name of the Lord', many will then shout the glorious report concerning them, saying, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. The 'Great Commission' sets forth the same principle, for Jesus said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father...'(Mk. 28:19). When Jesus appeared to the eleven during the forty days, He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among

all nations' (Lk. 24:46-47). Thus clearly the Lord's work can only be done successfully in His name or with His authority and in His character. That which Jesus did, especially during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, was written, 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name' (Jn. 20:31). Therefore, the life we receive at Christ's appearing, will be provided 'through His name,' or with His authority and in the character of the Father"-end quote.

Sometimes my head has trouble with my body. I woke up this morning and my head said to my feet, "Get out and walk." My feet said, "We're tired of doing all the walking, let the hands do it." Is that how it is? No-the body is in perfect union with the head. Jesus is the Vine, we are the branches. As long as the branch abides in the Vine it brings forth fruit. And it guarantees the answer to our prayer! "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go forth and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: and that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you" (Jn. 15:7,16). In union with Christ there is an expression of the Christ life. This is not a formula. No words can add anything to it. It is life and reality. All that the branch bears it bears in the name (nature) of the Vine, and in union with the Vine. You believe in His name-therefore you cast out devils, heal the sick, speak with new tongues, or fulfill whatever expression of Christ you are-as He moves within you to so do.

Someone still asks, "Brother Eby, don't you use the name of Jesus when you pray?" Sometimes I do. But you don't have to-if you are praying in union with Him. After we have prayed a very selfish prayer, "Oh Lord, I would like a BMW this fall, and a big sail boat for next summer," to make it spiritual and to have an edge on getting it answered we ask it "in the name of Jesus." But the name of Jesus has nothing to do with this! We pray a lot of childish, selfish, carnal prayers that have nothing to do with the mind of God. And then we tack the formula on, "in the name of Jesus," as though that will induce Him to indulge us. I tell you the truth-you might as well say "abracadabra" and expect the vault of heaven to open! God deliver us from formulas, from magical words, from spiritual sounding hocus-pocus and superstitious mantras and bring us mightily into union with the Lord Jesus Christ until the prayer we pray expresses His mind, His heart, and His purpose.

"Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Mat. 7:22-23). You know, I can see that scene right now. The Lord has come, and there are people who have come before Him and said, "Lord, we've got good news for you. In Thy name we have prophesied; in Thy name we have cast out devils; in Thy name we have done many wonderful works." The Lord grabs them by the hand and says, "Thank you ever so much-I wish I'd been there with you when you did it!" You say, "How do you know He will say that?" Because, if He had been there when they did it, they wouldn't have to tell Him they did it. You know, of course, why Jesus had to spend the whole night in prayer every now and then. You see, after He had had a big day or a successful week and had done a lot of miracles, He had to take a night off to tell His Father what He had done. "Dear Father, you should have been there!" And the Father said, "Oh, My Son, please let Me know the next time. But anyway, go ahead and do a few more miracles and come back and tell Me-if I can't be there I would like to know what's happening." Did Jesus ever have to tell His Father what He did? Never! Why? Because it was the Father in Him that did the works. When you have to tell the Lord what you did, it's because He hasn't been around when you did it. You did it out of union with Him, you did it for Him, but

it was not Him doing it in and through you-even though you used His name as a formula to do it. If it had been done in union with Him you wouldn't have to tell Him.

So what did Jesus say to those who told Him that they had done wonders in His name? "Congratulations, blessed are ye, enter into the Kingdom and receive a hundred more stars in your crown!" Is that what He said? His answer was, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." "I never knew you-you whose prophesying is iniquity; you whose casting out devils is iniquity; you whose mighty works are iniquity." Do you know what "I never knew you" means? It means that the works were not done in union with Him. "And Adam KNEW His wife, and she conceived..." (Gen. 4:1). "Know" in the Bible is the most intimate word of union. Jesus says, "I never KNEW you, I was not intimate with you, you were not acting out a deep and abiding love relationship with Me." He classified their works as iniquity. "Iniquity" means lawlessness, something done outside authority.

Isn't the whole business of the Gospel just this: "All power in heaven and in earth is given to Me...I give it to you...you go and preach the Gospel and when it's all over I will reward you!" No-"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mk. 16:90). The Lord was with them, working with them- IN UNION WITH THEM. So using His name may be blasphemy, it may be iniquity, it may be lawlessness, it may be foolishness like the seven sons of Sceva-if the words and the works are not done in union with the Christ. We have seen in our day the sad spectacle of men who get hold of God's power, God's ability, and use it to their own ends, for a name, for power, for money, to build a kingdom. The word will yet come to these in a terrible day of judgment, "Depart from Me ye that work iniquity; I never knew you." So this business of the name of Jesus-watch it. Is the person who is using the name using it in vain? Or is the usage of the name an expression of love, devotion, obedience, divine nature and authority? What is your motive? What is back of it? Is it that God alone may be glorified?

Chapter 5

Teach Us To Pray

(continued)

We are beginning today a study of that matchless gem of the life of sonship called “The Lord’s Prayer”. I trust that the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus will lay hold upon our hearts as we take our place at the feet of Jesus in the study of this prayer. No other form of words has a hold upon mankind like the few brief sentences of the Lord’s Prayer. Not a day has passed without their use since the firstborn Son of God taught them to His disciples. Some portions of the Word of God are so rich and inexhaustible that we come back to them again and again, as the Spirit quickens new vistas and depths of truth in words long since familiar. Such a scripture is the Lord’s Prayer. As we try to plumb the depths of these great and wonderful words, let us do so with the continual prayer, “Lord, teach us to pray!”

I doubt that there is a teaching in the whole Bible that unfolds more deeply the wonder, meaning, and power of prayer than does the Lord’s Prayer. It is, it seems to me, the key which opens the door in the blessed kingdom of prayer. The profound, eternal truths compressed into its few, concise phrases shine with celestial brilliance. These truths radiated from the very heart of our Lord as He moved among men. They embrace the deepest secrets and the highest purposes of God, stated in human language of disarming simplicity.

Some contend that this is not “The Lord’s Prayer” because He never prayed it. It was given to His disciples, they say, therefore it should be called “The Disciples’ Prayer”. But the prayer is called “The Lord’s Prayer”, not because it was expressive of Christ’s own relationship with His Father, or of His own needs, for He, who was pure and sinless, certainly never prayed, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against US.” It is called “The Lord’s Prayer” simply because it was taught by Him. The possessive form is used in the same sense as when we speak of “Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address,” thereby indicating that the address was authored and given by Lincoln. Just so, “The Lord’s Prayer” means that the prayer was formulated and given by the Lord Jesus to His younger brethren.

It seems strange that Jesus’ disciples would say, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Lk. 11:1). These men had grown up in religious homes. They had attended Synagogue and had learned all the prayers of the rabbis. They had been taught the eighteen petitions of the Shema. These were eighteen prayers a Jew was to pray every day. Pious Jews paused three times each day to pray the Shema. The workman would quit his task and the teacher his lesson, to stand before God and “say” his prayers. A year earlier if you had asked these disciples, “Do you know how to pray?” they would have indignantly replied, “Of course, we know how to pray. We have prayed regularly every day since we were children.” However, when they saw Jesus pray, they realized they knew nothing about prayer as they ought to know. To them prayer was a form—but to Christ it was a life and a power. As those disciples witnessed Jesus communing with His heavenly Father as a Son, as they saw Him go into prayer in one way and come out in another, as they saw the power of the Kingdom of God charged within Him in prayer, they realized that sonship prayer is something quite different from religious prayer. They realized

they didn't know how to pray on this high level, after they had seen Jesus pray, and so they said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Let me give you an illustration. Look at this number: 16175663451

It tells a whole story. Can you retell it? It is hiding a number of secrets. Do you know them? It holds a universe of meanings. Do you understand them? What does this number say to you? What does it mean? And if it is not obvious, how do you go about unlocking its meaning? Try commas. You can divide it into hundreds, thousands, and millions, but that will get you nowhere. You can take out your calculator and look for mysterious factors or perfect squares or multiples of pi, but to the best of my knowledge that will lead you nowhere. Likewise, you can try to find meaning in the number of times the sacred numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 are used, or speculate on why the ? is missing, but this too is a dead-end. So is any attempt to find historical significance to the dates 1617, 1756, and so on. If you add all the numbers together, you'll come up with 45. It is a nice number, but it is not a story, a secret, a meaning, or a revelation.

The real secret is hyphens. If you put them in the right places, everything is revealed: 1-617-566-3451. Even though the information was there before, now that you see the pattern, you understand almost everything. Think about it! The "1" is the first clue. It says, "This is a long-distance call." The "1" works like a switch. When the computer hears the tone for the one, it shunts the call out of the local circuits and into the long-distance track. There are, however, other clues to the same lesson. The "617" is an area code. You can tell that both from the position and from the 1 in the middle. All area codes (and no prefixes) have either 1 or 0 in the middle. That's another way the call is tracked as long-distance. In this case, 617 is in the eastern part of Massachusetts. The computer hears the three numbers of the "area" code and directs the call to somewhere near Boston. The 566 is the "prefix". It is the first of seven digits that make up the home phone number. When the computer hears 566, it switches the call in to the "Brookline" circuits and into the 566 bank of numbers. Finally, the 3451 is the personal identification number of the home telephone. Now that the secrets have been unlocked, let's look for the story.

The Lord's Prayer is exactly like the numbers 16175663451. Apart from the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, it is just as unintelligible as those numbers. Ah, we can understand the words with the natural mind just as we can identify each of the individual numbers above. But we are still without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can give us understanding of these things. If you memorized this prayer as a child, it is still spiritually a meaningless jumble like 16175663451. In these Studies, with the Lord's help, we are going to put in the hyphens and unlock the pattern. We will examine each of the connections in this wonderful prayer and trace its paths into the Kingdom of God and the life of sonship. We will unlock the deep spiritual significance of this prayer which contains the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. We will move all the way from the access code-"Our Father"-to the boundless glory and power of God's eternal Kingdom of Life and Light and Love!

One of the outstanding characteristics of the prayer is its exceeding brevity. All-inclusive as the Model Prayer is -- all it represents is compressed into seven brief petitions. And everywhere in scripture, seven is the perfect number, the symbol of completeness. There is a beautiful interconnection of these petitions. Each petition grows out of the preceding one as naturally as the different parts of a plant grow out of an original seed. The primary seed in the Model Prayer is the Fatherhood of God. "Our Father" is like the "1" at the beginning of a long-distance phone call-it is the access code that makes the first connection that moves us along

the path of omnipotence. It shuts us out of the circuits of “this world” and guides us along the track to a heavenly destination. The fruition of that connection is the hallowing of God’s name, the revelation of His Kingdom, the accomplishment of His will, the provision of divine sustenance, the effectual dealing with sin, deliverance from evil, and the full manifestation in and through us of God’s Kingdom, power and glory. As the colors of the prismatic spectrum spring from white light, so the Fatherhood of God is the white light of the full beam, the source and the end of the seven petitions. Far from being a prayer to be recited or a formula for talking to God, the Lord’s Prayer enables us to explore the depths of God and His great purpose of the ages. It reveals God as He really is and our relationship to Him in sonship. Almost a billion people regularly repeat the words of this prayer. If they really prayed it, they would bring the Kingdom of God to the whole earth!

Truly did Paul Mueller write: “Jesus taught us to pray, ‘For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.’ These are not idle, empty, meaningless words, but are words of life and truth. This prayer is not merely a declaration of faith, or a set of words intended to give Him the glory. It is that, and much more than that, for it is an expression of trust and confidence in God, giving us the assurance that He will do what He said He would do. The kingdom and the power and the glory belong unto the Lord. By His mighty power He shall bring His kingdom to earth. By His mighty, sovereign and omnipotent power, He shall cause His perfect will to be done in all the earth as it is in heaven. By His mighty, creative power, He shall give us our daily bread, both the natural and the spiritual bread that we need every day. By His mighty, kingdom power, He shall forgive us our debts, a truth we shall yet experience in a greater measure. By His power He keeps us from temptation, and delivers us from evil. And by His mighty, kingdom power, He shall subdue the nations and bring them all into the peaceful and righteous dominion of His reign. For His is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.”

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Kingdom of God is the divine dominion of Christ’s sovereignty. Accordingly, the Kingdom of God has its commandments. But these commandments are not imposed laws or enactments of ordinances; these commandments are the enunciation of principles. Jesus Christ is not the lawgiver of His Kingdom by way of establishing rules; but Jesus Christ is the lawgiver of His Kingdom in the sense of law-announcer, proclaiming the principles by which His Kingdom functions. Moses was the giver of laws; but Moses and his laws have gone. Jesus is the announcer of principles; and His principles abide. Moses said, “Thou shalt not...” Jesus said, “Blessed are they that...” Moses’ word was a law. Jesus’ word set forth a principle. The principles of the Kingdom of God are scattered throughout the New Testament. But there is one discourse of them so profound, comprehensive, explicit and divinely imperial, that it may be called the Manifesto of the Kingdom. It is the Sermon on the Mount. In the days when our blessed Lord, the King of the Kingdom, clothed in humanity, walked as a man among us, He established a school of learning in order that His many brethren might be instructed in the way of the Kingdom of God and fulfill their roles as ambassadors of that Kingdom and rulers in the Kingdom. We shall now give heed to the curriculum that He set, and which He carried through during His own ministry; and which He caused to be recorded for all future generations.

When Jesus taught this teaching, His fame had been spread abroad. He had come announcing the Kingdom of God and demonstrating its righteousness and power before the eyes of the whole nation of Israel. The time had now come for Him to set forth more distinctly the nature of His Kingdom, the conditions of citizenship in it, and the mode of propagating it. In the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord’s Prayer is set in the heart of the Sermon in which Jesus sets

forth the principles of His Kingdom. In that Kingdom God is not only God, but Father; He not only gives all, but is Himself all. In the knowledge, fellowship and participation of Him alone is its blessedness. Hence it came as a matter of course that the revelation of prayer and the prayer-life was a part of His teaching concerning the Kingdom He came to set up. The Lord's Prayer contains the essence of Jesus' entire teachings. It is a capsule summary of the message He preached for three-and-a-half years. It contains the message of the whole Bible. Even if we were to lose access to all of the Bible except the Lord's Prayer, we would still have the essence and meaning of the Kingdom of God. Prayer is, therefore, a fundamental function in the administration of the Kingdom of God. Prayer is the very law of the Kingdom, and the sons of the Kingdom are called to its ministry. The Sermon on the Mount is the Constitution of the Kingdom of God, and prayer is a vital plank in that Constitution. The gateway into the Kingdom is by way of the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual Kingdom. The power of the Kingdom is spiritual power. I do not hesitate to tell you, precious friend of mine, that it is impossible to have power in the Kingdom of God apart from the spiritual power gained by, and used in, PRAYER.

THE PATTERN PRAYER

The disciples came to Jesus and said, "Teach us to pray." They did not say, "Teach us a prayer." When you always go through the same form of words in prayer you are simply in a rut, and not truly communing with your heavenly Father. Your prayer is a form-you are "saying your prayers"-not praying. One of the most obvious examples of this is saying "grace" at the table. Most prayers said before a meal are merely prayers that are "said," not prayers that are prayed. A brother shared this observation: "When I was in high school in Montana we had a neighbor who was a self-confessed atheist, a godless fellow, but with a very engaging personality. We boys often went out to his place because he was a very generous man and let us do many interesting things on his ranch but he had no use for the gospel or for Christian things. At meal time he engaged in a form of ribald mockery in this matter of giving thanks, and I think he did it to shock us. He would sit down to the table and before anyone could start to eat, he would say, 'Now we are going to say grace-Pass the bread and pass the meat. Pitch in, you god-darn fools, and eat.' Of course he intended it as a mockery, but I wonder if our own graces, cranked out mechanically, are not equally as blasphemous?"

Saying "prayers" is a lone of professional praying. The preachers in the pulpits of the church system are masters of professional praying. They "say prayers" every Sunday as a part of their program, and on special occasions. Long, written, discursive, dry, and inane are the prayers of those who have never learned at the feet of Jesus how to pray! Without unction or heart, without inspiration or revelation, they fall like a killing frost on the dull ears of congregations that are just as dead as the prayers of their preachers. Every vestige of life has perished under their breath. The deader the prayers, the longer they grow until death becomes hell in the name of God. "After this manner therefore pray ye," said Jesus. It was not a prayer to be repeated-it was to be the "seed plot" of all sonship praying. The teaching is to "pray like this," not to "pray this." It speaks of a way to pray, not a form of prayer. If you direct the attention of a one-year-old child to some object by pointing with your hand, he will look only at the pointing finger. He cannot realize that you are referring to something beyond. In like manner, the baby Christians of all generations have missed completely the great truths and principles to which our Lord pointed when He gave this prayer to His disciples. A mockery and a vanity are these words when said as a memorized form, when nicely repeated before a crowd, or privately. It is like a baby staring at the pointing finger. The great and eternal truth is missed entirely in such empty and meaningless activity.

There is doubtless not a single man, woman, or child reading these lines that cannot quote the Lord's Prayer from memory. You can say it while thinking of something else. You can say it while looking back upon yesterday or forward to tomorrow. You have prayed it with the tender lips of childhood. You have prayed it in the intimacy of the family circle. You have prayed it in the small prayer group and in the great congregation. And, yet, it is possible that with all your praying of it you have never really prayed it at all! For saying a prayer is not praying. Elijah is a splendid example. James says that "he prayed earnestly" (James 5:17). The Greek phrase might better be translated: "he prayed in prayer." Many believers "say" their prayers. Elijah "prayed" his prayers. What a difference! It is not enough to admire, or study or say the Lord's Prayer there must be a deep and spiritual revelation not only of what Jesus taught us to pray, but of what He taught us about praying. As we understand the great principles of this prayer, we shall find that though we learned it at our mother's knee, it takes a lifetime to fill it with its meaning, it requires ages to give it all its fullness. One of the first things that needs to be indelibly impressed upon our hearts is that the Lord's Prayer is not "a" prayer at all! Yet, when the prayer- is rightly understood by the wisdom that comes from above it will make everything you are and everything you do real prayer. Never can we exhaust the depth and significance of this one prayer. As we enter into its depths and give ourselves up to its mighty power, there come to us insights and understanding far beyond our expectation and possibilities and potentials transcending our wildest imaginations.

ENTER THE CLOSET

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Mat. 6:6). How many varieties of inner chambers there are! For example, Abraham's "closet" was the oak of Morey; Isaac's closet was the field of Hebron; Hezekiah's closet was his sick bed; Peter's closet was the house-top; Jesus' closet was often the mountain-top.

I have known saints who were embarrassed because of the frustrating failure of being able to pray in public. Now, while there is an occasional place for public prayer, the God-ordained place of prayer is in the enclosed privacy where there is no other motivational influence than the fellowship of a son with his Father. I do not hesitate to tell you that I do not enjoy public prayer. I would rather never pray in public. It is unnatural to me. Why do others need to hear the words that are addressed to my Father alone? I cannot pour out my deepest heart or express my most intimate thoughts, desires, concerns, and confessions in the ears of the listening multitude, or even in the hearing of my most intimate friend. Not one word of my prayer is meant for any but my Father, not one word of my prayer is directed toward any but my God. It is this being with God and God alone, that is the essence of prayer. And that brings to mind the solitary nights of clear starlight which Jesus spent on the hills of Galilee, when the holiest events that ever occurred in a human soul took place in His, when marvelous discourse with the Father unfolded within His consciousness the reality of His sonship to God, when it must have seemed as if a quite unique tone released itself from our earth and made its way to the farthest expanses of the heavenlies above. And now-in the secret place of the Most High His younger brethren, the sons of God, are bidden to live this over again! A reflection of it is still to be found on this earth as long as there is one child of God coming to the secret place to know the Father as his very own Father.

We live in a day of distractions. We are beset. Radios blare. Televisions run from early morning till late at night. Traffic roars. Neon lights flash and dazzle. Headlines explode. Advertising is a vast conspiracy to make us look and listen. Our lives are incredibly busy, with more responsibilities crowded into each day than can be done. Nerves are frayed, emotions

tense we are stressed out. We are assaulted by a constant battery of sights and sounds and smells. The solution is not to be found in the doctor's office, the psychiatrist's couch, or in a bottle of pills. Jesus teaches us we must free ourselves. Man has been given dominion over all things. The environment is not to rule us, we must rule our environment. The first step to such liberty and power is found in the words of wisdom which distilled like dew from the gracious lips of the One who truly lived life as it was meant to be lived, "but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door...." We can close the mind against the distractions, soul and body against the pressures, and deliberately expose ourselves to the quickening, transforming power of the presence of God. Prayers should be made in a quiet and private place. The counsel is specific: the place should be free from distractions, the door shut against the spirit of the world, and the prayer free from influence or posturing, because it is in "secret". Jesus Himself set the example. He often went away apart into the desert or into a mountain. At times He arose early in the morning, before the awakening sun had kissed the clouds in the eastern sky, and went apart to pray alone.

Close the door when you enter into your "closet". Get into the inner chamber and close the door. Sometimes it is a good thing to close the door of the eye so that things that are suggested by sight will not come into your mind. I have seen sometimes that it is a very good thing to close the door of the ears, and not so much as listen to what anyone else has to say about the issue. Go right inside and close even the door of human touch. Do not put out your hand to lean upon your dearest one. There are times when we need the counsel or support or help of another, but sometimes you need to close the door of all the five senses and all that speaks to them, and commune in spirit, as spirit with spirit, with the Father of Spirits- our Father! Get inside and talk to God in Spirit, apart from all outward sensation. You do not need to close the door of your inner chamber by going to an inner chamber in your house. That is a good thing to do if you have one; but you can close the door of the inner chamber- of your own being by shutting the five great gates of sensation at any time and place and communing with God there.

The life of sonship is a hidden, inner life, having to do with the spiritual and invisible One who sees in secret. It is a secluded life, hid with Christ in God. The life in Christ neither strives nor shouts, nor does one hear its voice in the streets. It shrinks from all outward displays, whether showy public almsgiving, conspicuous religious exercises, oratorical prayers, ceremonious fastings, broadened phylacteries, processional parades, clerical costume, titles, or degrees, or holy tones. Like a planet around the sun, it rolls in its orbit of obedience to the Father without fanfare or advertisement; like the sun itself, it shines without noise. We live in a day of much feverish running to and fro, and Martha-like preoccupation about much serving; a day of organizations, conventions, television shows, and public meetings and programs of all sorts. It has almost come to be understood, even in "sonship" and "kingdom" circles that we can do nothing for God unless we organize, promote, and hold a public meeting. The secret life of aloneness with God has largely given way to the public life of gatherings, meetings, and activities. The closet has given way to the Synagogue. There is indeed a time for the corporate expression, but first and foremost let your watchword be: Alone with God. We need to hide ourselves with God before we show ourselves for God. Elijah did. God said to Elijah, "Hide thyself," before He said, "Show thyself." "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan" (I Kings 17:3). "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth" (I Kings 18:1). It is my deep conviction that we are living in the hour of the hiding of the sons of God. The sons shall come to intimately and fully know the Father in the secret place, and be prepared and equipped by Him there, before they are shown to the world in the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God.

There is an aloneness that transcends physical location. We have all had the experience of being in a crowd, but so occupied with our own thoughts, that we were oblivious to all around us. We were alone in a crowd! The true closet is within- in the secret place of the Most High in the depths of our Spirit. We can, at any time and in any place, shut the door and be alone with God, shut in with God in the secret place.

What do these four words suggest: "Enter into thy closet"? The word "closet" is unusual. The original Greek word, TAMEION, is found but four times in the New Testament, in one place being rendered "secret chambers" and in another "storehouse." To the Hebrew mind there was one place that was pre-eminently a secret chamber: it was that inmost court of the tabernacle and temple, where God especially dwelt, and which was known as the Most Holy Place. That was transcendentally a secret chamber, a closed place. It had neither door nor window, unlike many an Eastern Court which is open to the sky. When the Most Holy Place was entered, the veil, raised as the High Priest went in, automatically fell back to its place as soon as it was released, and so kept the secrecys of God's habitation from uncircumcised eyes. Here was one place, peculiarly marked by silence, secrecy, solitude and separation. Only one person ever entered here, and that only once each year, and he entered alone. Two or more persons were never known to meet there save the High Priest and Yahweh Himself. Can we not see by this that the highest form of prayer is impossible, unless and until each member of the Royal Priesthood, the body of the great High Priest, deliberately seeks to meet God absolutely alone. Yes, every son of God needs to meet the Father absolutely alone. All thought of human auditors or observers is a hindrance to the closest approach and the highest power in prayer. This holy and secret place is not a place for oratory- a place for the pouring out of great volumes of needs and wants- so much as a "place of vision"- of contemplation of God, from which to get new views of God, fresh revelations of Him, and fuller impartations of His grace, wisdom and power. Each and every son must KNOW GOD FOR HIMSELF.

There is a quest higher than mere request- a search after knowledge of God and communication from Him. In this secret place we are changed, just as Jesus was metamorphosed on the holy Mount "as He prayed." The closet is the perfect school teacher for a son of God. One can learn more in an hour alone with God than from many hours of study. Books are in the closet that can be found and read nowhere else. Revelations are given in the closet that are given and received nowhere else. Power is obtained in the closet that is available nowhere else. The true closet of the son of God is not built of stone and lime. The secret place of God is not a thing of wood and nails, or bolts and bars. The man after God's own heart builds for himself a little sanctuary, all his own; he builds a house for God in the inner world of the spirit. We say, "This is the house of God: this is the gate of heaven." This inner sanctuary of the spirit, in the deepest part of our life, is the quiet place of inner reality where we experience God as our ALL. "Be still and know that I am God," saith the Lord out of His holy place within.

The sons of God are predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son. "Having PREDESTINATED us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5). The Greek word translated "predestinated" is POORIZO, a compound of the preposition PRO, meaning "before," and the verb HORIZO, meaning "to fix a limit, to establish a boundary." Our English word "horizon," the boundary that sets the limit to how far we can see, comes from HORIZO. Thus, predestination means that in love God has PRE-ESTABLISHED A BOUNDARY ABOUT US and in this way determines beforehand the sphere of our existence, activity, and state of being. Those whom the Father "chose" to place as members of His Son are, by God's sovereign will, brought into blessed fellowship and vital relationship with Jesus Christ. Those whom the Father did not at this time

see fit to establish “in Christ Jesus” are merely left in that realm outside the conscious awareness of His love and grace, the realm of death. ALL will be drawn in due time for the promise is sure: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw ALL MEN unto Me!” These are simply not being drawn now, nor are they predestinated to the present calling.

Several years ago while teaching in a meeting a sister asked the question: “Brother Eby, don’t you think there are some people who are predestinated to sonship in this hour, and, regardless of what comes or goes, what they do or don’t do, they will make it?” Now, I perceived by the Spirit where she was coming from, and what she meant was that there are certain persons who are predestinated to be sons, and matters not the depth of consecration, how they live, what they do, how they conduct their lives, what is their lifestyle, whether they revel in worldliness, wallow in sin, or any other thing, they will finally make it in by grace just because they are predestinated.

I replied, “It is true that certain persons ARE PREDESTINATED to sonship and because of that predestination WILL become the sons of God. The message is clear: ‘For whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son’ (Rom. 8:29). Thus, if one is truly apprehended to sonship, the proof of his predestination will be found in the fact of his EXPERIENTIALLY BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF GOD’S SON. Men are not predestinated to be either “saved” or “lost.” No scripture on predestination applies it on that level. That is one of the gross misunderstandings of Calvinism. Predestination is unto two things: sonship and conformation to the image of the Son. So- if one says, “I am predestinated to be a Son,” but lives and acts like a devil, he obviously has no revelation of sonship. When any man or woman claims to be called to sonship but no change to God’s divine nature is taking place in their lives, then I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that sonship to such a person is merely a doctrine or mental concept and they are in all reality self-deceived. Nothing can be clearer than this bright gem of truth: “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Therein lies the unmistakable proof of one’s predestination. Predestined...TO BE CONFORMED!

Nothing but the knowledge of God, as the Holy One, will make us holy. And how are we to obtain that knowledge of God, except in the INNER CHAMBER? It is a thing utterly impossible unless we take the time and allow the holiness of God to shine on us. How can any man on earth obtain intimate knowledge of another man, if he does not associate with him, and place himself under his influence? And how can God Himself transform us into His nature and character, if we do not yield ourselves to His holy promptings to turn aside and be brought under the power and the glory of His presence and life? This is how our Elder Brother teaches us to pray- He brings us into the Father’s living presence. Nowhere can we get to know the holiness of God, and come under its influence and power, except in the inner chamber. No one can expect to be changed into His glorious image who is not often and long alone with God.

“Shut in with God in the secret place,
There in the Spirit beholding His face;
Gaining new power to run in the race,
I love to be shut in with God.”

The following words of inspiration from the pen of Carl Schwing add precious height and depth to this blessed reality. “There is a special feeling in the forest during the winter which only comes with the absence of man. All nature seems free as the cold wind howls through the frozen fingers of the mighty monarchs of the forest. The bear rest safely in their dens...the deer

search for delicacies hidden in the snow, and birds find warmth in the brush of the field. As far as the eye can see there are no footprints in the soft white gift of winter...there have been no intruders into this holy place. The only sounds are that of the blue jay, hawk, or owl...or the screaming of a wildcat. In these precious moments one truly knows that the earth is the Lord's. Indeed there is a peace and sacredness that exists in the absence of man. There is a still small voice which can only be heard in the absence of man. Our spirits are free as the wind as the Spirit gently moves within our hearts. There can be no intruders into our holy place. We are alone with the Father...we hear His voice...we know that we belong to Him, and that once again we are dwelling in the regions of His Kingdom. Indeed there are truths that we can see and know and become...in the absence of man.

“Let all who will, turn against us...God is for us, nothing else really matters. We are the firstfruits of the Kingdom, not by choice, but by predestination. We were created to sit with Christ in heavenly places, yea, to sit with Him in His Father's Kingdom. Soon the light of His Kingdom shall cover the earth, and all shall see and know God's Christ. We can see the light of the dawn as it breaks through the darkness of an old dying age. We can hear the Living Word as it flows from the 'still small voice.' And with the mouth of the Spirit, we speak the things of the Father. Alone, forsaken, rejected, and despised...how lovely to worship in His presence...in the absence of man. In the absence of man, there is truly an entering into the Kingdom of God, and indeed there is a receiving of Jesus Christ into the earth which we are. There is a partaking of the Order of the Kingdom, a knowledge of the Everlasting Gospel, and there is a fellowship with the Spirits of justified men. There is a place by Him where sons abide, a place where the Everlasting Covenant is reopened, and a place where we regain the glory we had with Him in our beginning. In this secret place of gold (deity) we share union with God, which is partaking of the Godhead: Father, Son and Spirit”-end quote.

VAIN REPETITIONS

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Mat. 6:7). For centuries men have practiced their VAIN REPETITIONS before the Lord, thinking they would be heard for their much speaking, hoping that by often repeating their requests God would at last take heed to their supplication and grant them the answer they desired, all the time forgetting that our heavenly Father knows what things we have need of before we ask.

This element of wordiness, of reiteration of the same phrases and words over and over, was characteristic of all heathen prayers. The idea was to overcome the indifference or preoccupation of the gods by the continual drum-beat into their ears of your desires and needs. This laborious and time consuming custom resulted in the creation of the prayer wheels of the Tibetans and other Eastern peoples. Thin paper prayers are attached to a great wheel. Then the wheel is cranked and the devotee turns the wheel all day long. Each revolution of the wheel is supposedly equivalent to the utterance of the prayers inscribed on the wheel. Each time the wheel goes around it means that your prayer has been made without you doing anything. It is a mechanized prayer life! In Christendom the burning of candles is supposed to fulfill a similar purpose. This, my beloved, is the death-knell of all prayer, the chief aim of which is to bring man into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with the heavenly Father.

Does our Lord forbid all repetitions of the same words? Certainly not. There is misunderstanding here with some people that all repetitions are vain. The emphasis is not upon repetitions, but upon vain. There are some repetitions that are not vain. There are some repetitions that are good. For example, how many times does our Lord Jesus say “Father” in

the 17th chapter of John? Sixty-two times! Is that a vain repetition? Abba, Father! You can say it adoringly. You can say it respectfully. You can say it confidentially. You can say it tenderly. Again, Jesus repeated the same prayer three times in Gethsemane. Was that a vain repetition? What then does He warn against? The senseless and mechanical repetition of prayers for repetition's sake, substituting quantity for quality. And this is a characteristically heathen habit. That is how the prophets of Baal prayed on mount Carmel in Elijah's time, calling out the name of their god from morning even until noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" Thus pray the Buddhist monks today, ceaselessly repeating for whole days the sacred syllable, "Um! Um! Um! Um!"-a lot like the pagan "harmonic convergence" of the contemporary New Age Movement. But is this any worse than the rosary of the Roman Catholics, which requires at each large bead the recitation of a Pater Noster, or at each of the small beads the recitation of ten Ave Marias, to end with a Gloria Patri?

The howling Moslem devishes will yell, "Allah! Allah!" for hours without any praise or petition. One Greek poet has in a single prayer nearly a hundred verses filled with a repetition of the same invocation to the gods. The Hindu fakir will stand all day long and repeat the name of his god. The Buddhist thinks there is salvation in the endless repetition of a magic formula. The pietistic Jews are still under the influence of this error. When they read their prayers, nothing can exceed their vehemence. They read with all their might, and then cry aloud like the prophets of Baal. But is this much worse than the ritual of our Pentecostal friends who gather at the altar and shout the same requests over and over, as they cry out loudly and emotionally to God in much the same way as the prophets of Baal on far away Carmel? Ray Prinzing once wrote: "I remember standing outside the building one day, having gone to my car to retrieve something I had forgotten, and I could hear the noise rising in pitch as it came through the open window, and wondered what others walking down the sidewalk would think. Is God so deaf He must be screamed at? Or, was this simply an indication of their own soulish frustration in prayer? I was used to this method of praying, having been raised in a Pentecostal denomination where they would often say, 'God is not deaf, so you can pray in a whisper, but neither does He get nervous if you shout.' And often it was deemed a measure of the anointing upon you as to how loud and fast you gave voice. We learned that loudness was not synonymous with anointing. Prayer is not a screaming at God, but a communion with Him. A child may demand attention with its screaming, and the parent will immediately set about to first quiet the child, and then gently minister to the need. But as that child grows into maturity, he approaches the parent calmly, quietly, to share whatever is upon his heart and mind. He has learned to get past the noise approach into an intimate relationship."

SEASONS FOR PRAYER

All the various works of God know their appointed times. The wise man said, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven (Ecc. 3:1). Everything in nature sets the example of precise order and patterns, and so it is also in the realm of spirit. Every spiritual activity has its appointed time and season. There is a time to be a babe in Christ, a time to grow, a time to learn, a time to mature. There is a time to give oneself to prayer, a time to devote oneself to the Word, a time to share and witness, a time to work and bless, a time to heal and encourage, a time to correct, admonish or rebuke, and a time to simply BE the expression of God in the earth. But while I am asserting the necessity of seasons for prayer and all other spiritual activities, let no one think I am suggesting that we should carnally determine these seasons, for instance, "I will pray for an hour every morning between 5:00 and 6:00," or "I will study the scriptures each night just before I go to bed." While such resolutions sounds logical and laudable to the natural mind, spiritually it just doesn't work! Spiritually, such self-efforts are rubbish!

The seasons for spiritual work are spiritual seasons, not natural. They depend upon the leading and moving of the Spirit of God, the flow of His life, the discernment of His mind, the unction of His will- not the position of the hands on the clock or the sun in the sky. Are you familiar with the legend of Chanticleer, the rooster? Chanticleer thought that his crowing caused the sun to rise. He even felt that if one day by accident he should fail to crow, the sun would not rise at all. Of course, the universe is quite different from what Chanticleer imagined. For in fact it was the sun with its soft rays of dawn that awoke Chanticleer. He was only a herald, the announcer of all the light and warmth contained in the sun. It is so with God and us. We do not move God by our efforts and prayers- it is God who moves us to pray!

There are times when I have “decided” to spend time in prayer, but when I turned aside to give myself to it, no matter how I labored there was no sense of His presence, no flow of His life, no quickening of His Spirit; the heavens were brass and God seemed a million miles away. I could get nowhere and the whole time proved unproductive. But there are other times when I found myself praying, I found myself desiring to pray, moved to pray, and that was the Holy Spirit urging me to do what was necessary to enable things to happen the way they were supposed to happen. It’s a mystery I don’t fully understand, but there are times when I have to pray, there are times when the altar of my soul is full of clouds of holy incense as I send up petitions, as I decree a word, not for myself, but for others, and when I can’t articulate them in English I send them up in an unknown tongue. This is the spiritual “season” of prayer of which I speak determined, not by my carnal understanding or soulish effort, but set by the Spirit Himself.

Ah, dear one, discern the “mood” of the Spirit, be sensitive to the “times” of the Spirit, find the “stream” of the Spirit, and FLOW WITH IT. Pray when the anointing for prayer comes. I do not hesitate to tell you that more will be accomplished in ten minutes in the flow of HIS LIFE than can be wrought in many hours of praying or studying or ministering after the flesh. Learn this and you will understand a great secret: If a person is not moved to pray by the unction of the Spirit he can hardly succeed in prayer. Except you be quickened inwardly, you cannot pray in the Spirit. But when you pray “in season” you touch the throne of the Most High, and just as the apple tree bears its apples “in season,” just so will your prayers bring forth a mighty harvest when they function in season. You mount above the stars beyond creation’s limit, and the soul is alone with God. The electric current which thrills every fiber of the human frame, is but a faint image of that spiritual force that comes forth at this contact with the celestial and the divine. We touch, in union with Him, all things that are lawful and high in His eternal dwelling place.

If we would fulfill the divine function of the Kingdom of God on earth let us cherish the motions of God’s Spirit in our hearts. The mariner may spread his sails, but the ship cannot go to its destination without a gale of wind; so we may spread the sails of our endeavor, but we cannot bring the Kingdom of God on earth without the moving wind of God’s Spirit. How vital then becomes our sensitivity and yieldedness to the motions of the Spirit, motions to prayer, motions to intercession, motions to praise and worship and thanksgiving. “When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee” (II Sam. 5:24). So, when we hear a voice within us, a secret inspiration stirring us up to pray, we must hasten to move with God. It is the power of His Kingdom in manifestation. While the Spirit works in us, we should work with the Spirit. Oh! make much of the motion of the Spirit- it is the energizing of God to accomplish great and mighty things for the Kingdom!

TO BE THE LORD’S PRAYER

It is one thing to understand. It is another thing to do. But it is yet another thing to BE. “We shall be, like Him...” As we arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ we do not merely understand the great truths of the Lord’s prayer; we do not only truly pray the Lord’s Prayer; WE SHALL BE THE LORD’S PRAYER. We will learn to become the Lord’s Prayer, but in order to do so we must walk with the Lord of the Lord’s Prayer. In the words of Michael Wood from Australia, “We have had a completely new breakthrough in our prayer life. It seems that union and communion with the Father, beyond the veil, changes prayer into a state of being and a oneness with God, rather than a tedious labor, even of love.”

The greatest manifestation of power is not in what we say or what we do- it is just simply what we are. If we are the image of God in the earth, the Lord’s prayer will be inspired in the minds and hearts of men though they have never heard nor learned it. Beholding in us the nature of God lived out will create in men, the intense longing, the deep and insatiable cry for God to be their Father, to know the Father as we know Him, to receive from the Father what we have of Him, for His rule to come in their lives, for His will to be done, sins be forgiven, temptation and weakness to be conquered, and evil to be overcome. Simply, men will want what they see in us. When the glory, power, love, purity, reality and life of God in you evoke the desire for salvation and transformation into the likeness of God in other’s hearts, YOU HAVE BECOME THE LORD’S PRAYER!

The entire Lord’s Prayer must be something that flows out of a transformed heart. It must be a definition, a statement of your spirit, the expression of God, what is inside you, what you are. Thus:

I can not say “our” if I live only for myself.

I cannot say “Father” if I do not endeavor each day to live and walk as His son.

I cannot say “who art in heaven” if I am not seeing by the spirit.

I cannot say “hallowed be Thy name” if I am not expressing His nature.

I cannot say “Thy Kingdom come” if I am not making Him Lord in my life.

I cannot say “Thy will be done” if I am not following His leading and obeying His word.

I cannot say “in earth as it is in heaven” if I do not yield my members unto Him.

I cannot say “give us this day our daily bread” if His Word is not being made flesh in me.

I cannot say “forgive us our debts” if I harbor a grudge or bitterness toward anyone.

I cannot say “lead us not into temptation” if I deliberately place myself in its path.

I cannot say “deliver us from evil” if I do not put on the whole armor of God.

I cannot say “Thine is the Kingdom” if I do not give the King the loyalty due Him from a faithful subject.

I cannot say “Thine is the power” if I fear what men may do or blame things on the devil.

I cannot say “Thine is the glory” if I am seeking honor only for myself, promoting my ministry, or taking any credit for what God does through me.

Jesus prayed. How He prayed! And yet, the fact of the matter is that when we contemplate deeply the prayer life of Jesus we find that prayer was not simply a part of His life; it was His life. Prayer was the underlying attitude of His mind and heart. Prayer was the atmosphere in which He lived, the energy that fueled His engine, the air that He breathed. So true was this of God’s firstborn Son that the Hebrew of Psalms 109:4 was literally true of Him: “But I am prayer.” The King James Version reads, “But I give myself to prayer.” Notice, however, that the words “give myself to” are in italics. That means they are not in the original, but were supplied for some reason by the translators. Without those added words the Hebrew says, “But I prayer.” There is no word in Hebrew for “am”- it is understood. The correct way to say “I am

prayer” in the Hebrew language is to say “I prayer.” And that is how it reads! Jesus was prayer. And God is making a people prayer in this hour- it is becoming our nature, our state of being.

I would close by sharing these meaningful words by Ray Prinzing: “The Greek word for prayer is PROSEUCHOMAI meaning: to pray or wish toward God. But it is far more than getting God to run our errands for us, or begging Him for all the things on our ‘wish list’. For true prayer seeks GOD HIMSELF, it is a coming into an awareness of Him- while we share with Him not only the desires of our heart, but a fellowship, and a listening for Him to share with us of His desire for us, and His plan for us. Truly prayer goes far beyond petition, it is that outflow of desire to HIM, in worship, adoration, desire for HIS WILL alone to be fulfilled within. As this becomes the focus of our days- to live out, to become HIS WILL, HIS PRAISE IN THE NOW, then we have linked that seemingly distant future of full salvation to our present times, and brought deep meaning to our daily living.

“There is a principle which we have spoken of over and over again through the years, namely: The highest form of anything is TO BECOME that thing. Thus we see that the highest form of prayer is not just a bended knee and offering our petitions, it is when we become a LIVING PRAYER, our state of being is a pulsating desire for His kingdom to be established in the earth. We are to become HIS PRAISE, not to just praise, but a state of being that redounds to His glory. We are not just to speak truth, but we are to BE TRUTH.

“James brings us a very enlightening point, when he says, ‘The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much’ (James 5:16). The words “effectual fervent” are from one Greek word ENERGEIO, which Young’s Concordance gives to mean: to work in, be inwrought. And again the thought is two-fold. First of all the prayer WORKS IN US, it becomes an INWORKING PRAYER, for the first essential changes must be in us. Thus it works in us until we become aligned with, are ONE IN HIS WILL. And then there is power in the prayer to reach outward to help one another, as is so beautifully borne out in the Amplified translation which says ‘The earnest (heart-felt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available- dynamic in its working’“-end quote.

Chapter 6

Father

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...” (Mat. 6:9).

We have known so little of the scripture. We have been so busy arguing over it, formulating doctrines, creeds, and dogmas about it, that we failed to hear what it was saying. Sonship has been the theme of the scriptures from the opening scenes of Genesis to the closing dramas of Revelation. Sonship is the heart of God’s great and glorious purpose from the shimmering mists of Eden to the dazzling glory of the New Jerusalem. The record begins with a son in a garden (Lk. 3:38) and ends with a son on the throne (Rev. 3:21). It is not our purpose to write the names of all God’s sons, or repeat the story of each one’s life on earth, but it is a beautiful story, beginning with a son “stepping down” and ending with a son “highly exalted”.

What a difference one word makes! Jesus taught us to pray that wonderful prayer we call the Lord’s Prayer by saying “our” rather than “my” Father. The word my implies exclusivity, as if God could be the personal property of one group or one individual over all others. Just the thought of “our Father,” on the other hand, immediately recognizes God as the Father of all! The plural pronoun reveals that no son of God is an “only child.” This does not mean that it is wrong, in our personal communion with God, to call Him “my Father,” for Jesus Himself certainly did. But we must not approach Him feeling we have some special possession or position that excludes others — we are one of a vast family of many sons of God with this same privilege.

Our Father which art in heaven is the greatest word on mortal tongue, and the truth of the Fatherhood of God is the greatest that ever dawned on the intelligence of man. But did it ever dawn upon the mind of man in such a way that other truths have done? When Peter made his great confession, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, our Lord answered Him in joy and thankfulness, “Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah; flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven.” May we not say that flesh and blood never revealed this truth of God’s Fatherhood? It is God’s own direct, supreme revelation of Himself in Christ His first-begotten Son. That which marks off the message of Christ from every other is this teaching of the Fatherhood. It is unique in the history of man’s troubled search for God. If we name the most barbaric of the world’s religions, if we name the most refined of them, we shall find that the revelation of Jesus quite infinitely transcends it, and does so by reason of its revelation of God’s Fatherhood. It is the master-idea in the revelation of Christ, that which is the seed-bed of all that follows. It is the architectonic thought — and the whole plan of God in Christ is the expression of it.

This thought is Christ’s own. It is native and original with Him. In the world there had been nothing like it before. None of the world’s religions knew of it. The Old Testament only vaguely refers to it. But the very first recorded words of Jesus in His earthly life and His last breath, the Father’s name. The child is sought by His parents and found in the temple, and He asks them, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” Gethsemane lies behind; the agony of Calvary is ending; and the triumphant Sufferer with His last breath exclaims, “Father, forgive them...into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” Whenever the Saviour speaks to God He calls

Him Father. He never calls Him by any other name. Five prayers of His are recorded in the New Testament.

In each one God is addressed as Father and in no other way. Not as Yahweh. Not as Adoni. Not as God. Father! The Father is addressed by Jesus no less than sixty times in the prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth chapter of John. It is a remarkable thing. How wonderful it is that our Lord, in a prayer that covers only twenty-six verses, should make direct appeal at least sixty times to God as Father. The thought that I desire to impress upon your mind by this fact is how Christ glorified the Father and presented the love of the Father to creation through all His ministry. We should remember above all things, that He came to reveal and glorify the Father. "These things spake Jesus; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said. Father..." Father! Father! Get that word Father into your spirit. Not the word merely, but all that lies in it! Ask God to give you by the spirit of wisdom and revelation increasing knowledge of its meaning. It will take eternity to reveal all that is in that word.

Regeneration, begotten, new birth, being born again into the kingdom of God, becoming sons of God — these are all principles with which every Bible student is familiar. The beautiful ANALOGY is accepted by everyone. But all this means to the average Christian is that he conjures up the nice religious feeling of thinking of himself as if he were a real son of God, as Jesus is. The average Christian has absolutely no idea of the transcendental implications of this birth into the family of God. Most think of being a child of God as sort of an "honorary" title conferred on them by an indulgent God who accepts them as "little adopted human children" to whom He plans to give as their reward for accepting His gift of eternal life, a beautiful park, a celestial Disney World, a spiritual playground in the sky called "heaven". This heaven is designed for them to enjoy for eternity, loafing, romping, playing, shouting, visiting, rejoicing, playing harps, and floating about doing whatever sinless thing their hearts may desire.

But let us understand what it really means to be born into the very family of GOD. Let us turn that phrase around in order to better catch its significance. Rather than saying we are born into the family of God, it is just as proper to say that we are born into the GOD FAMILY! By way of illustration, I may say that I was, by natural birth, born into the family of Luke Eby. But this also means that I was born into the EBY FAMILY. I am of the EBY KIND. I AM EBY. Not only are men born into the family of God, but they are born into the GOD FAMILY. Not only are we birthed into the kingdom of God, we have been birthed into the GOD KINGDOM, the kingdom which IS GOD. And startling as it may be, this GOD KINGDOM or GOD FAMILY is the ELOHIM of the scriptures! And to be born into this family means, literally, to be born into the GODHEAD!

Before you dismiss this thought as blasphemy, let us consider a dialog that occurred between Jesus and some Jews. It is recorded in John 10:30-36. "I and the Father are one. Again the Jews brought up stones to stone Him. Jesus said to them, My Father has enabled Me to do many good works — I have shown many acts of mercy in your presence. For which of these do you stone Me? The Jews replied, We are not going to stone you for a good act, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, make yourself out to be God. Jesus answered, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are GODS (Elohim)? So men are called gods — by the law — men to whom God's word came, and the scripture cannot be set aside or canceled or broken or annulled. If that is true do you say to Me, the One whom the Father has consecrated and dedicated and set apart for Himself and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?" The quotation of Jesus from Psalm 82:6 says simply, "I have said, Ye are gods (Elohim); and all of you are the children of the most High."

Oh! Let us see this thing as God sees it! Why do parents have children? Do they beget them for the benefit of the children that are to be born? Not at all. There is inherently a PATERNAL DESIRE within the heart of a husband and wife, in the union of the love they share. And it is this paternal nature that drives them to project the experience of the love they share into a new expression of their identity. Children are the projection of our life, our love, our union, OURSELVES, into an extended and expanded reality. If you had one son in whom you found unspeakable delight, would it not be normal to desire another? It is exactly so with the heavenly Father who by nature and choice has purposed to have a vast family of human-divine sons who are just like His first-begotten Son. God has not brought us into His family as a hobby to play at for pastime. He has birthed us out of His own paternal desire to extend and expand HIMSELF! God is our Father because He has from eternity been in the process of begetting and bringing sons to birth, sons to be born in His image, spiritually perfect as He is perfect, ever-living as He is ever-living, God as He is God — the purpose of all creation, the goal of human life, the plan of God — is sonship!

The four Gospels, written in Greek, preserve for us only a few of the Aramaic words from the everyday language spoken in Galilee in the days of Jesus. Abba is one of them. “And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt” (Mk. 14:36). That Jesus in His native tongue addressed God as Abba reveals something essential about His identity as the Son of God — and reveals something essential about our relationship to God as our Father. The apostle Paul wrote: “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (placement), whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15). The word Abba does indeed mean “father,” but it is the form of address a child would use in addressing his earthly father. The origins of the word are clearly in the babbling sounds made by an infant: “dada, mama, papa, abba.” At the time of Jesus, older sons and daughters could refer to their fathers as “Abba,” but the connotations arising from the origins of the word were never lost. If we were to look for an English equivalent for abba today, “daddy” or “papa” would be nearer the mark than the mere formal term “father”. The formal term for father, indicating a mature relationship between father and son, is found in the Greek word “pater”. This is the term generally used by Jesus when speaking of or to His Father. Thus the word “abba” denotes a tremendous child-like trust without any reasoning, whereas “father” expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship.

The Lord’s Prayer changes everything. Everything changes when our perception of reality changes. We learn through this prayer that God is, my Father. That changes my perception of myself. I’m not just an animal dressed in clothes. I’m not a highly developed ape. Nor am I just a “sinner saved by grace” as the preachers are wont to say. No! I am a son of God the Father in heaven. That makes my origin heavenly. God is more than a Creator. God is better than a friend. God is closer than a brother. He’s more than just a wonderful teacher or a great ruler and law-giver. He’s my Father. My very own Father! Anybody who has that kind of close, intimate, loving relationship with God is somebody special.

Surely our Lord Jesus was teaching us a transcendently important lesson when He told us that we should address the mighty Creator and God of the universe as “our Father.” There is but one God. There are things that the heathen called gods, ugly, repugnant, often hideous and terrifying things, that are supposed to be gods. But there is but ONE GOD; and with reverence and great respect we address Him, not as Dear God, not as Almighty God, not as O Thou Great Jehovah, not as O Thou Unknowable, Unapproachable, Infinite, Most Efficacious, Eternal Sovereign, not as Yahweh, nor yet as Precious Jesus — but in sincerity and truth as

OUR FATHER. The wonder of this was expressed by a brother in telling of an incident that occurred in his life. He said: "When my daughter was about five or six years old and passing through a certain phase which a lot of children pass through, she heard other people calling my wife and me by our first names, Anne and Jim. She thought that sounded like a pretty good idea. So she began to call us Anne and Jim. I thought that she would soon pass through that phase so I didn't say anything about it. It was 'Jim' so and so, and 'Anne' such and such, and we let it go for a few days, then a week, then a couple of weeks. Finally, I thought to myself, 'Enough is enough!' I will never forget the day that I took her into the living room, sat down in an easy chair, and sat her on my knees. I said, 'Sweetie, daddy wants to have a talk with you.' 'Okay, Jim, what's your problem?' I said, It's about you calling me Jim. You see, there are millions of people out there in the world who call me Jim, but none of them can call me what you can call me. You are the only one who can call me Daddy.' You see, I had entered into a closer relationship with her than even on a First name basis. The first name basis is the realm of friendship. But Daddy is the realm of worship. She was losing that and I did not want her to lose it. That was thirteen or fourteen years ago. Do you know what my name is today? Daddy. That's right! And that is very dear." Praise God, we have gone beyond the first name basis! We have come into that intimacy of relationship — OUR FATHER. How Filled with meaning, reality and glory are those words!

Let us suppose that a man by the name of John Smith has a son named Mike. When Mike addresses his father he doesn't call him John Smith! Mike doesn't say, "John Smith, may I have a quarter?" or "John Smith, I love you!" No. Instead he will say, "Daddy, may I have a quarter?" or "Daddy, I love you!" Only persons who have no sonship relationship with John Smith will address him as John Smith or Mr. Smith or simply John. A son does not address his father by name, but by relationship. A son does not pray to an impersonal "God," nor to the Old Testament "Yahweh," nor to the New Testament "Jesus." "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Jesus came to reveal the FATHER'S NAME. He came not to reveal some other name that the Father has had — He came to reveal the name — FATHER. To all those blessed ones apprehended of God to sonship there is a recognition, a conscious awareness, when we pray, or praise, or worship, that it is to our FATHER. What that holy name means is more than I can say in a thousand articles such as this, but this we may well know — He who is called Father must of necessity have a relationship with His sons and daughters that transcends that of any father on earth that we have ever known. Every boy and girl in the world likes to be able to look up to his or her father as the most dear and exceptional man on earth. Unfortunately some are deprived of that love, but we will never be disappointed with our Father who is in heaven.

Christ taught us to pray what no one else ever did, what Abraham never did, what Moses never did, what David never did, what the prophets and priests of Israel never did; He makes us understand it still: that the mission of the Spirit is to cry, "Abba, Father!" and help us to know Him. How wonderful is the fact that in teaching us to pray Christ never taught us to pray to Himself; never taught us to pray to the Holy Ghost; never taught us to pray to Yahweh; never taught us to pray to saint or angel, Virgin, or human being. How simple is the teaching, how simple is the prayer, "Our Father." Oh, that is it!

God has revealed Himself to us in a three-fold manifestation as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and He brings us into relationship with Himself in each of these three manifestations. All Christians have entered into a relationship with God as Son, experiencing Him as SAVIOUR in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (Jn. 10:9). In this "Saviour" relationship we come to know Him in the joy of sins forgiven and the blessed reality of redemption. Jesus as Saviour is the door, the gate the entrance into

the Kingdom of God. As we go on in God we experience Him as the Holy Spirit — the ANOINTING — the presence and power of God working in and manifesting through our lives. But ultimately we must grow up to truly know and experience Him as OUR FATHER.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). First we note this word “sons” is from the Greek “huios” meaning MATURE SONS, a fully developed one, strong to bear the responsibility and position to which he is appointed. There are different words used throughout the Greek text which speak of the whole range of growth and development from a babe, new born, on through the young lad, till one arrives at maturity. There is a GROWING UP into Christ, who is the Head, so that “when I become a man, I put away childish things.” And God is indeed bringing forth SONS, mature ones, developed and disciplined, conformed to His image, which shall also give expression to HIS NATURE.

You can usually tell the difference between a babe in Christ and a more mature son by their terminology. The babe knows JESUS THE SAVIOUR, and will always be talking about Jesus, calling on Jesus, “Jesus...Jesus...Jesus!” This is quite natural, although unscriptural. However, as one grows up into Christ he receives a revelation of the FATHER. When a baby is born it knows nothing about its father. This understanding comes through growth and development, becoming more precious and meaningful as time goes on. The cry of a son is — “FATHER!” Our sonship is the extension of Christ’s sonship, the Spirit of sonship within us is the Spirit of THE SON. The new man within IS CHRIST. The Spirit of the Son, the Christ within cries not, “Jesus!”, because it is the Spirit of Jesus. This Spirit causes us to cry, not Jesus, but FATHER! A simple truth is this: If there is a spirit within you that cries “Father!” then know, my beloved, that you are beginning to enter into your sonship to God!

In His great sermon on the mount Jesus was teaching His disciples not to worry about the future or the mundane things of this earthly existence. He said, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on, etc.” He reminds them that our heavenly Father takes care of even the little birds and feedeth them, and then He says, “Are ye not much better than they.” He tells them how God causes the lilies to grow, and has clothed them with such beauty, and the grass of the Field; and then He continues, “Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith...for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” Yes, it is our heavenly Father that is the source of our supply; He is the giver of every good and perfect gift; the supplier of every need on every level, and Jesus wanted us to know this and to know and trust this mighty God as our Father. Jesus said, “It is not I that doeth the works, but My Father who dwelleth in Me.” So it was God the Father who healed the sick, it was the Father who stretched forth His hand and did signs and wonders, who cleansed the lepers, made the lame to walk, and raised the dead. Jesus Himself said so. It is still the Father who does the works today, and we know nothing of sonship until we thoroughly understand this principle. Though the Son and the sons are the channel through which the divine fullness flows, the Son and the sons are not the source, the Father is the source of all. From the Father flows the mighty river of divine fullness. Though two thousand years ago it flowed through the channel of His First-begotten Son, and today may flow through the channels of the sons of God, it does not originate with any of us; the Father is the source, and all emanates from God the Father. To know Him, the only true God, is to be joined unto Him, the fountain of Life; to be one with Him who is the fountainhead of all life, wisdom, love, power and goodness, is to have eternal life, and to be a channel through which the divine fullness can flow. Truly, “There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things...” (I Cor. 8:6).

When we look at some of the prayers of the early disciples, we can see how, and to whom, they prayed. "For this cause," wrote the apostle Paul, "I bow my knees unto the FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant to you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with His might by His Spirit in the inner man." Again, "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:15-17). Every other prayer in the epistles and the book of Acts is prayed to the Father. And James pointed out that "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights..." (James 1:17).

The Church world today has lost the cry, "Our Father!" Humanity never really had it, until Christ revealed the Father. "Have we not all one Father?" Yes, but men do not know it, and they do not pray to the Father. They pray to God, to Jesus, to Yahweh, to the Holy Spirit, to the blessed Virgin, to the saints; but few pray to the Father. Never shall the heart of mankind be turned, father to son, mother to daughter, until they know God as Father. Never shall we understand the mission of Christ, or the true value of our lives, until we know that He came from the Father to reveal the Father, because we too came from the Father, and He is the way to the Father, and will bring us back to God. Never shall men understand the mighty power of that word "Father" until they know that all things are from the Father; that all things subsist by the mighty operation of the power of the Father.

Let us not forget that God is our Father — not the Father of some men, but the Father of all men. He was the Father of Adam (Lk. 3:38) and we are all the offspring of Adam; that is why it takes the second man, the last Adam, to bring us back to the Father. The propitiation which Christ made is not for our sins only, "But also for the sins of the whole world" (I Jn. 2:2). The Father's love is reaching out to all humanity, to every prodigal son, far away from Father's house. The message of Christ was a message from the Father, and when He left us He said, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."

Consider the scene with me. Up the victor's way, to the temple of Jupiter, swept the procession one Roman holiday. It was the procession of a victorious general who bore the title of Caesar. He swept on with all His panoply and pride, a victorious leader amidst the plaudits of the people. Standing in his chariot, he reined in his horses and bowed grimly from side to side as the people proclaimed him, "Ave Caesar, Imperator! Ave Caesar, Imperator!" He heard their cry, "Caesar, Imperator!" and rode on with the captives chained to his chariot wheels, while behind him came the kings and princes of the lands he had conquered with his great generals and mighty soldiers. The music was ringing, the shields clashing, while the people shouted, "Ave Imperator Caesar!" Suddenly there is a hush. Out from the crowds comes a little child and raises his tiny hands, with a look of infinite satisfaction and love. He has burst from a mother's or a nurse's arms, he has leaped into the victor's way, almost beneath the horses' feet, and has uttered only one word. The little boy's cry is not "Caesar", it is not "Imperator" but "O Pater! O Father!" Caesar reined his horses, held them in check, stopping the entire procession, and the little fellow, almost run over, kept up the cry, "O Pater!" Handing his reins to the charioteer the Imperator leaped from his chariot and raised the child in his arms and kissed him. Then louder than ever rang the cry, "Ave Pater! Ave Pater! Hail, Father!" They saw that the heart of the Caesar was the heart of a father; as he embraced his child and kissed him and mounted his chariot holding him to his breast, the people continued to shout amidst smiles and tears, "Ave Pater!"

Oh, great God! God is wonderful! God is all-powerful! He is the Imperator! He is absolute. But God is merciful! If you but cry, "Father, Father!" He will rein the chariots of the stars; He will reign the chariots of the suns; He will rein the planets in their courses, and He will leap from His heaven, and raise His child to His heart. He is your Father; He is my Father. He is our Father — and "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

Ray Prinzing, in his excellent little book *SONS OF THE HIGHEST*, wrote: "Jesus came to be The Way, The Truth, and The Life — to save the world, this is true, but He also came to reveal the Father. He did not fence everybody in to a 'Jesus realm,' He came as our Saviour, yes, but also to be much more than that! When He declared Himself to be THE WAY, He did not mean just a way to escape hell and go to heaven, but that He was the way to the Father, and as the Man Christ Jesus, partaking of flesh and blood, He knew the limitations of our human realm. He also knew the Source of fullness, and so He said, "I go to my Father, for my Father is greater than I" (Jn. 14:28). The Father is greater than all manifested realms of sonship. Fatherhood is the position of being part of the life-giving force.

"Although He was actively doing the works of His Father, so that He was able to say, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee...' (Mk. 2:5), yet when it came time for Him to pour out His life at Calvary, and He faced those who would crucify Him, though He was well able to forgive them, still He said, 'Father, Forgive them; For they know not what they do'" (Lk. 23:24). He knew that while the eyes of the multitude were riveted upon Him, yet they saw only the outward human form, and recognized Him as the 'Son of man,' and though it would have sounded noble to a few, for Him to have uttered His own words of forgiveness, yet even in that moment He sought to raise their consciousness to a higher level, and thus He directed their attention TO THE FATHER, for total forgiveness comes from Him. And in due time man would understand 'that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. (II Cor. 5:19).

"There is a ONENESS WITH THE FATHER, a relationship that He would have us enjoy, where we receive directly from Him all that we need. Jesus also spoke of that deeper dimension when He said, 'In that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you' (Jn. 16:23). This surely bespeaks of a deeper relationship with our God. The evidence of our salvation being clearly revealed, the mediatorial work of the Son being complete in our personal behalf, we shall have DIRECT ACCESS TO THE FATHER. This does no despite or injury to our Saviour, rather it redounds to His glory, for it reveals that His workings in us have been successful, and that we are now prepared to enter into a deeper relationship with Him, able to approach the Father in His name, we stand in the character and nature of all that His name implies" — end quote.

To the above Paul Mueller adds these instructive insights: "There is another significant stop for us in our spiritual growth in God. It is the maturity of our worship and devotion to the Father. Although Jesus accepted the worship of others, He clearly directed those who were more spiritual to worship the Father. He said, 'But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him' (Jn. 4:23). Many Christians see Jesus as their advocate with God, and it is scripturally correct for them to do so. They call on Him to deliver them out of their tests and trials. They seek an escape from those trials, for they cannot see what we see. Father has not opened the eyes of their understanding as He has done for us. But there is a realm in God that is above and beyond that realm of immaturity: it is the realm of the worship of the Father. In this higher spiritual realm of greater maturity, we relate directly to the Father.

“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father. Yea, the hour is here now, and a people are now worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth. It is not that a certain date was reached, and the hour arrived. It is that we matured in God to the point where we now worship the Father. When we grew sufficiently in the Spirit, the hour of our more mature worship of the Father came. Now we can say we are ‘true worshippers’. We speak directly to the Father and relate to Him in all things. In this higher realm of worship, our Father reveals His secrets and mysteries plainly to us (Jn. 16:25). We have now come into the greater son relationship with our Father. Now the scripture is fulfilled in us. We are sons marked for the adoption of sons. ‘And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son (huios, a mature one); and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ’ (Gal. 4:5-7). That we are sons of God is certain. But though called to be sons, we were once babes, then young children, then servants, then young, immature sons, and now, we are more mature sons by virtue of our spiritual growth. But we are not merely more mature sons, we are sealed sons. We are marked and identified by our Father as those who shall receive their adoption (Rev. 7:3-4).

“Jesus also said, ‘At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God’ (Jn. 16:26-27). Let us understand clearly what Jesus was saying here. He plainly declared that He would not pray to the Father for us, for the Father Himself loves us. In this new relationship with the Father, Jesus would not intercede for us. Our Father Himself would take our petitions, for we have been raised to the level of ‘kings and priests unto God and His Father’ (Rev. 1:6). Our union with God has increased! By our spiritual maturity and growth in God, we are kings and priests unto our Father. Speaking of our relationship with the Father, Jesus made this amazing statement: ‘And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father’ (Jn. 16:23-25).

“We have entered a new relationship with our Father. The old form of worship is being replaced. We are now walking with our Father as His sons. Our sonship relation with Him is being confirmed. We are now privileged to ask of our Father that our joy may be full. By the Spirit, we are believing for the heathen as our inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for our possession (Ps. 2:8). This is the purpose of the kingdom of God. Our new relationship with the Father confirms us as kings and priests in His throne and kingdom. Our Father is no longer speaking to us in proverbs. He is no longer treating us as children or servants. In this new relationship with the Father, He is now dealing with us as His sons in a one-on-one relationship (Rev. 3:20). He is now showing us things to come which are being revealed plainly of the Father” — end quote,

THE FATHER OF SPIRITS

The reverent heart is made to wonder at the unmistakable simplicity of the ways of God. Long centuries ago the apostle penned these meaningful words, “We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?” (Heb. 12:9). This verse tells us that just as our natural, earthly father is the father of our flesh, so is God the FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS! Ah, He is not the Father of your empty religious rituals and static creeds; He is not the Father of your denomination; He is not the Father of your flesh; He is not the Father of your carnal mind,

your self-will, or your fleshly emotions. You can never meet God in any of those realms — He is not there. God is the God of your spirit, you must be in your spirit to be with God and touch God. Today I am sitting in my office in El Paso, Texas. If you go to Dallas you will miss me. If you go on any other street, you will miss me. If you stand outside my house on the street corner, you will miss me. You must come to the door and enter my dwelling to be where I am and know me. And you must enter into where God is to know Him. God is the God of our spirits! We all need to turn to the spirit. From thence is the fountain of all life!

God is both Creator and Father. There is a vast and distinct difference between the two. A scientist may invent and construct a robot that walks, talks and works. Is he then the father of the robot? No one would impute fatherhood to the scientist because of his invention. He is clearly the creator, but not the father. Should another scientist invent an egg that hatches a bird, would we then characterize the scientist as the “father” of the bird? Certainly not! In the beginning God said, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). God made cattle to reproduce “after their kind,” after the cattle kind. He made every winged fowl to reproduce “after his kind,” after the bird kind. That was the standard of parenthood in that long-ago beginning, and still is, ONE’S OWN KIND must be brought into being before parenthood is conceded. It was clearly God’s purpose to make man AFTER HIS KIND. Incredible as it may seem to those who have no understanding of the revelation of God, God is a FAMILY. “I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the most High” (Ps. 82:6). “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:14-15).

Is God, then, a man? Unless we can establish that God is a physical and corporeal Being with a body composed of flesh and bone, then His creation of man did not make Him a “father” any more than did oceans full of fish, or mountains filled with bear and elk. The book of Genesis gives two accounts of the origin of man. As I have studied the Word of God, many things have become very evident, one of which is that there are two distinct creations or works of God revealed in chapters one and two of Genesis. In Genesis 1:26-27 the first of these creative acts, in respect to man, is presented, and as we consider the wonderful advent of man created “in the image and likeness of God” we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God Almighty and bearing His own divine nature, character, and attributes. The image of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. The second work of God wrought upon man is related in Genesis 2:7 where we see this significant action taking place: “And the Lord God FORMED MAN OF THE DUST OF THE GROUND, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Reading this passage we have the definite assurance that, as man has first been “created” in the spiritual image of God, a further work is being carried forth and the man is now being “formed” into another expression “FORMED of the dust of the ground,” thus becoming a “living soul” — manifest in the earth realm. The First is the created man, the second reformed man. The first is out of God in the spirit, the second is out of the earth after the flesh. The first is a spiritual man bearing God’s image, the second a physical man resembling the animals. The First bears the image of the heavenly, the second bears the image of the earthly. The first is known unto God in the Spirit, the second is known by the creatures of earth. The very fact that the scripture states that Adam became a living soul, reveals that there was a process from pure spirit existence, into a lesser realm.

The Lord Jesus in His resurrection said, “A spirit has not flesh and bone as ye see Me have” (Lk. 24:39). He also said that “God is a SPIRIT” (Jn. 4:24). Therefore, in order to become a “father” it was necessary for God to bring one or more spirit beings into existence. Then, and only then, could He be classed as a “father”. Paul speaks of this Fatherhood of God in his

teaching on the discipline that God applies to His sons. “Furthermore we have had Fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits, and live?” (Heb. 12:9). God is here declared to be the Father of SPIRITS. This is clearly not speaking about either angels or demons, for the whole subject of this chapter is SONSHIP. God is not the Father of angels any more than the scientist would be the father of his robot, for they are created spirits, not begotten. “For unto which of the angels said He at any time. Thou art My Son, this day have I BEGOTTEN THEE? And again, I will be to him a Father” (Heb. 1:5). Only spirits which are born spirits are the children of God. All others are created spirits, a different “kind” of spirit life than God. God is the Father of OUR SPIRITS! What a glorious reality!

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:14-15). You see, everybody came out of God. Your spirit came out of God’s Spirit. It’s a part of God’s Spirit. But you’ll never know anything about your spirit until the inspiration of the Almighty gives you understanding. “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job:32:8). The word “inspiration” in the Hebrew means “breath, wind, or spirit.” When you receive the Spirit of Christ into your life, He quickens your spirit. His Spirit then “bears witness with your spirit that you are a son of God” (Rom. 8:16). Only when your spirit is quickened by His spirit are you awakened to your true identity to know the true value of your life.

The prophet Zechariah declared that from the beginning God “stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him” (Zech. 12:1). Who can gainsay the obvious truth that the outward physical form we recognize as man is indwelled by a spirit? The mighty Moses declared that God is “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 27:16). The apostle Paul said, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him”? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God” (I Cor. 2:11). And again, “And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes. 5:23). These passages, and many more like them, lead us to the inevitable conclusion that God, as “the Father of spirits,” has begotten myriads of spirit beings. God did not become our “father” by virtue of the physical body being fashioned in His own image. Did not God Himself command that IMAGES were not to be worshipped or revered? That is, the image should not be confused with the living reality. It is not the outer man, the physical-body-image that made God a Father, but that spirit which He exuded into the face of that image when He “breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life.”

God is spirit. Get a Fix on this one grand truth — God IS SPIRIT! Spirit is not His memory, spirit is not His afterglow, nor is spirit merely something He created. Spirit is what God IS. It is what He was before there was the “beginning”. There was a time when there was only God. “And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17). “The spirit is life” — reality. Going on within our God are so many wondrous things, and they are all spirit reality. Fellowship is there. Life is there. Wisdom and knowledge and power are there. Love and mercy and goodness are there. These are not merely aspects of God — they are God.

Hans Christian Anderson was a great storyteller. He could spin a yarn and tell a tale with the best of writers. He also recognized a greater writer, the storyteller of life. “Every man’s life is a fairy tale,” he wrote, “written by God’s fingers.” When do our tales begin? Many say, “Why, at birth of course, when the cord is cut and the child draws its first breath and sees the light of day.” God, the storyteller of life, tells us His “fingers” were busy long before that. Long before your conception in a physical world, you existed, because you are the children of the Father in

heaven. If you did not exist before your conception, then, my friends, you have no spirit) within you, and God, the Father of spirits, the Father in heaven, is not the Father of the spirits of all men. The question begs an answer: From whence came your spirit? From God? From the devil? Did God by a special act of creation form it at the moment of your conception or your birth? Was it pro-created in the physical union of sperm and ovum? If you did not exist before your conception you are merely a beast and you do not belong to the celestial family of God, nor are you the sons of God, nor did Jesus descend from the heavenly realms to redeem you and bring you back to the Father, and there is not much that I can tell you that will do you any good.

I turn to the passages of scripture which with divine certainty relate this. In Ephesians 1:4-5 we find, "According as He hath chosen us IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (placement as mature sons) by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that God chose and pre-destined a company of sons before the foundation of the world. The word "before" translates the Greek word PRO meaning "to go before, precede." Hence, the Father's act of choosing the first-fruit sons preceded the laying of the foundations of the world (that is another story, but I will not deal with it here). How, I ask, could God choose you IN CHRIST and predestinate you in that long ago eternity IF YOU DID NOT THEN EXIST? Now, therefore, when I talk to you, I am talking to a household of God's sons and daughters; I am talking to a celestial race, a divine household; and these are the people of whom the apostle spoke when he wrote to the saints in Rome, saying, "For whom He did FOREKNOW, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Yes — the Father in heaven FOREKNEW you, knew you beforehand, my beloved brother, my precious sister in Christ. And that can mean nothing else but that He KNEW YOU BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD and at that time when He KNEW YOU BEFORE He pre-destined you to enter this earth experience and thereby be conformed into the image of the First, unique, and preeminent Son, Jesus Christ.

We were in Christ before the ages began. There was something in God — spirit — marked off with your name on it, you were chosen in Him before the garden graced the eastern slopes of Eden. You began in that long ago eternity — that is the first you that was ever seen. You, my beloved, must expand your view of you. Spirit is superior to matter. Spirit is superior to physical. The things which are not seen existed before the things that are seen, and the things which are seen are temporal, whereas the things which are not seen are eternal, saith the Lord. Spirit was before matter came to be. Spirit outlasts the physical. Your body did not yet exist, nor your present strange personality — but God was before all things and you and I were back there in Him!

Spirit is superior to physical. Eternity is superior to time. Non-dimensional is superior to dimensional. God, the eternal spirit, created something that would not last. I have no desire to detract from the material creation, but words fail me to explain how momentarily unimportant the natural realm is in comparison to heavenly and eternal things. The natural creation is here for a short visit — it began and it will end. Some fundamentalists believe that the material creation has been in existence for only 6,000 years. Scientists believe that it is some twenty billion years old. But even twenty billion years is but a moment, an infinitesimal time in relation to God and eternity. It is so insignificant in the greater scheme of things. And you were marked out in Him, I was marked out in Him, before the worlds began and that makes the part of me that is spirit very, very important!

I do not hesitate to say that only that which is spirit is real. “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Cor. 4:18). “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing” (Jn. 6:63). “Except a man be born of...the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5). “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:8). “God is spirit” (Jn. 4:24). There is something within you, there is something within me that is crying out across time, longing, yearning, searching for that which we were and are and shall be. But caught within the limitations of time and space it is so difficult to put your hand through that wall and reach back into a realm that you can’t see, feel or hear. If you can penetrate that wall, what you touch on the other side is real. It is invisible, but very real.

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

Never were words more sublime uttered by sage or prophet than those spoken by king David when he lifted up his heart to God in a prayer of thanksgiving and adoration saying, “Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting. Thou art God” (Ps. 90:1-2). Here the prophet David assures us with great plainness of speech that the Lord has been our dwelling place in all generations. Even before the mountains were brought forth or God had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting He is our God and in Him we dwelt and from Him we came. Our spirits were with Him before the creation of the earth, for the Father was then our dwelling place. We were sent to this earthly realm for a wise and glorious purpose — for testing, learning, instruction, training, discipline, and perfection — preparation for our part in that magnificent work of deliverance of the whole creation from the tyranny of darkness, decay and death. The Psalmist said, “Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men” (Ps. 90:3). The Lord turned man to destruction, which is to say, He sent us down to this earth realm of dust, sin and death, and then said to us, “Return! ye children of men.” What a revelation that is!

Far away in the depths of my spirit today there is a chord that still vibrates to that wondrous shout of joy before the foundations of the earth were laid, when, in that long forgotten past we were there with the Father in spirit, and there is an inward sense of assurance that much of the truth we now possess was known to our spirits since that early beginning. Because the spirit is

burdened down with the earthly and visible, man has come to the place in his experience where the inner sanctum wherein God lives in man's spirit is veiled by the flesh and his spiritual consciousness is imprisoned by this gross material realm. We remember not the things of old — until that heaven blest day when Christ comes in quickening power and touches the mind of our spirit, restoring the memory of those former things. For lack of true understanding we call this restored memory "revelation". When by the eyes of spirit we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, the powerful attraction kindled in our hearts for Christ and reality is, in fact, just the beginning of the wonderful RENEWING OF THE MIND to recall again the things of that high and holy realm from whence we came. The "re-newing" of the mind means to make the mind new again and can be nothing else but the restoration of the mind to a realm of knowledge and understanding previously enjoyed. The renewing of the mind is our deliverance from spiritual amnesia. "But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath BEFORE ORDAINED that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:4-10).

From out of eternity, Before time began; In the bosom of the Father, While the morning stars sang, I shouted for joy, While beholding His great plan; God's purpose on earth, His election in man! While meditating upon the wonder of these things, I was struck by the Lord Jesus' statement in Matthew — "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." It seemed to be asking me if I was thinking of God as my Father or if I was instead simply thinking of myself as the outcome of a whole network of human beings who stretched back through time to our proverbial ancestors Adam and Eve! In other words, instead of thinking of ourselves as the outcome of materiality, we can all relate to our Father in heaven, just as Jesus told us to. And since God is spirit, it follows that in our true nature we must all be spiritual because we are His children. Looking at ourselves from this spiritual basis can really bring about a great change in our lives. It can set us free from inherited tendencies or from a checkered past. For instance, if one's human family has been a bit on the shady side of the law, or with a disproportionate number of alcoholics, this knowledge of our true identity and the true value of our life can help to free us from believing we're stuck with repeating the same mistakes.

I saw this very clearly during the time when I traveled to the Alps of northern Italy to visit the area where my family originated many centuries ago among the ancient Waldensians. While this research was historically and personally interesting to me, I saw that I needed to reject any belief that I was a mere mortal with a whole history of material inheritances. Otherwise, I would be allowing myself to be vulnerable to whatever hereditary weaknesses that might be uncovered in my family tree at one point or another. This is where a deeper understanding of man as being truly spiritual is a great help. The belief that we are physical and the outcome of a long line of physical beings tends to us — and our families — into an identity in this gross material realm. This life is one that is subject to sickness, breakdown, moral weakness, and a host of other troubles, including death. In this mental and physical environment, heredity has almost omnipotent influence, as your medical doctor will be quick to point out to you. So when someone says that you have a nasty temper "just like your father," or are scatterbrained "just like your mother," or that "cancer runs in your family," take a minute to stop and think about which heritage you want to accept for yourself. As God's child, as God's son, we can know the freedom that the truth brings. And as the offspring of God you can have the peace, blessing, life, power and order of the Kingdom of God! The truth shall set you free! Knowing that you are from above, the child of your heavenly Father, will cancel all fear, frustration, weakness and limitation. What a wonderful Father! What a glorious Kingdom! What a beautiful Reality!

Surely this is what Jesus had in mind when He gave us this most spiritual, yet practical, teaching: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 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 nor steal. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 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. 5:3,8,9; 6:19-20,25,32-33; 7:11).

Chapter 7

Our Father

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...” (Mat. 6:9).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2). That is the truth, the final, absolute, and ultimate truth about you and me. It is a dogma, and an intolerant dogma, as all dogmas are. It does not permit any compromise. If I am the son of God revealed in Jesus Christ, then I am not just a little better than the beast, nor just a little lower than the angels — I am better and higher than the angels and have obtained a more excellent name (nature) than they, raised up in Christ to sit together with Him in the higher than all heavens, to sit with Him upon His throne even as He is set down with His Father in His throne, crowned with glory and honor. Every kind of thought or action based upon the belief that I am anything less than this — a spirit being in the image and likeness of God — any idea that my life is limited like the life of the animals, or controlled as theirs is controlled — is a tissue of falsehood and all action based upon that falsehood can only issue in disaster. If I am the son of God then I am born of the Spirit, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

If I am the son of God, nothing but God will satisfy my longing; no amount of comfort, no amount of pleasure, no amount of wealth, will give me peace or rest. If I had the cup full of all the world’s joys held up to me, and could drain it to the dregs, I should still remain thirsty if I had not God. If the feast of all the good things of life, pleasures and powers, fame and prestige, that have been and are, could be laid out before me and I could eat it all at one meal, I should still be hungry if I had not God. There is not enough in a hundred billion galaxies to satisfy a fully developed spirit — I must find my life in the Father. I must know the Father. I must fellowship and commune with the Father. I must dwell where He dwells. There are not in reality two worlds or two lives, there is but one — and that is life eternal, which is to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent (Jn. 17:3).

TWO LEVELS OF SONSHIP

Although God is “the Father of the spirits of all flesh (Num. 27:16; Heb. 12:9), ” it is evident that not all sons are created equal. Let me give you an example. The first son that Abraham had was Ishmael. Ishmael was conceived when Sarah had despaired that she would never bear the son of promise. She persuaded Abraham to take unto him her Egyptian maidservant, Hagar. Ishmael is a type of the son of the flesh, rather than promise. Abraham loved Ishmael! He was indeed his son, and undoubtedly a beautiful and winsome child. But — while Ishmael was the son of Abraham, he was also the son of the Egyptian bondswoman. The analog is just this — your first birth is that of Ishmael. It’s the love of the Father, it’s the Father’s son, His very offspring — but it’s born out of the Father in an Egyptian (earthly, worldly, sensual) mind. Abraham could not tell that when he looked at his son — he looked at Ishmael and all he saw was his son. His bowels cried out, “This is my son — O Lord, please bless Ishmael!” But the

Lord responded, “No — in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” “Who in the world is Isaac, Lord? I’m one hundred years old — what do you mean, Isaac? Sarah is ninety years old — how are you going to give me a baby?” But the record states: “He believed.” And in that wonderful day when Isaac was born the Bible says that Ishmael mocked the son of promise. And then Abraham could see the real nature of things. Two sons — two natures — but both from one father. One of the low realm of the flesh, and one from above by the power of God. Can we not see by this how it is that God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

We might ask, Who really is entitled to think of, or to pray to God as Father? In one sense, every living soul, if we take into consideration such a passage as Malachi 2:10, “Have we not all one Father? Hath not God created us?” Jesus said to His disciples, “I ascend to My Father, and to your Father; to My God, and your God” (Jn. 20:17). Yet, at the time He uttered these words none of them had been “born again” by the Spirit of God. When Jesus spoke to the multitudes He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” — none of those people to whom He spoke these words about being the children of the heavenly Father had ever heard about a “born again” experience! Apart from Jesus’ death and resurrection, apart from the coming of the Holy Spirit, and apart from any New Testament salvation or born again experience they were all the children of their heavenly Father!

God is the Father of all men. There is a special sense in which God is the Father of those only who are reborn of Him through the Holy Spirit of re-generation. To these He gives, in a blessedly distinct sense, the “spirit of adoption” or the revelation of their sonship, whereby they cry, “Abba, Father!” Nevertheless the fact remains, universal and unalterable, that God is the Father of the spirits of all men. Father Adam is declared by the spirit of inspiration to be “the son of God” (Lk. 3:38). He is indeed a “prodigal son.” But notwithstanding his disobedience and banishment from Father’s house, he has never ceased to be a son; the Father, notwithstanding His anger and punishment, has never ceased to be a Father. A famous preacher of yesteryear once said, “The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world’s joy. The lonely pine on the mountain top waves its somber boughs and cries, ‘Thou art my sun!’ And the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue and whispers with its perfumed breath, ‘Thou art my sun!’ And the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind, and makes answer, ‘Thou art my sun!’ So God sits, effulgent, in heaven, not for a favored few, but for the universe of life: and there is no creature so poor or low that he may not look up with childlike confidence and say, ‘My Father, Thou art mine!’”

Now consider how this truth of God’s Fatherhood will affect some views of ours. God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. He is the Father of all virtuous and lovely souls, and He is equally the Father of the sinful and the vicious. He was the Father of the exemplary, dutiful, faithful, industrious son who stayed at home and worked. He was not less the Father of the prodigal who wandered into a far country, spent his substance in riotous living, and began to be in want. “If you are not good God will not love you,” a parent sometimes says to a child. But He will! He cannot help it. You do not cease to love your little one because of his mistakes and shortcomings. You smile and are sorry together! But the love is there. God may have to punish — but that need not be unloving. His strokes may be mercy, His chastisement grace. He cannot possibly treat all alike, the responsible and the irresponsible, the faithful and the

rebellious. He may have to leave the unfaithful alone, to taste the fruit of his doing, and see what results from his sin. He may leave him to pass through sorrow, the grave, and hell. In a word, God may have to deal with a sinning child of His as the noblest and purest earthly parent might with his prodigal son or daughter who would not come home. Yet God is still the Father, and God is love.

Charles Aked wrote: "This fact of Fatherhood is indestructible. On that we must insist. In the nature of the case it is indestructible. A father cannot become an un-father. You cannot travel back in time and prevent the birth of your children. Fatherhood is not a contract. It is one of the inevitabilities of life. If I am already, here and now, your son, how can you make it otherwise? I may be unworthy of you. You may desire to disown me. You may even disinherit me, but the fact of your fatherhood is one of the facts of the universe. And to many of us it is inconceivable that God should ever want to destroy such a fact, or abdicate His Fatherhood. Suppose your son is so unworthy, and you so righteously grieved and pained and angry with him. Suppose he came to himself, with tears and shame and through a cleansing baptism of repentance sought his way back to your heart. Suppose you, with divine insight, saw that his repentance was sincere and that he longed with a great longing for your moral and spiritual help and uplift in his toilsome, agonizing struggle backward to the forgotten good and forward to the light of day. It is only barely conceivable that you would turn a deaf ear to his petitions and prayers. And when it is a question of God's love and of His eternal Fatherhood, it is forever and forever impossible to conceive of a time or a circumstance, when, if the prodigal wishes to return to his Father, the Father will refuse to receive him. We may trust death and if need be hell itself to demonstrate the Father's love."

Now in a very real sense — and I ask that you follow me closely — all mankind are the sons of God. I must emphasize that. Scripture is very accurate and careful to make this assertion. Paul, when speaking to the pagan Athenians on Mars hill said, "God that made the world and all things therein...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, if haply they might seek after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, FOR WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING" (Acts 17:24-28). And the word he used — offspring — is GENOS in the Greek which carries the meaning of that which is generated or begotten. When Adam sinned mankind fell from that intimate and sweet relationship with God, dying the spiritual death, unresponsive to the reality of the spirit, and knows not of his sonship, but walks estranged and without God and without hope in the world.

So, there are two levels of sonship — those whose spirits have been quickened by HIS Spirit, begotten again unto a living hope; and those who walk estranged from the Father's house, lost even from the knowledge or remembrance of their true identity, for they have not yet "come to themselves." They are the Father's sons even while they wallow with the pigs in the stench and filth of the pig pen of sin, eating the swill of the flesh.

MAN — THE IMAGE OF GOD

You may remember the story of Helen of troy. According to legend this beautiful queen was captured and carried away and became a victim of amnesia. She became a prostitute in the streets. She didn't know her name or the fact that she came from royal blood. But back in her homeland, friends didn't give up. One Greek man believed she was alive and went to look for her. He never lost faith. One day while wandering through the streets, he came to a waterfront and saw a wretched woman in tattered clothes with deep lines across her face. There was

something about her that seemed familiar, so he walked up to her and said, "What is your name?" She gave a name that was meaningless to him. "May I see your hands?" he pursued. She held her hands out in front of her, and the young man gasped, "You are Helen! You are Helen! Do you remember?" She looked up at him in astonishment. "Helen!" he yelled out. Then the fog seemed to clear. There was recognition in her face. The light came on! She discovered her lost self! She put her arms around her old friend and wept. She discarded her tattered clothes and once more became the queen she was meant to be. God searches for all men in the same way. He uses every method possible to look for men and women to convince them of their worth to Him — their true value.

The almost universal urge to pray is due to the fact that originally man was created in the image of God, begotten of the Father in heaven. It is true that as a result of man's fall into sin and death the divine image in his character has been much blurred, and in many instances almost erased, yet remnants of it still remain, and one of its manifestations is the urge to pray — to fellowship and commune with God in the realm of the spirit. Even atheists pray, sometimes!

The story is told of a painter who saw a child so perfect in his beauty that he painted him, and said that if ever he found a face as vile as that face was angelic, he would paint that as a contrast to it. Years passed, and he had not seen a face so absolute in its degradation as that child's in its loveliness. But one day he visited a prison, and there saw a felon, still young, but with face almost devilish in its vicious demoralization. He painted this wretched prisoner, and while painting him found, to his appalling astonishment, that this man was that lovely child, as drink, and lust, and greed, and hate had made him; and the two pictures, it is said, hang side by side in some Italian gallery. But the awful tale they tell is a tale of every day, and in all these cases the holy image of God is not seen, but is distorted by the fraud and malice of the devil and the carnal mind.

What was fully manifested and seen in Jesus is potential in every man. Something of that same divine spirit that was expressed in Him in all fullness is also in us. Something of the same divine likeness in which we were created is hidden in all men. Concealed and corroded by sin the resemblance is not evident save to the penetrating search of love, but there is something of God-life in every man. Our spirit must indeed be quickened by His Spirit before it can be made evident and recognized. To be "dead" does not mean to be non-existent, but to be unresponsive to the realm of spiritual life. The body in the casket is not non-existent, but it is certainly unresponsive to this world. This is what Paul meant when he wrote: "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein in time past ye walked (dead men walked!) according to the course of this world...among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:1-6,10). This is the second birth BY WHICH THE DIVINE PART OF MAN MAY COME TO LIFE.

It has been said that in Jesus Christ the divine and the human meet, but this is also true of every one of us. He is the true humanity who is the Son of God. It is not that He is super-human, but that we are sub-human. But inasmuch as we are human at all we are akin to Him. The first man and the second man are both men. The first Adam and the last Adam are both Adam. Those in the first Adam are in part what the last Adam is in perfection. The whole

purpose of our lives is to become human in the sense in which He was human; to be changed into the same likeness from one glorious conversion to another, even by the Lord who is the Spirit — PERFECT MANHOOD. Christ is to grow up in us, and the whole process of life is one in which “He must increase, but I must decrease.” Paul said so well: “It pleased God to reveal HIS SON in me,” which precisely describes the life of sonship, for the Son of God is the PERFECT MAN IN GOD’S IMAGE. It is as the Spirit of Christ becomes manifest within us that we approach nearer and nearer to the true humanity as it was seen in Jesus, “till we all come to a perfect manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). His possession of our lives will grow, as a grain of mustard seed will grow, until we are fully “strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inward man,” being “filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:16,19).

As one brother has so ably said: “God is equipping a people by revealing the power of words — the Word. Thus saith the scriptures: ‘The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart’ (Rom. 10:8). What word? ‘The word of faith which we preach’ (Rom. 10:8). It is the word of power, the word of the Kingdom, the word of salvation, the word of life over death. When you realize how powerful words are, by virtue of believing words that are God in you, and which can change and transform you, then you will understand how ‘at hand’ the Kingdom of God really is. You see, in the beginning was the Word. And the Word is God. The Logos — the speaking — is God. So when Jesus appeared on the earth all He had to do was say ‘Be made whole,’ and the power of God worked, for His word was God in expression and manifestation. The essence of divine words is God. This is not so difficult to understand when you realize that everything in life is moved by words.

“There isn’t anything that isn’t done by words. The method of educating all children is with numbers and letters. With numbers and letters, configured in various forms, you raise the educational and functional level of a human being from nothing at the time of birth, to become a surgeon, a politician, an architect, a scientist, or accomplishment in a vast number of fields. We have surgeons that perform brain surgery. They are people just like you and me. The only difference is the words of letters and numbers that are ingrained within their thinking. The combination of that learning, the disciplines of those sciences of mathematics, medicine, politics, etc., have given to them a different personality and capability. They have a personality and consciousness that enables them to open up your head and operate on it. Let me ask you something — would you let me open up your head and operate on it? Of course not — and I wouldn’t ask you to! And you know why — you know that the knowledge contained in those words and letters is not in me! The words and letters used in medical school have not trained me to be a doctor. But the greatest doctor started out as a baby with no knowledge, no ability, no accomplishment, no skill. He started out with nothing in his head — just like you and me. The only difference is that someone took the time to instruct him and put the knowledge of medical science into that person who by the assimilation of that knowledge and experience became that reality. And it was all done by words. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is no more a mystery than a man planting seed in soil. He said that if you would plant seed in the ground and water it, while the sun shines upon it will produce a plant that you can neither understand or explain how it does it. He said, ‘So is the Kingdom of God!’ If you will just take the time and effort to plant the Word of God in your mind, and water it and give it light, it will grow of itself and make you something you weren’t.”

Someone has pointed out that we are more attracted to a personality than to an idea. In very fact, most people respond more heartily to a weak idea presented by a great personality, than to a great idea presented by a weak personality. The Bible says that “In the beginning was the Word” (Jn. 1:1). Every word originates in the realm of thought. All words are merely ideas

expressed verbally. You cannot divorce the spoken word from the idea it articulates — they are the same. I may pray, for example, in audible words or I may pray silently, sending only my unspoken request to the Lord by the spirit of my mind, as did Hannah of old as she prayed for a son and was heard. “Now Hannah, she spake in her heart: only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him” (I Sam. 1:13,17). She asked without speaking. It is in essence, the same. A word is a thought or idea verbalized or otherwise expressed. Let us take the liberty of paraphrasing parts of the logos passage in the first chapter of John’s Gospel. “In the beginning was the Idea, and the Idea was with God, and the Idea was God...and the Idea 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. 1:1,14).

Now, the best way to promote an idea is to wrap it up in a personality. That is what God did in Jesus Christ. He wrapped up all His nature, character, glory, grace, wisdom, knowledge, love and power in a man and stood Him up in the earth. This man was God’s Idea — the Word! And Jesus Christ is the ideal of all mankind, the second Man, the last Adam, the example and pattern and proto-type of God’s will and purpose for all men. What Jesus is, is what God meant when He said in that long ago beginning, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). That is GOD’S IDEA! That is GOD’S WORD! That is the glory and majesty of man AS HE WAS INTENDED TO BE!

George Hawtin once wrote: “Did you ever stand in awe and marvel at the work of the great artists on earth? Perhaps expressions failed and words became inadequate as you stood before Michelangelo’s statue of David or gazed with wonder at the faces of the presidents carved in the heights of Mt. Rushmore. Wonderful as these things are, it must be that, ere the sculptor placed his chisel upon the stone to chip it away, he beheld in the uncut rock the very image of that which he by toil and skill would bring into being. Thus it was that God, the mighty architect of the universe, beholding in His own Spirit the glorious image of things to come, set the forces of His own will in motion to bring forth with unerring exactness the image of His pleasure in the very likeness of Himself. God with omniscient wisdom planned with unerring and immutable accuracy every blow of the hammer that would in the end bring forth from the uncut rock a race of sons in the image of Himself.”

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

the divine — and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature..." (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). Christ, and humanity in Christ, is like a ray of light that comes from the sun — man, the extension of God, emanates God.

Consider the scene! After having created man a spiritual man, in the image and likeness of God, God then formed a man of the dust of the ground. God then came to man in the earth realm. He breathed into the man, so magnificently formed, the spiritual realm, the winds of heaven, the breath of divinity. He released into Adam something of the heavenly, and out from His breath came a brilliant, sparkling, effervescence like a living star that entered into the clay. That wind, that spirit, that breath, that substance of God animated the clay model, creating within a dimensionless quality, condition, and state of being. That "breath of lives" as the Hebrew states it was the glory of the spiritual man breathed or infused into the clay model. Only the Light that God Himself is more beautiful than this creature. And the magnificent wonder is that this man can see right into the heavenly, spiritual realm. The animals can't see into that realm, the birds can't see into that realm, the fish can't see into that realm — no creature on earth can see beyond this gross material realm except the man in God's image.

Please mark this! Here is a physical, visible creature who can see the unseen. He is not frightened by it. He is not intimidated by anything or any creature he beholds in that glorious realm. In all the brilliance, purity, glory, and power of that high and holy realm that he beholds, he is at home with who he is and who they are. He looks around and all things are open to him. He sees all, perceives all, understands all. The face of God bent down and looked into the face of man, and man looked up into the face of God and they looked like each other. They looked like Father and son. They looked like twin brothers. They looked like clones. They bore an incredible, remarkable resemblance. God stretched forth His hand, Adam stretched forth His hand, and Adam stood up from the dust and faced his Creator. He belonged to this planet, but the winds of heaven were within him. He belonged to the heavens as well as the earth. Man is the only creature that ever has been, is now, or ever shall be that belongs to both realms!

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

What is man? Brain, heart, blood, bones — the material structure? If the real man is in the material body, you take away a portion of the man when you amputate a limb; the surgeon destroys manhood, and worms annihilate it. But the loss of some physical member has sometimes become the quickener of manhood as in the crucible of suffering there appear the virtues of humility, thankfulness, patience, compassion, drawn from the rich resources of INNER SPIRITUAL STRENGTH. The unfortunate cripple may present more nobility of true manhood than the dashing athlete — teaching us that the man on the inside is of far more enduring substance than the man on the outside! Take away the physical and take away the outer worldly elements of wealth, possessions, fame, social recognition, which weigh not one jot on the scales of God, and in what remains we get a clearer picture of man as God made him. Let goodness, mercy, justice, purity, health, holiness and love — the Kingdom of Heaven

— reign within us and the outer is found to be of no consequence. The real man is SPIRIT, not dust. The inner man is the IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY, not the image of the earthly as perceived by the physical senses. Some maintain that there is no life apart from or beyond the body — when the body dies, they say, the man ceases to exist. If such be the case, then the inward man that is being renewed day by day is no different from the outer man which is perishing!

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

George Hawtin has eloquently expounded on this thought, and I share a few of his valuable insights. "Well did the apostle Paul know that the vast majority of humanity was 'at home' only in the REALM OF THE BODY. They belonged entirely to an earthly realm where things are visible, audible, and touchable. Their minds seldom mounted higher than things physical, and when for a few moments they did rise to walk upon a spiritual plane, they were not really 'at home' there, but waited for the moment when they could LAPSE BACK to the NATURAL AND NORMAL, for that is where they were 'at home.' So, while men are 'at home' in the body, they are always 'absent from the Lord' (II Cor. 5:6-7), absent from the spiritual world of true reality. HEAVEN IS CLOSED TO THEM. Their minds dwell in the realm where men buy and sell, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage. They dwell in a realm of eating and drinking, of finding pleasure for the body, amusing their minds with silly things of the world, absorbing, listening to, or looking at some fictitious thing that serves only to amuse the natural man, keeping his heart away from the realm of eternal reality."

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

and deed. The tree of life (spirit) invariably ministers incorruption and immortality, whereas the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (flesh) unfailingly leads to death.

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

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

By His resurrection Jesus proved the Spirit within to be **OMNIPOTENT**, all-conquering, all-sufficient. He met and mastered death itself by the law of the Spirit of Life. He took no drugs to fight infection or inflammation. He did not depend upon health food or pure air or vitamins or herbs to renew depleted energies. He did not require the skill of a surgeon to heal the torn palms and bind up the wounded side and the nail pierced feet, that He might use those hands to remove the napkin and the grave clothes, and that He might walk as before. Jesus vanquished every material obstacle, overcame every law of matter, and stepped forth from His gloomy grave, crowned with the glory of a sublime success, and everlasting victory — the second man, the last Adam — the role-model for each and every man and woman of Adam’s race! Jesus’ victory over sin, sickness, pain, limitation, death and the grave was for the

enlightenment of all men and the salvation of the whole world. Paul writes, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved BY HIS LIFE (within)" (Rom. 5:10). Glory be to God, and peace to the fainting hearts! Christ hath rolled away the stone from the door of human hope and faith, through the revelation and demonstration of Life in God, the life resident in the SPIRITUAL MAN. And now with unspeakable joy and overwhelming wonder we cry, "O, our Father!"

Before closing this message I am moved to share some anointed, inspiring, and penetrating words from Bro. Carl Schwing. "Many of you have wondered who and what I am. I am not a teacher or a prophet. I do not bear a great title, nor do I seek the praise of men. I am, so to speak, a sower...I have gone out to sow the seeds of the Kingdom. I seek no reward except His good pleasure. I am one of you, I seek a better country whose Builder and Ruler is God. I am like you...I yearn for the Spirit to rule over the outward man. I am part of you...for I too bear the suffering of Jesus in my body. And with you I look up...for total redemption draws near. I sat with you in another time and another place...and we all shouted for joy! We share together our birthright in Christ Jesus and share the longing for our manifestation: the hour of truth and freedom for the creation. Hallelujah! Truly we are blood relations...born of His Spirit before there was time, place, or things. But most important is what He is in us. He is more beautiful than beauty. He is richer and fuller than life. He is the One who hath made us one in Him. We follow the Lamb...we hear His voice...He is the fullness of the Word within our inner son. And we shall plunge ourselves into His depths until He alone remains. Truly, we are of a higher order; all that is inflicted upon us is a blessing and a cause to rejoice in His perfecting will.

"We are not dreamers, we share a vision. We are seeing beyond the limitations of the past, beyond the consummation of the age...perhaps beyond the Millennium. It is a vision we shared long ago within our Father's house. A vision of the finished plan: man in the image and likeness of God. A vision of the place by Him where condemnation and punishment is met by mercy...ah, His mercy endures forever. A place where His light overpowers all darkness. A place where reconciliation replies to the cry of vengeance. And when 'It is done' is heard, a beginning rises like ten thousand suns...for all things, good and evil, light and darkness, truth and error, life and death, hell and the grave, have all served in His perfect plan to establish forever His glorious Kingdom upon the earth, within the hearts of all mankind and upon all creation; unto the filling of the universe and all therein. This vision leads to attainment...and attainment is the accomplishment of predestination. Hallelujah! Do you realize, my faithful ones, just what it means to be one with the Father? or to be filled with His fullness? or to sit with Him upon His throne? Do you realize the depths of this truth?...we are to share all things in common with Him. Do you recall when He said to us, 'All that I have is thine?' Awesome, is it not? Born of the seed of God's Christ...heirs with Christ of the Father's glory. Is it any wonder that we could not find life in the religions of men! Is it any wonder that He called us unto Himself! We are receiving the inheritance we have in Christ Jesus and the Father is receiving the inheritance He has in us. Oh! the wonder of it all...

"Have you ever wondered why you could not find fulfillment in the form, or in the letter, or in the ministries of men? I would imagine that we have all wondered that at one time or another. It is simply because of this: it was never meant for us to find fulfillment in anything, or anyone, except the Father. The six days of man's feeble rule is coming to an end, as the reign of God's eternal Christ rises in transforming glory within our inner son. The way of life is breaking forth in the wilderness of man's dead ideologies, theologies and philosophies. Time could only give us 'present truth'...now beyond time, ministries, and dispensations, comes the ageless truth of our union with God. Though we have walked with the understanding of a child, we are now

coming to the full knowledge of the Son of God, which will enable us to walk as mature sons, entering our appointed place in the fullness of Christ.

“Do you think it awesome to call God Father? Are you beginning to see that as sons we have been freed of all the gods and idols of the world and of religion? Who do we have in heaven besides Him? Who is there on earth that we could desire more than Him? There is not one! Whenever we cry Father, the Christ-son within us leaps for joy! As sons, we see the creation as a visible expression of the Father. It is not true that the Father made all things from nothing, rather, all things were made out-from-Himself...everything bearing a likeness, to some degree, of His infinitely perfect nature. In this hour it has pleased the Father to reveal a son in us. The full scope of this is beyond my finite understanding. A Christ-son covered over with the skin of flesh...ah, such a treasure in an earthen vessel. ‘Christ in you’ is no longer the hope, it is the glory...Hallelujah!

“Many years have passed since we were ‘called out’. Even then there were ‘leaders’...they too drew followers unto themselves, and sadly there are still those today who play ‘follow the leader’. How vain is man to think he has control; even more vain are their followers. The truth which so many have missed is simply this: He called us out unto Himself, to be His sons...and He, our Father. There were always the few who were strangely different, eccentric little creatures who enjoyed the beauty of isolation, the joy of solitude, and they heard only the voice of their Beloved. They were not ‘torch bearers’...they were the light. Today, my brothers, we are the light that shines in a world of darkness. We are the stars of the Kingdom Morning, our Beloved has come to set up His Kingdom within our inner son. He shall rule, with a rod of iron, the earth that we are...till He has conquered us, and our inner son stands in His perfect image; receiving once again the glory we had with the Father in a beginning. If all voices were silenced, all pens put aside, and all men laid to rest, the truth and light would only burn brighter within the bosom of the sons. Nothing, and no one, can hinder the plans which the Father made with His sons in eons past. All power, political or religious, falls backward in the presence of God’s Christ. All preaching, teaching and prophesying are but shadows in the light of God’s Christ; even the sacred page fades in the presence of the Living Word.

“For you that are called and chosen of the Lord, this is the hour of freedom and great holiness. This is probably the most serious and sacred hour in the history of the world. That which the Father is doing within His sons shall change the course of time and man. He has quickened our spirits (the inner son), and our minds (the understanding); all that remains to be conquered is the flesh. Now we wait in the silence of the morning for our Mighty Christ who shall redeem and quicken our mortal bodies. The creation is on tiptoe, waiting and longing, perhaps even sensing, that the time is at hand for the manifestation of the sons of God. The world and its people are crying out for freedom; proclaiming the dawn of a new age...yet, how little they know of what THE DAWN shall bring. Far greater is the rising of the sons than the sunrise of the morning. They bring with them the fulfillment of all that the creation has moaned for: Justice, Peace, Equality, and the Liberty of the Sons of God. When they appear the long night will be over...the ways of man will be gone forever, and the dead in Christ shall live again. They are the City of our God, the place where the sun never sets...where light began, where truth was born, where love and mercy met...and grace came forth. They are the many-membered Christ. The Kingdom is rightfully theirs...the rule of the universe and of the ages is theirs...and the souls of all mankind. This is the covenant the Father made and sealed with the Lamb’s Blood, before there was time. Eternity echoed with these words of the Father: ‘Sons, thou art ever with me, and all I have is thine.’ Hallelujah!” — end quote.

Some dear heart, a new reader of these precious truths, may inquire — If all men are sons of God, and ultimately to be brought back into oneness with the Father, what then is the hope of MANIFESTED SONSHIP? Why is there a special calling of sons and a distinct dealing of the Father with these sons? Manifested sonship is the FULL INHERITANCE OF SONSHIP. It is the realization of the full potential of the true man in God's image. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the first of the firstfruits of this glorious dimension of life. Since that long-ago day when the first Adam walked in the glory of Eden, Jesus is the very first man to demonstrate what true manhood and sonship really is. There is a firstfruit company to follow, cleansed and perfected through the unique ministry of their Elder Brother, fashioned and formed out of the crucible of His dealings through this age of the Spirit, conformed to His image, filled with His fullness, imbued with His wonderful mind, wisdom, nature and power, that through these firstfruits of Christ's redemption the full inheritance may then be ministered to the rest of creation. Jesus, the first of the firstfruits, gives it to us — we, in Him, minister it to the rest! This, precious friend of mine, is the glory of sonship and the hope of all creation! "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited — yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the sons of God!" (Rom. 8:19-21, J. B. Phillips translation).

A man's last words can be of supreme importance and significance. This was no less true of Jesus. It is significant that in His Upper Room Discourse with His disciples that somber night before the crucifixion, and in His great prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, He should refer or make appeal at least sixty times to God as Father. His first words following His resurrection were instructions to Mary Magdalene to go tell His "brothers" that He was going to be returning to His Father and to their Father. He then exhorts them with tender concern just prior to His ascension not to try to establish the Kingdom apart from their sonship relationship to God. They were to wait in Jerusalem for the "promise of the Father" which would mantle them with power and authority through which they would be able to establish the Kingdom of God among men. As the Father had sent Him as the Royal Son, so would He send forth a mighty company of royal sons and daughters to manifest and minister the blessings and benefits of His Kingdom to men upon earth. Herein is the key to the Kingdom — we are beloved sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, in the royal family of God!

Sons of God know they are sons of God, not by the message of some preacher or writer, but by the revelation of the Spirit of God. Jesus revealed God as Father. How do we respond to it? A child responds to fatherhood when it reproduces the father's likeness. The child inherits the father's nature — but he must then develop the father's character. Press on, saints of God — the hour of the great unveiling is at hand!

Chapter 8

Our Father

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...” (Mat. 6:9).

Jesus was a Son of God treading the dusty paths of earth. His life and ministry had been spent revealing this sonship relationship to God. “I know you hear me always,” He had said outside the tomb just before crying, “Lazarus, come forth!” He knew who He was and was so certain of that position that every petition He asked of the Father was granted. He, the Son, was on a mission for the Father. He had come only to do His will, and then all that He needed to accomplish this, when He needed it, was as certain as yesterday. His declarations of His position were stated many times: “I and my Father are one...the Son does only what pleases the Father.” The first thing in prayer is: I must meet my Father. The light that shines in my secret place of prayer must be the light of the Father’s countenance. The fresh air from heaven which permeates the atmosphere in which I breathe and commune must be the overwhelming love of the Father, God’s infinite Fatherliness. In this knowledge and experience of God’s Fatherliness all the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are revealed, all the glories of God’s fullness are shed forth.

Man needs to know God as Father. If we can visualize with our mind’s eye the finest Father in the world, we think of a man with loving strength that provides for and protects his loved ones. There is nothing in the world he would not do for his children, if he felt it was in their best interests. He would do it regardless of the cost in money, life, health and comfort. God is like that, only He is a more wonderful and gracious Father than any human father that ever lived! His will for our lives is that we may receive out of His love and wisdom all that we need to walk as His sons in this earth.

At the very beginning of the Lord’s prayer the word of identification is “Father,” and it reminds us that He once said, “Call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven” (Mat. 23:9). The patriarchal society of Jesus’ day reveals why He chose this word. The entire life of the family revolved around the father. As one has written of the culture of that time: “Genealogies were traced through the father; the family was utterly dependent upon the father for everything: their protection depended upon the father; inheritance came through the father; food and the meeting of all physical needs was the job of the father. The father held a very special place, so much so that it is difficult for us to imagine his importance in terms of today’s society. In the West today, where women work and compete on equal terms with men in every area of life, and where women can inherit and be financially and socially independent, it is well-nigh impossible to appreciate the role of the father in distant times. In our imagination we can sense, however, what the word must have meant to Jesus.”

It is a great tragedy that in the flesh many people have known only harsh, hard, or irresponsible fathers. Their father may have been a selfish, self-centered person who cared little for their well-being. He may have been lazy, shiftless, a drunkard, a dope addict, a deserter, or some other perverted person who wrought havoc with their personalities in early

childhood. He may have been a weak-willed person who could command no respect from his children. Even at best he may have at times fluctuated in his moods and temper, one day lenient in dealing with his children, the next tough and terrifying. So how could one so inconsistent, so unpredictable, bring strength, understanding, counsel, stability or wisdom to his offspring?

A brother once wrote: "I recall one lady at a conference honestly confessing that she found it much easier to go to Jesus for forgiveness than to think of approaching her holy, austere, heavenly Father. In fact, she inwardly hoped the matter could be taken care of by Jesus, and not even mentioned or brought to the attention of God the Father! In her mind, Jesus was perceived as being far more understanding and forgiving than the Father. I have raised this concern many times in audiences the world over and found the majority of people have similar feelings. Most of them know better in their heads, but many can't really grasp the reality of the Father's love in their hearts. Indeed, some have such a distorted concept of His character, they subconsciously picture God the Father as a divine, but distant, legislator, judge and executioner who seemingly finds a peculiar pleasure in severely punishing violators of the law. Such legalistic mentality leads to a life that is continually under a cloud of condemnation."

Recently David Wilkerson shared some significant and sobering observations. He said, "Not long ago, Newsweek magazine featured a cover story entitled, 'A World Without Fathers.' The focus was primarily on African-American families and the alarming increase of children being raised without fathers. Consider, for example: (1) A black child born today has only a one-in-five chance of growing up with a father until he is sixteen. This statistic reflects not just poor families, but also a staggering 22 percent increase among those families making \$75,000 or more. Right now some 62 percent of all black families are without a father. (2) Divorce is taking its toll among Caucasian families, as fathers flee their responsibilities in increasing numbers. There is no longer a stigma placed on fathers who just 'disappear.' The government is having to track down a growing army of runaway fathers who won't support their children. (3) At Hannah House, New Life for Girls and Teen Challenge Home for Women, one of the biggest struggles for women in the program is to forgive their father or stepfather for having molested them while they were young. Many of these young women have spent years battling memories of being terrorized by a lust-driven father or stepfather. One girl at Hannah House had a most difficult time forgiving her biological father for getting her pregnant. The Holy Spirit helped this young woman to forgive him recently, just before he died. But her life has been marked by his brutal sin. (4) A stepfather in upper Manhattan killed his baby stepdaughter by throwing her out of an eight story window. The entire community wanted to string this man up. And many fatherless children in that housing project once again had their image of a father perverted in their minds. If you were to ask them what they think fathers are like, they'd answer, 'He's a mean, vicious man who throws his children out the window.' These kids can't relate to a loving, heavenly Father — because implanted in their minds is an image of a violent, heartless man! I bring up all these examples to remind you of how difficult it is for many people to think of God as a loving Father. They can't help but see God through the eyes of past experiences with an ungodly father or stepfather. Very few of the troubled men and women who come to us for help can relate to a father who is normal or loving. Their father either abandoned them or wounded and grieved them. It's all so sad — so tragic" — end quote. In spite of these deplorable facts, yet, thank God, there are multiplied hundreds of millions who have had good fathers and a solid family life — the very picture and image of the depths of our heavenly Father's special goodness and love!

DISTORTED VIEWS OF THE FATHER

Plutarch, the great Greek biographer, once wrote, "I had rather a great deal men should say there was no such man at all as Plutarch than that they should say there was one Plutarch that would eat his children as soon as they were born." He preferred to have men deny his existence rather than to have them hold an unworthy conception of his character. Carrying this thought into the spiritual realm we may raise the question as to whether it would be more pleasing to God to have His existence denied or to have men hold a distorted and unworthy conception of His character. We may not be able to answer that proposition with certainty, but the fact is that in this world far vaster multitudes of men hold distorted concepts of God than deny His existence! There are fewer atheists in the world than religious folk who continually malign and slander the character of the heavenly Father!

It is helpful to understand how men in ancient times viewed their God; the way in which they conceived of Him who created them. Would that we could go back to those ancient days in India or China or Japan and see the hideous idols with their grimacing countenances, their devouring teeth, their many arms and sharp claws, something of the devouring, hateful nature of their deities — or go back to the cruel Assyrians or Babylonians or Egyptians and the monstrosities, the tyrannies, which they worshipped as gods. The people of Israel knew that there was only one true and living God — Yahweh. But the idea that God was a loving God was alien to them for the most part. Until Jesus came even they did not know the heart of the Father. They knew God according to superstition and after the Law. To them God was Yahweh the Law-giver, harsh, demanding, and vindictive, throwing lightning bolts off of Sinai. The Old Testament world stood before the thought of God as we sometimes stand before a summer thunder-storm — black, flashing with lightning, terrible — and with fear and awe they bowed in the dust. They conceived that God was exacting and full of wrath. God punished people and destroyed all His enemies. But that God loved them? God would accept their sacrifices, certainly. God would even put up with them, and they would propitiate Him and appease Him (or so they thought!), but they did not in most cases truly love God.

Among the many references to the Almighty crowding the various books of the Old Testament the name Father is applied to God only seven times — five times as Father of the Hebrew people, and twice as Father of individuals. One of these is a prediction that men will one day pray to God, calling Him Father. That which was dim in the Old Testament becomes bright in the New. Jesus called God His Father, and bids us, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." He takes us into the presence of the great Yahweh, and says to us, "He who is my Father is your Father too." Absolutely everything depends on this one fact, that it is Jesus Christ who teaches us this prayer. He alone, in His life, in His death, and in His resurrection, is the guarantor that there is a Father. This is the grandest, tenderest, most glorious thought of God that has ever come to man — the Father revealed in Christ.

Since it is an everlasting truth that men become like the god they worship, so this revelation, the unveiling of the face of the Father in heaven in the person of Jesus Christ, has done more to soften and conquer the hearts of mankind than anything that man has ever discovered. It has brought more love and more genuine progress to civilization than anything else. Without it we might still be as the Assyrians who worshipped cruel and merciless gods and, therefore, when they descended upon their foes they placed thousands of sharpened stakes in the ground, picked up their adversaries and left them impaled to die an agonizing death. Those they did not impale they flayed alive and covered the walls of their captured towns with the skins of their victims because that was the kind of god they worshipped.

But have we really made that much progress? The same beloved John who wrote so extensively of God's marvelous love left us this solemn warning, "Little children, keep

yourselves from IDOLS (that is, false gods, or false ideas and representations of the true God)” (I Jn. 5:21). Do we have false ideas about God? I fear we do. We say that God is all-wise, all-knowing, and all-powerful, and then turn around and deny it. We say that God “so loved the world” and that Jesus is “the Saviour of the world” and then turn around and say that only a few will be saved while God sends the vast majority to suffer the excruciating pains of fire and brimstone for all eternity without His feeling any concern for their suffering — totally impotent to win them to Himself, and without mercy! We say that God is all-powerful, and then turn around and say that God has “provided” salvation for all men, that God is “trying” to save the world, that God is “pleading” with men to repent, but the devil who blinds and possesses men’s souls is so much more powerful than God that he will carry captive into eternal hell countless billions of men for whom Christ died! More preachers major on hell and damnation than emphasize His all-encompassing love, mercy and purpose. And multitudes of Christians live under a sense of condemnation and fear of God, ministered to them by the preachers.

“Little children, keep yourselves from false ideas of God!” False ideas about God. How the world and the Church are filled with them! Many who read these lines have gone through several rounds of smashing idols, false images of the Almighty, and will probably continue to drop false ideas until Christ be formed in them. Many people view God as a schoolboy did: “...the sort of person who is always snooping around to see if anyone is enjoying himself and then trying to stop it.” Then others make God out to be a tyrant, or a vengeful, wrath-filled FIEND. But the Bible knows of no such God. No more terrible insult was given to the God of all grace who came in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. This story is told about a little girl. After she had heard her father preach a sermon on the awful wrath of God, and that the unsaved would go to a red-hot, sizzling, burning hell the moment they died, and that they would twist in agony and torment forever, without mercy, this little girl said, “I wish Jesus were as good and kind as my father.” God does bring judgment upon sinners — swift, strong, effective, corrective judgment — but never meaningless, sadistic torture.

Do you know what God wants more than anything else? And in the end, will it be God or the devil who gets what he wants? “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:3-4). His mercy runs so deep that He sent Jesus as the redeemer of the race, and has mapped out a beautiful and comprehensive “Plan of the Ages” in which to reconcile all things unto Himself. He has revealed that His tender mercies are over all His works; that He hates nothing that He has made; that it was all for His pleasure; that He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil; and that He has provided a way that even the banished may return to Him — self-banished though they may be by sin. The unquenchable and eternal love of God our Father for all of His creation is the great center of all Christ’s teaching. He said, “For GOD SO LOVED the world...” He said, “I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.” He is not pleading with the Father to love us or any man in the world infinitely, for He came from that Father with the Gospel, with the glad tidings of the Father’s love; that He so loved the world that He sent His Son into it, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. What compassion! What wisdom! What love! What a God!

In coming to know God we pass in through all His power, and all His majesty, and all His overwhelming surroundings — and we are not content until we come to His heart, to God’s very, very heart. What a thought! Oh, all ye thinking men! What a thought! What a heart must God’s heart be! What knowledge it must have! What pity it must hold! What compassion! What love! How deep it must be! How wide! How tender! What a mystery! What a universe we belong to! What creatures we are! and what a Creator we have! and what a God! Above all,

what a Father! “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

And now our relationship to God is one of a Father infinitely loving a son. One author tells of a boy who again and again broke the laws of the land and would end up in jail. His father would go down to pay his fine and get him free. Finally it cost the father about all that he had and also his heart was almost broken. A friend said to the father, “If that were my boy, I would let him go.” He replied, “If he were your boy, I would too, but he is my boy and I can’t let him go.” Well, God is your Father and, no matter what happens, He is ever seeking to bring you back to Himself.

When the apostle Paul described his prayer life he said, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:14-15). The question follows — Who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? The question has a clear and unmistakable answer. Long millenniums ago the anointed Psalmist spoke by the Spirit of the coming into the world of God’s firstborn Son and prophesied these words to fall from the lips of God’s Christ: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee” (Ps. 2:7). I draw your attention to the word LORD in this verse. “The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son” Whenever we find the word Lord printed in all capital letters (LORD) in the King James version of the Bible the word in the original is YAHWEH. This word is used 5,528 times in the Old Testament scriptures — more than any other name of God. Thus it is clear that YAHWEH is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. “YAHWEH hath said unto me, Thou art my Son.”

Let us define this name Yahweh. He is the one who is what He is. When He appeared to Moses He said, “I AM WHAT I AM.” He is the eternal, unchanging One. That is clear, but it does not describe what He is eternally and unchangeably. There is a deeper meaning in the Hebrew name. Andrew Jukes has given the following definition of the Hebrew name Yahweh. “Yahweh is the expression of God’s being as truth and righteousness. Therefore He loves righteousness and hates iniquity and finds in all evil something that is antagonistic to His nature, which because it is not true or just must be opposed and judged.” That is the underlying principle behind God’s everlastingness and unchangeableness. He never deviates from truth and righteousness, and will not ultimately tolerate error or sin anywhere in His universe. Jesus Christ is the Son of this God, Yahweh, whose being is truth and righteousness, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity. For this very reason the scripture bears witness of Him, “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son. Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” (Heb. 1:5,8-9).

THE DISCIPLINE OF SONS

Some months ago I was deeply moved by a message from our dear brother, Bennie Skinner, on YAHWEH AND THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. I am constrained to use most of the rest of this Study to share this vital and significant word with my readers in the hope that it will speak as profoundly to your heart as it has to mine in this significant hour. I quote...

“People say, ‘How can a God of love do this, or do that; permit this, or permit that? How can a God of love permit fires, wars, famines, earthquakes, plagues, and a world of other

catastrophes and sorrows that befall mankind. How can a God of love allow all these things to take place?’ You see, if you knew all the sides of God’s nature, you would understand how a God of love can allow all of this — and not only allow it, but bring it to pass. You need to know God in all the sides of His nature and not think of Him as an indulgent old granddaddy, a goody-goody, and everybody can do anything they want to, and He still loves them anyhow — ‘it’s alright darling, everything is going to be wonderful in the end.’ Ah, yes, it will be wonderful in the end — but let me tell you something, beloved; before you get to that end you are going to discover another side to God’s nature. You will know a number of sides to God’s nature.

“When I had children born to me I loved those children unconditionally. There were no reservations to my love, because I am a father. Regardless of what they did, how they acted, or what they didn’t do I still loved them the same. But suppose I had said to them, ‘I love you — I don’t care what you do,’ and just let it go at that. Do you know what kind of un-holy terrorists I would have raised? Do you know what kind of juvenile delinquents I would have reared if I would have said, “Anything goes, everything goes, I love you darling, it’s alright, it’s O.K.,’ and never taught them a thing about life or responsibility. Can you imagine how they would have lived? There are multitudes of people today who think of God in this way and so they think of themselves like that as parents. They don’t want to bear the responsibility of showing another side to their nature. They equate love with permissiveness. They invest nothing into their children to teach them and train them. Consequently the children grow up to be juvenile delinquents. The real problem is parental delinquency. If you know and understand God and the different sides of His nature it will put a balance in your life that will be reflected in your home, in the way you treat your wife, in the way you treat your husband, the way you treat your children, the way you treat your parents, the way you treat your neighbor, the way you treat your employer, the way you treat your employees, the way you treat humanity — in all these relationships the way you know God in the sides of His nature will be reflected. That’s why it’s important for you to know the names of God and the sides of His nature they stand for.

“YAHWEH is the Father side of God. Yahweh is the stern One. Yahweh is the Law-giver. Yahweh is the Head. ‘And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Yahweh: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of El Shaddai, but my name Yahweh was not known to them’ (Ex. 6:2-3). El Shaddai means ‘the breasted One.’ What is it that a baby learns first? Or, better yet, what is it that a baby doesn’t have to learn? A baby doesn’t have to learn how to suck — it is born with that ability — it learns that while still in the womb. The first thing a baby learns is what to suck, and where to find it. A baby learns about mother’s breast. A baby learns where dinner is. A baby learns who mother is before he or she learns who father is. Whenever we come to God, the first thing we learn is to know that He is our sustenance, He is our provider, He is the One we draw our life from, He is the One who blesses us, helps us, keeps us, protects us, watches over us, looks out for us, and cares for us no matter what. We know Him as El Shaddai — we know the motherhood of God. We learn to eat of Him and drink of Him, we learn to eat His flesh and drink His blood, we learn to partake continually of His life and draw all sustenance and strength from Him who is our Mother — the breasted One.

“Elohim can say, ‘I am Yahweh,’ just as I can say, ‘I am a father.’ We are not talking about more than one God — it’s the one and same God who can be all these things. Each of us, though we are one person, has various relationships and offices. I am a father. I am also a son. I am a husband. Furthermore, I am a citizen of Palm Beach County. I am a member of the human race. I am all these things and more — and yet I am but one person. I do not act as a father in the same way I act as a husband. I do not act as a husband in the same way I act as a son. I do not act as a son in the same way I act as a neighbor. I do not act as a neighbor in

the same way I act as a pastor. I have all these different sides to my nature, yet I am but one person. God has many sides to His nature (many names), but He is only one God.

“Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew God in only two sides of His nature — Elohim and El Shaddai. They knew Elohim the Creator, and El Shaddai the breasted One, the nourisher and sustainer. No wonder that Abraham could lean on Him and draw from Him and when he was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety they could have a baby. They drew from His life. They partook of His life. But they did not know Yahweh.

“Let me ask you something. Can children be raised without a father and there not be something lacking in their character? Unwed mothers and single mothers are one of the plagues of our society. They are trying to bring up their children without a daddy. But the children have a flaw, a defect in their character because they haven’t had a father to train them. I’m not speaking against these children or the mothers — I’m just telling you that a woman by herself cannot raise her children as well as if she had a husband in harmony with her, working together with her, bringing that balance into their children’s lives. We must come to know Yahweh. We must know the Fatherhood of God. We must experience Him as our Father. We have known Him as the One who loves us. ‘For God so loved the world.’ We have known Him as El Shaddai, the provider, the breasted One, the One who nourishes us, who blesses us and watches over us with that tender, loving care of a mother. And now, we’re going to have to learn to know Him as a Father.

“Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Yahweh. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is YAHWEH, art the most high over all the earth’ (Ps. 83:16-18). Have you ever prayed that kind of a prayer for anybody? ‘Lord, make their faces ashamed, that they might seek Thy name, O Yahweh.’ No — we’ve wanted God to reveal Himself to those we pray for as El Shaddai — ‘Lord, bless your children; Lord, help them, have mercy upon them, reveal to them your love and goodness.’ We want people to know God as El Shaddai or Elohim. But here the Psalmist has come to know Him in a deeper way, so he says, ‘Fill their faces with shame, O Yahweh, that they may seek Thy name.’ Do you dare to release your children, to release your loved ones, to release your friends, to release your neighbors — do you dare to release them in prayer to Yahweh? That’s the only way there will be any mighty changes take place in them. They have to be released into the hands of Yahweh. They have to learn some things. They’ve got to learn that they can’t do whatever they please and get by with it. Not with Yahweh! Oft times a mother will let children get by with things and are less stern than a good father. Father will tell you one time, and that is it; do it again, and punishment will be sure and swift. Now I know this is not always the case. We have a lot of fathers who won’t be fathers. They are not men, just males.

“There is an awesome responsibility with being a father. It requires wisdom, knowledge and backbone. You see — in many mothers there is a soft streak, a tenderness that overlooks. And that is how it should be. God made mothers that way because it is the balance for the sternness of the father. Both are aspects of God’s nature in mercy and in judgment. So the ladies should not try to make the men like them, nor should the men try to make the women think and act like them. God made us different — God took the woman out of the man that she might be a different creature to think differently, act differently, and react differently. Men are reasoners, they are logical, they face the issue squarely, whereas a woman goes by intuition and feelings. Each needs the other. My wife has saved me from many a hurt by that intuition she has. And I thank God for her, I need her, I’m not complete without her, but she’s not complete without me, either. Whenever I disciplined my children, and I was pretty stern with

them sometimes, she went along with me. And whenever I chastened them they didn't run to mother to get help. Mother wouldn't give them any help. And when mother chastened them they didn't run to daddy, because daddy wouldn't give them any help.

“So let me assure you, beloved — we need to know the Fatherhood of God. We need to know Yahweh. You don't fool with Yahweh. He says what He means and He means what He says, and if you don't obey you will be punished for your disobedience. He loves you enough to correct you. You say, ‘When a father takes off his belt and lays a whipping on his children does he not love them? Why be so stern? Why be so hard? Why not make a compromise?’ He loves them enough to do that. And the God we are serving — part of His nature is Yahweh. He has given some commands and He wants those commands to be obeyed. And He's not fooling around with us. If we don't do what He says, if we refuse or neglect to do what He commands, He will lay the rod on us. If you don't believe the Lord chastises His children you just fool around with Him and you'll find out. He will lay the rod on you. And I'm glad! For ‘whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth’ (Heb. 12:6). We're not dealing with an old gray-headed, long-bearded granddaddy that you can twist his nose, pull his hair, or pout, and get him to do anything you want him to do. You are dealing with GOD. Elohim, yes. El Shaddai, yes. But YAHWEH who is going to be obeyed.

“Do you know what's lacking so much in the deeper truth message today? It's balance. There is no balance in so many areas. It's out of balance. When things get out of balance there is trouble. Remember Uzza — when the children of Israel built a new cart to take the ark of the covenant up to Jerusalem, remember, it went over some rough road and started to get out of balance. Uzza reached out and tried to balance it and God smote him dead on the spot. Let me tell you something, beloved, we must do things after God's due order, the way God says to do it. God didn't say to make a new cart and put the ark of the covenant on it. He said to take the priests, the Levites, and consecrate them unto the Lord and let them carry the ark with staves — they were not to even touch that ark. They were to put staves in the rings on the sides of the ark and lift it up and carry it. What they were doing was out of balance, and when Uzza reached out and touched the ark God smote him dead. Yahweh is God — and He can kill and He can make alive. He can knock you down and He can raise you up. If you obey Him He will bless you, He will help you, He will keep you, because He is the God of truth and righteousness. He's the God who suffers when His children suffer.

“Do you think it didn't hurt me when I had to chasten my children when they were little ones, and I was a big strong man, and I laid the belt on them and they cried — their tears fell, and they were hurting because I put a hurting on them. Do you think I didn't feel that? Don't you think there was a side of me that would rather just have dismissed the whole thing, and forgotten about it? Yes, — I hurt when they hurt. I felt it when I had to severely chasten them. It actually hurt me more than it did them. They got over theirs in five minutes. But I would go in that night, and watch them lying there in the bed asleep, and how my heart would go out to them! I would hurt in my heart. But I knew I had to do it. It had to be done. The alternative was unacceptable. The alternative would mean rebellion, trouble and heartache. And Yahweh loves us enough that He will chasten us.

“‘And in that day ye shall say, O Yahweh, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and Thou comforteth me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord YAHWEH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation’ (Isa. 12:1-2). How many who read these lines know that there was a time when the Lord was angry with you? When you disobeyed, when you did your own thing, when you acted in the flesh and acted as if you didn't even know Him, do you think God winked at that? ‘Oh,’

someone says, 'God never gets angry with His children; He loves them.' Yes He does get angry! Let me ask you as a parent — have you ever been angry with your children? Do you think God can't be angry with His? If they disobey Him He is angry with them until that thing is straightened out, until that sin is confessed and forsaken, until there is repentance — a change of mind — and a turning back to Him with a whole heart. Then there is great mercy, there is abundance of compassion, there is love, there is forgiveness, there is acceptance, and there is blessing from that same One who a few moments before was angry with you. Now there is balance!

"In this Kingdom message there has not been a enough emphasis on this side — the Yahweh side — of God's nature. So we thought we could do just anything and get by with it — the grace of God would cover it. 'I'm O.K., you're O.K.' is the mentality of a world without God. But a lot of us would have been saved from a number of pitfalls if we had truly understood the anger and wrath of God as Yahweh. 'Though Thou wast angry with me...behold, God is become my salvation' says the verse we quoted above. The One who was angry with me has become my deliverance, to bring me out of that condition, to change me, and make me like unto Himself.

"I know who my Father is. I had an earthly father who was like Yahweh in this respect. He loved us — he showed us in many hundreds of ways that he loved us — but whenever he said for you to do something and you didn't do it, he didn't argue with you, he didn't use a little psychology on you, he didn't take away privileges. He would grab that razor strap that he had on the back porch and he 'laid it on,' he applied the rod of correction to the seat of understanding, and you gained some understanding. Do you think I hated my dad for it? No — I love him, I honor him, and I respect him to this day. He didn't go to school a day in his life, he couldn't read or write, but he knew how to raise children. He raised fourteen of us. One day one of my brothers-in-law said to him, 'Mr. Skinner, you successfully raised fourteen children — what's your secret?' Dad looked away from him and didn't speak for a long time. He didn't speak for so long you would think he had forgotten the question. But dad was thinking. Finally he fastened his eyes on my brother-in-law and said, 'When you speak to children, say what you mean, and mean what you say.' Let me tell you — that's a pearl of wisdom. That's a proverb from a wise man. That is what it takes. And let me assure you — when our heavenly Father speaks to us He says what He means, and He means what He says. And you won't have to wonder whether this is His nature or not, whether this is His will or not, He will make it clear and plain to you.

"God is very patient. He will let you try to do any way you want to — but when you know what He has said, you had better obey Him. I tell you, my beloved, I fear the Lord. I'm not afraid of Him, but I have a good healthy respect for Him. I don't fool around with the Lord, because He doesn't fool around with me. And when I need the Lord I call upon Him, and I don't want any foolishness then, because I need Him now and I need Him then — and He comes to my rescue. Before I ever call He hears, and while I am yet speaking He answers. What a wonderful Lord! But you must walk with the Father, you have got to know the Father like this. This is what the overcomer must do, he must know the many sides of God's nature. That's why I am preaching this word of the God of the Melchizedek Order — because if you come into the overcoming company, if you become a part of this Melchizedek King-Priest Order, you are going to experience and know the different sides of God's nature. You have to respect that, and God will respect that in you, too, because He knows that His nature is built into you" — end quote.

TO BE A FATHER — TO BE A SON

Fathers and mothers want their children to have “the best of everything.” But sometimes that comes when certain things children want are withheld from them. Ann Landers, the newspaper columnist, shared a letter sent in by someone who wrote about what her parents did not do for her. They didn’t let her do whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted, and they didn’t shower her with things, things, and more things. They also did not pass up the opportunity to teach her the value of money and the benefits of hard work; they never failed to listen to her when she had a problem; they never refused to give her advice when she asked; and they never left any doubt about their love for her. Whoever wrote that letter understands that parents try to do for their children what will help them grow into responsible adults. The Bible, too, teaches that the relationship between parents and children is based on a natural love that God established when He made them. God even requires this love in one of His commandments. Parents and children must love each other in the Lord. The best expression of this is when loving parents ask for their children’s obedience and children respond by obeying in love. As children honor their parents and parents conduct themselves as worthy of their children’s honor, both parents and children benefit immeasurably.

This principle is just as true in the family of God as in earthly families. There is responsibility on both sides — the parent and the child. God has a responsibility to each of His sons, and every son has a responsibility to his Father. This responsibility is powerfully expressed by the Holy Spirit in II Cor. 6:17-18. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And I will BE a Father unto you, and ye shall BE my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” God can never BE a Father to you until you receive and walk out the revelation of your sonship. Millions of Christians today call God Father, and pray to the Father. Yet their sonship to God is totally meaningless to them. They see themselves as Christians, believers, forgiven, saved, justified, redeemed, sanctified, etc., but they walk not in the consciousness or experience of SONSHIP to God. They live out their lives as believers in Jesus, Christians, Church members, teachers, preachers, etc. But God is not their Father! He is their Saviour, their Healer, their Deliverer, their Comforter, their Blessor, their Baptiser and their “soon coming King” — but He is not their Father. They have not been sons, and He has not been a Father to them.

Now, let me explain what I mean by this. “I will BE a Father to you, and ye shall BE my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” There are two levels of Fatherhood. The first is biological, the second practical and experiential. On the first level one bears the title of “father” merely because he has biologically generated an offspring. His name will appear on the birth certificate as the father of the child, even if he has never been seen again since the night of conception. On the second level, however, one is respected and loved as a father because he fulfills all the responsibilities, privileges and potentials of fatherhood. He is there when the child is born. He provides, cares for, loves, nurtures, disciplines, guides, trains, and counsels that child through all the years of his growth into adulthood. Thus, there are fathers who are not fathers — they have merely contributed the sperm to generate an offspring, but have never had a father’s heart nor fulfilled the responsibilities of fatherhood. They have not actively, truly, caringly BEEN a father! With what wonder and understanding do we now receive the promise of the Lord: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...and I will BE a Father unto you!”

In like manner there are children who are not children, sons who are not sons. Oh yes, their name, too, is on the birth certificate as the child of the one who gave them life. They are biologically the offspring of their parents, but they do not relate to the parents in a functional way. Rather than submitting to, obeying, respecting, honoring, and loving their parents, they are rebellious, disrespectful, uncaring, and hateful. On the one hand they are legally the

children of their parents, but on the other hand they have not BEEN sons and daughters. They have refused to fulfill the responsibilities of sonship. They have failed to walk in the relationship of sonship. They have spurned the spirit of sonship. Can we not see by this the deep cry of the Father's heart when He says, "Wherefore, come out from among them (the idols, false gods and false ideas of the true God — Babylon), and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing...and ye shall BE my sons and my daughters!" Ah, that is just it! There's something to do, a responsibility to fulfill, a walk to enter into in order to BE sons of the Father. Often in my prayers, meditations, and consecrations I say to my Father, "I want to BE a son to you, so that you may BE a Father to me." That is the deepest desire of my heart. Carl Schwing once wrote: "There is no greater communion than that of a son losing himself in the depths of the Father. There is no greater love than the Father giving all to His son. There is no greater testimony than this: 'I and the Father are one.'"

We have seen that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who could have revealed the Fatherhood of God to us. In fact, that is the very thing He came to do. Truly God is a Father, as far as He is concerned. His whole attitude toward all men is that of a Father, but the trouble is that our attitude often is not that of sons. Men see themselves as human beings, sinners saved by grace, Christians, Methodists, Baptists, or Catholics. These are the most common terms used both in the world and in the Church. It never dawns upon their understanding that the terms "children," "son," "sons," "daughters," and "Father," appear multiplied hundreds of times in the scriptures, whereas "Christian" appears only twice and Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, or Roman Catholic not at all! Sonship is God's revelation in Christ Jesus. Sonship is the central issue of God's great and eternal purpose. Sonship is the hope of creation. Sonship is our calling and our destiny in God. When we are quickened through Jesus Christ it is not God who becomes our Father, but we who become His children. It is not He who changes His identity, attitude, and relationship toward us, but we who change ours toward Him. We become in a conscious and practical way His sons and His daughters.

May the blessed spirit of Truth within make this real and precious and powerful to all who read these lines. With what confidence and unhindered joy can we then pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven!"

Chapter 9

Our Father Which Art In Heaven

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...” (Mat. 6:9).

Now, as we are trying in these messages to realize the full significance of this model prayer, we must give our attention specially to this expression, “which art in heaven.” There is perhaps no subject in the Bible about which there is such shallow thinking, such dullness of understanding, and so many distorted notions, as the subject of heaven. Where is heaven? What is heaven? Is it a place? Is it in another galaxy? Is it beyond the stars? Is it a condition of life? Is it a different dimension of living? If our very Father is in heaven, then we ought to know something about heaven, for it is the source of our life, the realm of our origin. We know this because the Father who begat us dwells in heaven; therefore we are out of heaven and from heaven. If He is our Father and heaven is His natural environment, His habitat, we should understand what that realm is really like.

The English word “heaven” is derived from the old Anglo-Saxon term “heave-on,” meaning to be lifted up, up-lifted. It means to be “heaved-up” or “heav-en.” As someone has written, “In the scriptures, heaven is used to describe three rather distinct and different realms. First, we find it used over and over with reference to the earth’s atmosphere. It is used to describe the envelope of air that surrounds the planet, conditions our climate, and sustains life. ‘And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament...and God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day’ (Gen. 1:6-8). The formation of clouds, the precipitation of rain or hail or snow, are regarded as coming from heaven. Also the birds fly in heaven. In other words, all that we normally associate with the atmosphere about the planet is said to be heaven. ‘For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater’ (Isa. 55:10).

“Second, there is a very much broader sense in which the word heaven or heavens is used to describe outer space. It specifically refers to the sun, moon, and stars, and the sky. It denotes the unmeasured immensity of numberless galaxies flung across infinite expanses. It is used for the unending realm of stellar constellations that circle through the night in majestic movements. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork’ (Ps. 19:1). Again and again the scriptures speak of the stars of heaven and the heavenly constellations.”

But the heaven where God dwells is beyond all this. Not only is God our Father, but He is our Father in heaven. By saying God is in heaven, Jesus does not mean to localize or locate God. He is not telling us of a place where God is and where God lives apart from any other place in the universe. Those who think of heaven as a place, usually think of Him as being very distant. Somehow we have gotten the idea that heaven is a long way off. This error has crept into many songs sung by the church world. In the Pentecostal Church where I was raised as a boy two of the favorite songs were “When We All Get To Heaven” and “Won’t It Be Wonderful There.” Another with which many who read these lines will be familiar says, “There is a happy land, far, far way.” And even in that popular hymn, “The Old Rugged Cross,” we sing, “He will

call me some day to that home far away...” How did we get that conception? Certainly not from Jesus or the apostles! When Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, He said, “No man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (Jn. 3:13). That is, Jesus claimed that while He was sitting and talking to this rabbi, He Himself was actually in heaven. This means, of course, that heaven is here and now.

Let us turn to the Word of God for the understanding of heaven, and forget all the perversions we have heard and all the nonsense of religion. We want no theories or guesses. We want truth and reality. We want nothing but the highest authority. And what better authority can we find than the One who made the heavens and who Himself dwells in the heavens. If anyone understands the facts of heaven, it is He. Let us see what He said. He had left His heavenly glory. He had humbled Himself, had taken upon Himself the form of sinful man; and becoming a man, was despised and rejected. He was of no reputation. And yet, while in humility and reproach, a man among men, He made this statement: “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.” And still the unlearned and the ignorant and the unbelieving say that heaven is a place to which the redeemed go after death. Any fool can understand foolishness. But those blessed ones called to sonship to God have a higher heritage than these. We who are of the Day have been given the unfailing Word and understanding of the deep things of God.

The eternal Word of God left His glory, and descended to the depths of shame and reproach. He came and took our place of disgrace. He became a man among men in order that we might be raised and exalted and honored and, under Him, be given a name above every name. He, the Christ, who was made in all things like unto His brethren (Heb. 2:17) yet, while a man on earth, in humility, Himself said, “The Son of man WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.” And yet Christians in unbelief and ignorance, well meaning no doubt, nevertheless in shame and error sing, “When we all get to heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be!” Heaven for children of God is not a future hope. It is a present reality. Jesus the Christ, when a man on earth, was at the same time in heaven. And so also are we who are “as He is” (I Jn. 4:17). “As is the heavenly such ARE THEY ALSO THAT ARE HEAVENLY” (I Cor. 15:48).

Our Lord was in heaven; He came down from heaven, and still was in heaven; and this heaven is, in the Greek, OURANOS. It is something a person can be in, can descend from, and still possess. And the meaning of the word is “elevation, height, exaltation.” Our Lord was the King of the universe. But He descended from that state. He humbled Himself, and took upon Himself the form of sinful flesh. He became despised and rejected. But nevertheless, in His humiliation He was still the Lord of the universe. All things were subject to Him. He still could command the winds and waves and they obeyed Him to the astonishment of those men who saw it. He still could control the atoms, multiply the loaves and fishes, raise the dead, and was Master of all laws of nature. He still saw into the unseen realm of spirit, was consciously aware in both the earthly and spiritual dimensions, unlimited by the physical world. He was still elevated, exalted; He was still in heaven!

God gives us definitions in His Word. He tells us exactly what certain things are — if we have ears to hear. And He tells us exactly what heaven is. “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool” (Acts 7:49). HEAVEN IS MY THRONE! It is the height, the very pinnacle of power and eminence and glory and majesty over all God’s limitless domain. And yet men, in their blindness and unbelief, tell us that heaven is a place where good people go to play harps. We are considering the Greek word OURANOS. It is a word appearing in the New Testament about 275 times. It is a state of eminence in which our Lord was, and which He left to become the meek and lowly Saviour; but a state of eminence which He, as the Lord of glory, still

possessed. And the definition of it tells us that it is the very pinnacle of power and glory. "Ouranos is my throne." And the meaning of the word is elevation, height, exaltation. Therefore we have exactly the same statement if we say, "My throne is elevation, height, exaltation, eminence." And that, dear reader, is the basic heaven of the New Testament. "Ouranos" is not a place. It is, in its spiritual application, the height or pinnacle of majesty, glory and eminence. It is a condition, a position, and a state of being.

How many still hope that God is in heaven? The first Sputnik the Russians put up scared a lot of people — they were afraid it might knock God off His throne. Thank God, so far it's missed the throne! But let me ask — How far is heaven away from earth? We know how far it is to the moon — 240,000 miles. We know how far it is to the sun — 93,000,000 miles. So how far is heaven from the earth? Let me assure you — it's not very far. Maybe twenty feet? Perhaps ten feet? Five feet? Do those figures seem a little too close? We have all read the story of Jacob, when he was fleeing from his brother, Esau, he laid his head upon a stone and saw a ladder from the earth, passing by the moon, reaching past the sun, extending past Jupiter, right on through the Milky Way until it finally reached heaven! He saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven and God was standing at the top of the ladder and spoke to Jacob from the top of the ladder. Jacob could both see and hear God from the top of the ladder and he could see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder. Jesus said HE was the ladder. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (Jn. 1:51). The ladder is the Christ of God — with its Head in the heavens and its body upon earth. The Christ body is the connecting link between the earthlies and the heavenlies. In and upon this body heaven comes down to earth, and earth is raised up into the heights of the Spirit realm of God. Jesus Himself is the prototype of this reality as He walked on earth in the conscious awareness and active participation of both dimensions. He was both in heaven and earth at the same time. At the very moment when Jesus spoke these words, heaven could have been no more than six feet away, for Jesus was Himself the ladder that connected heaven with earth! In Him men could see God at the top of the ladder, and by Him God spoke to men upon earth. So heaven isn't that far away! When Christ comes into your life — where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there.

The heaven of God's presence, wherever it is in the universe, is constantly available to all who walk in the Spirit. And it doesn't take a hundred years or even eight minutes for your prayers to reach heaven. We know that light travels at the speed of 180,000 miles a second, which is an incredible, almost incomprehensible, speed. At that rate it takes light eight minutes to reach the earth from the sun. But if you can determine how long it takes for your prayer to reach heaven, and the answer to return, you will know how far away heaven is. Someone says, "Brother, heaven must be very far away, because it takes a year for my prayer to get answered!" But have we not also discovered that the moment we pray, God hears? "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. 65:24).

God says that men enter His heavenly Kingdom by being born into it (Jn. 3:5). Men do not die to go to heaven, they are born there, for our Father is in heaven. And then after they are born into that state — after they become heavenly beings — they can lay up, by obedience to the heavenly Father, heavenly riches which will not only be a place, but royal pomp, splendor, majesty and dominion beyond compare. Sonship not only entitles one to residence in God's limitless and eternal domain, but to the ownership and rule of that domain, in proportion to qualifying in spiritual growth and development. Oh, that it were possible to lift men up above the shadows, and give them just a glimpse of something higher! Mortal minds are so entirely inadequate; human eyes so dim; human ears so dull!

Heaven is not a mansion over the hilltop, not the gratifying of the needs and desires of this vessel of clay. It is not that which will bring creature comfort. It is not a state of eternal creature enjoyment or rest. The celestial realm is something infinitely higher. It is eminence, power, majesty, life, glory. It is becoming the same kind of a Being as the One who made the worlds (Jn. 10:34-36; I Jn. 3:2), and will bring, not inactive rest with fluttering wings and strumming harps, which in a few short hours even becomes exceedingly tiresome, but activity and accomplishments far surpassing that of earth's limitation. And it includes kingship and priesthood over God's eternal and infinite domain. It is dominion and power and influence far above that which earth can contemplate or even imagine. And it begins here and now as the power and glory of God begin to move and manifest in and through our lives on this earth. Truly, "Heaven came down, and glory filled my soul."

The King James version of the Bible gives us this prayer in these words, "Our Father which art in heaven," but in fact the verb "art" is not in the original Greek text. The Greek expresses it more this way: "Father of ours, the One in the heavens." Why is there no verb in the Greek text? Because there has never been any particular time when God was not "in the heavens." One of the laws of Greek grammar is that whenever a verb is missing, it indicates limitless time. If our common version were correct and this verse said, "Our Father which art in heaven," it would indicate that the Father was in heaven at the particular time that the prayer was made. Our Lord, however, is revealing the great truth that our heavenly Father has always dwelt in the heavens. He was, is, and ever will be in heaven. It is the permanent dwelling of God.

WHERE IS HEAVEN

Jewish thought was fond of dividing the heavens into seven different strata, the "seventh heaven" being God's dwelling place. But God does not dwell in one certain heaven — the third, the seventh, or any other. He is in the heavens, and above and beyond all heavens. A philosopher of yesteryear once referred to God as "God, whose center is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere." Ah, that is it! If God's center is everywhere, then wherever I may be the center of that center would be in my deepest being. From where I stand the center of God is right in the innermost part of my life, and His circumference is infinite. The Greek word for heaven, in the New Testament, is most often in the plural. When you read Jesus' great parables of the Kingdom of Heaven it is really the Kingdom of the Heavens. Also, where Jesus teaches sons to pray, He says, according to the King James version, "Our Father which art in heaven." But in Greek it is plural — "Our Father which art in the heavens." So, contrary to popular thought, there is more than one heaven where God dwells. Paul spoke of being caught up into the third heaven, and God, our God, is the God of all the heavens. God dwells in heaven. He fills every heaven. He rules in every heaven. He is above every heaven, beyond every heaven, higher than all heavens and greater than the reality of each heaven. The great king Solomon cried out, "Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, and the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build Him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before Him?" (II Chron. 2:4-6).

In other words, that heaven that is so vast, so expansive, so extensive, so all-inclusive that it embodies within itself all the other heavens — even that heaven cannot contain our God! And yet I hear some say that God is not omnipresent! God is the God, not of heaven, but of THE HEAVENS. And in our journey into God we pass through all these heavens. Jesus passed through all the heavens on His way into the glory of the Father. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10). In His ascension to the right hand of Power He passed through — experienced — all the

heavens. But not only did He pass through them, He has also FILLED THEM ALL so that God in Christ is the essence in every heaven. You will find Him on a different plane, in a different dimension, in a different aspect of His life, in each heaven. Heaven is not a place, not a geographical or astral location — it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is a dimension of life. It is a level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is as omnipresent as God is omnipresent. It is co-existent and co-extensive with the physical universe, but on a different level of reality and being. It is the dimension of spirit reality, of being where God is all that He is. Heaven is also the realm in which God is revealed by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God is known by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be touched in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be experienced in the Spirit. God is the God of the heavens, and if ever you will see Him, if ever you will know Him, if ever you will touch Him, if ever you will experience Him — it will be in the heavens where He dwells, in the realms of His Spirit. Heaven, as I have pointed out, means “height, eminence, elevation.” God is in heaven. God is Spirit. Heaven is the high and holy realm of the Spirit where God exists. To be in heaven is to be in the Spirit. To experience God spiritually is to experience heaven. Thus, heaven is the realm of spiritual experience. The heavens are the various realms or levels of spiritual experience where we meet and know God. When God is revealed to you by the Spirit, heaven is opened and you behold heavenly things. In the lower heavens you know God in a more elementary way. It is wonderful to know God in His heavens. Each heaven speaks of a plane of relationship with God by the Spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life, wisdom, and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. As you pass through the heavens you come to know God in greater and grander measures. You experience Him in a deeper way. You come to know God more fully.

Let all who read these lines clearly understand that God’s heaven is not the inexhaustible universe of stars and suns and planets — swirling nebulae. Heaven has nothing whatever to do with the time-space continuum or matter in any form. The true heaven is beyond it all, above it all, before it all. Heaven is that high and holy and invisible realm of SPIRIT, the pure and divine and eternal and incorruptible realm of GOD HIMSELF, which existed before ever a star or a planet appeared. Heaven, therefore, can only be entered BY THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT. Let every man know for a certainty that natural eyes cannot pierce the invisible realm of spirit. The Russian astronauts returned from space and said, “We have been up there, we looked around, and we didn’t find or see God.” Of course not! Natural minds know nothing of that realm, for we perceive only those physical things recognizable by the physical senses. Natural ears are unable to hear that which is spoken in the realm of the spirit, for spirit vibrates on a frequency higher than and superior to the low vibrations of matter. Heaven is all around us, in us, and through us, just as radio waves and various other rays are all around us, within us, and through us without our knowledge. We must be raised out of our natural consciousness in order to touch it. But the dimension of heaven is ten thousand times MORE REAL than this gross material realm to which our mortal form has been subjected.

The highest realm revealed to man is called HEAVEN, and all who have been born again from above by the Spirit of God have had opened to them a realm higher far than the heavens perceived by astronomers and astrologers. These know nothing of heaven at all! Paul tells us that we are to “seek those things which are ABOVE, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things ABOVE, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2). The man or woman who is born again from that bright glory world above becomes an entirely new creation in Christ Jesus. And from that time forward he lives for God. His chief delight is in spiritual things. His affections are set above and not on things below. His citizenship is in heaven. Before his eyes there is opened up a kingdom which is beyond his full articulation or

expression. He has only glimpsed some of the ineffable glories that God has revealed, is revealing, and will reveal to him. He is now part of a kingdom so vast in scope and so enduring in quality that the things of this world seem crude, mean, narrow, and insignificant by comparison.

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

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

Paul tells us something about this high and exalted realm. "...cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the HEAVENLY PLACES, FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:16-21). In verse twenty of this beautiful passage we have the Greek phrase "en tois epouraniois," translated into English as "in heavenly places." "...He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES." The word for heaven in the Greek New Testament, as I have pointed out, is OURANOS, only in this passage we have something added to it. And the compound word thus formed is of such great import to us that we must consider it very, very carefully. We have the Greek word EPI which means SUPERIMPOSITION, or in plain speech, ABOVE, HIGHER THAN, OVER. And when joined to OURANOS, it becomes EPOURANIOIS. These two words joined together mean ABOVE HEAVEN or THE HIGHEST HEAVEN or HIGHER THAN ALL HEAVENS — SUPERIMPOSITION! This word is found twenty times in the New Testament.

Our Lord and Saviour when on earth, even though He had humbled Himself and had descended to the depths of the realm of death and had borne our sins, was still the exalted One. He was still in heaven (Jn. 3:13). But then He arose the conquering Christ! And not only that, but He ASCENDED victor over all the powers of darkness, having brought in eternal

redemption for a lost world and redeemed all things unto God. "Wherefore God hath HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, and given Him a name which is ABOVE EVERY NAME." Or as Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:10, "He...ascended up FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS." Or, let us note carefully, God set Him "at His own right hand IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES." And the word that is mistranslated here as "heavenly places" is EPOURANIOIS, meaning HIGHER THAN HEAVENLY. It is ABOVE HEAVEN, HIGHER THAN HEAVEN, FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS! Thus we read, "He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand IN EPOURANIOIS — FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED...and has put ALL THINGS under His feet" (Eph. 1:20-22).

So the heavens He has been raised up far above are the Principalities and Powers, the Might and Dominion, that inhabit and dwell in all the heavens. God has given Jesus an exalted position, far above all other Principality and Power, good and bad, and given Him a name (nature) that is above every name that is named throughout the vastnesses of infinity. He has put all other Power and Authority everywhere under His feet, and made them all His footstool, that before His glorious name, that wonderful name of Jesus, every knee should bow, yes, every knee, of the inhabitants of the heavens as well as those on the earth and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess, the tongues of those in the heavens, of those on the earth, and those in the underworld, every one of them shall proclaim Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And let demons rage. Let fools and unbelievers hang their heads in shame. We quote once more from the incomparable Word of God. "But God...HATH raised US up together, and MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS" (Eph. 2:4-6). And this "heavenly places" where WE NOW SIT with the firstborn Son is this same super-heaven, or epouraniois, the same position that He holds "far above all heavens"! Ah, we who have come the way of the cross, we whose spirits have been quickened by His Spirit, we in whom the mighty power is working which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand far above all heavens — are enthroned with Him in this super-eminence NOW. Christ is enthroned in the higher-than-all-heavens and WE HAVE BEEN QUICKENED AND RAISED UP AND GIVEN JOINT-SEATING WITH HIM IN THE UNION OF HIS DIVINE LIFE! So you see, precious friend of mine, it IS possible to live in heaven while you walk on earth!

And yet Christians in ignorance sing, "In the sweet bye and bye, we shall meet on that beautiful shore!" Heaven for those who have been born from above is not a future hope. It is a present reality. It is the realm far above all other forms of natural and spiritual life that inhabit God's vast universe and far above all power and might and dominion of any order; not above them geographically, but above them in RANK, in QUALITY OF LIFE, in EMINENCE, in POWER and AUTHORITY and NATURE and GLORY! All the elect sons of God must find their existence and experience enthroned with Christ in the higher than all heavens. They must find all their source and reality of being IN SPIRIT. Oh! sons of God — let us arise and live the heavenly life! Let our ministry be one that will lift people out of the earthly consciousness into a heavenly (spiritual) consciousness. Truly all creation has been lowered into the bondage of corruption, the consciousness of the earthly and temporal, but not without a hope of restoration into a full God-consciousness and state of being again. This is what salvation is about. This is why God's purpose in this hour is to perfect, to raise us and bring us into the consciousness of God which is the full awareness of the realm of the SPIRIT — the power and substance of life within OUR VERY SPIRIT!

If my Father is “in heaven,” then I can expect from Him only such things as come from heaven, are heavenly in character, and such as will make me heavenly. All that comes to me from heaven will make my life and my world more heavenly. In prayer I am making a link between earth and heaven; I am opening up a channel for heaven’s bounty to come into this world. We do not, then, pray to gain divine power for doing worldly tasks, or for realizing worldly ends. We come in prayer to open up the way for heaven’s life, heaven’s reality, heaven’s power, heaven’s glory, conditions, qualities and purposes to flow down into the earth realm, thereby establishing the Kingdom of Heaven — the Kingdom of God in earth. We come not to lay hold upon heaven’s power to fulfill earthly plans, hopes, and dreams, but to open the door of heaven for godliness to come down and transform all it touches. As a son of God I cannot ask for anything contrary to the character or will of my heavenly Father, for anything out of keeping with the heavenly order. To the Father in heaven I come seeking heaven’s glory. When we understand this, and by conscious awareness live in the reality of “our Father,” we live and move and have our being in God. It is a great mistake to think of heaven as something that happens after we die. It separates us in the “here and now” from the reality of our Father. It is said that the Kingdom of Heaven is “within you” (Lk. 17:21), that it is “in the midst of thee” (Zeph. 3:17), and that it is “at hand” (Mat. 4:17). We must claim it now, know it now, experience it now, lay hold upon it now, live in it now as sons of our heavenly Father.

In the Garden of Eden the footsteps of Yahweh were heard. He walked in the Garden and talked with man face to face. As far as Adam saw, the wonderful Creator was ever present. The thought that God was far away, removed from the habitation of man, never entered the pure minds of our first parents. It was later that worldly philosophy placed God at a terrible distance, while idolatry lowered Him to the earthly and sensual.

HEAVEN WITHIN

Heaven is our Father’s native realm. It is His natural environment. It is His home and habitat. Heaven is heaven by virtue of the fact that His presence, nature, power, wisdom and glory make it such. If God dwells in me, then heaven is within me, for He is my Father “in heaven.” When teaching His disciples this magnificent prayer, Jesus was not thinking of a distant Being in some remote area of the universe. He was referring to One whose existence was the very essence of His life. What was true of Jesus Christ as He lived in Palestine twenty centuries ago, is equally true of all sons and daughters of God today. Our Father is in heaven and also in our hearts. To know this is to know a new and deeper dimension to life. To know the presence and person of God our Father within is to experience heaven in the here and now, to be in heaven. But even more than that, we will see our lives now as the residence and habitation of the Most High. We will know ourselves to be the home of our heavenly Father, just as Jesus did. “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works” (Jn. 14:10). Thus, we and heaven are one. To say that God is in heaven and also in my heart, and to then separate between the two, is to entirely miss the mark. Once God’s sovereignty has been established in any human heart, the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven is accomplished in that life. That is heaven. That is where God lives. That is where we see, know, touch and experience God in His heaven.

Every child when thinking of his father associates with that personality an abode or dwelling place of some kind. It may be a tumble-down shack on the other side of the tracks or the king’s palace, yet it is home, sweet home. Home is where father is. Home is the storehouse where father keeps his resources to meet the need of his son. Home is the place from whence emanates peace, love, wisdom, joy, harmony, security and provision. It is the place where the child goes to find comfort, understanding, counsel and strength. It is the one place to which the

child can go to express his joys and share his happiness. That is the picture of the abode of our heavenly Father which we call heaven. Heaven is our home — not in the sweet bye and bye, but in the here and now! Heaven is where the Father is, the realm from which He radiates and sends all His love, wisdom, power and purpose. Jesus went to prepare a place for us in the Father's house, and He has come again in mighty Spirit power to receive us unto Himself, to bring us to the Father, seated together with Him in the heavenly places. In the true and inspired words of the old hymn:

Once heaven seemed a far off place,
Till Jesus showed His smiling face;
Now it is here within my soul,
'Twill be while endless ages roll.
O Hallelujah! yes 'tis heaven,
'Tis heaven to know the Son that's given;
O're land or sea, what matter where,
Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there!

We must realize Him as our living, ever-present God within. He is closer to us than the air that we breathe. Yea, closer is He to us than the blood that courses through our veins. He is in our spirit, and He is our very life. He is in heaven and we are in Him and He is in us. There is such a commingling that we cannot tell where heaven ends and earth begins, where God begins and we end, or where we begin and God ends. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Some time ago a brother shared a word and I now communicate it to you as faithfully as I can. He pointed out that heaven does not have a present significance in the mind and spirit and understanding of vast numbers of God's people. Somehow the churches relegate heaven as an aftermath, something beyond this life, the category that awaits us after death. And that is to the great detriment of the Church. The Church is, by definition, a heavenly institution on earth and in time — NOW. Those who dwell in heaven (spirit) are required to bring the dimension of heaven into their present experience and expression. So if we save the word heaven for the future we are striking a death-blow to the very nature and character of the Kingdom of Heaven and God's purpose in His people as a heavenly people presently in time. We need to become alive to heaven; heaven needs to become vital; it must be made real; it needs to have substance within our hearts, our lives, our speech, our thoughts, our convictions, and our manifestation. In a word, we need to be made HEAVENLY MINDED!

Everything in this world works against this kind of consciousness. Everything in modern civilization, everything in the scientific, educational, medical, industrial and social institutions of the world is calculated against heaven, against eternity, against SPIRIT. They want to delude the masses of mankind to believe that this is it — this temporal, spatial, physical and visible world is the sum and substance of REALITY. That is the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of this age that undergirds and permeates the entire kingdom of corruption and death. The world operates on the supposition and premise that everything of value is now, in time, material, the things that are seen, tangible, felt and held, and that when this life passes it is over. Therefore, eat, drink and be merry; therefore fornicate; therefore overindulge; therefore grasp; therefore get all you can get and enjoy all you can enjoy, for this is all there is. And that is a LIE! The world is living in a lie. And the church world is living in another (and just as serious) LIE. The churches tell us that heaven is a future hope — beyond the grave. They understand not that heaven and spirit are synonymous — you cannot have SPIRIT without having HEAVEN. And the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS WITHIN YOU!

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

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

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all **SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES** in Christ," the inspired apostle wrote. In the Old Testament the blessings of the people of God were temporal and physical in nature. They were seen in financial prosperity, the multiplication of the herds and the sheep and the goats, in many children, in servants and in wealth. That was because they were a people of another

age and God had to make His blessings visible to their eyes so that their faith could comprehend and grasp it. Everything was natural and physical under the Old Testament, a natural people, a physical land, a worldly temple, outward rituals and ceremonies, external laws and regulations, and temporal blessings. In the New Testament we move to a higher plane. The blessings that our heavenly Father bestows upon us are primarily spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. We might have physical blessings in this world, and God does pour them out upon us in the overflow — He is faithful with many physical needs of finances, healing, and answers to prayer — but all these things have a problem. They are like that gourd on the vine under which Jonah sat just outside of Nineveh! A worm came up and ate the gourd and it rotted and corrupted. So it is with all the physical blessings of the natural life. They all have a worm in them and when the day of withering is at hand, soon they shall have corrupted. Today God meets a need, but tomorrow a greater need arises. Today God heals our disease, but a few years after we are taken with another illness more grave than the first. Those who are so blessed that they are never sick a day in their life finally collapse and die. When we face the blasts of eternity, if we have nothing but the temporal blessings of this world, we shall face those blasts naked. Therefore “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).

He who writes these lines testifies to those who read them that all who live after the flesh, out of the flesh, and for the flesh are earth dwellers, and woe! unto them that dwell upon the earth, for the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. All who by faith live after the spirit, out of the spirit, and for the spirit have now become PART OF THE ETERNAL. Neither can they die anymore. Death's cruel sting, filled with its venom of sin, has passed away, and victory has been snatched from the yawning jaws of the tomb. We have passed from the realm where all is death to the realm where all is life. Our citizenship in this present age has been revoked and we have a new citizenship conferred upon us from the eternal and undying realm. And just as the stars in some mystical way influence and control the destinies of earth, so does the power of the SPIRIT quicken and metamorphose all natural things and even our mortal bodies as we live out of the high and eternal realm of the Spirit.

We are not citizens of earth, we are the true SPACE PEOPLE. Neither are we to be governed by the laws of earth. We are to be governed by the laws of heaven, the principles of the Kingdom of God, for we are citizens of that realm. In the realm of heaven there is life more abundant, incorruption and immortality. There is fullness of joy, peace, love and righteousness. There is no lack of anything, for all is out of God (spirit) and GOD IS ALL IN ALL. Even the natural world is blessed and made fruitful and quickened and raised when it comes under the rule of the heavens. Jesus was showing us this principle when He fed the five thousand from five loaves and two small fish, when He turned the water into wine, when He sent Peter to catch a fish in whose mouth was clenched the money to pay their taxes, and when He healed the sick and raised the dead back to life again. Jesus lived out of spirit, He knew God the Spirit as the source and substance of all things, He knew the power and reality of the Father who dwelt within Him, and all supply came out of the realm of spirit rather than from the limited and perishable capacity of the flesh.

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

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

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

Various ministers and writers through the centuries, with keen spiritual insight, have seen and expressed these glorious realities. The Scottish preacher, Dr. Alexander Whyte, adds this testimony from one of his sermons delivered back in the 1800's. "The spiritual world is essentially and fundamentally different from the material world. The geographical and astronomical dimensions and distances of the material world bear no manner of relation at all to the dimensions and distances — so to call them — of the spiritual world. We speak of English miles, we speak of nautical miles, when we take our measurements of the material world. But the distances and the directions of the spiritual world cannot be laid down and limited in such miles as these. When Holy Scripture speaks of the 'highest heaven,' it does not speak mathematically and astronomically, but spiritually. The highest heaven is not so called because it is away up above and beyond all the stars that we see. It is called the highest heaven, because it is immeasurably and inconceivably above and beyond us in its blessedness and in its glory; in its truth, in its love, in its peace, and in its joy in God.

"When it is told us in the Word of God that the Son of God came down from heaven to earth in order to redeem us to God with His own blood, we are not to think of Him as having left some glorious place far 'beyond the bright blue sky,' as the children's hymn has it. Wherein then did His humiliation consist? His humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition, born in a stable and laid in a manger, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, and the cursed death of the cross. That was His descent from heaven to earth; and it was a descent of a kind, and of a degree, that no measuring-line of man can tell the depth of it, or the distress of it, or the dreadful humiliation of it. 'Our Father which art in heaven.' Now heaven, here, is not the sky. It is not the heaven of sun and moon and stars. Heaven here is the experience and enjoyed reality of God — wherever that is. Heaven here is our Father's house — wherever that is. Heaven is high up above the earth — yes; but let it be always remembered and realized that it is high up, as Almighty God is high up, in His Divine Nature, above mortal

man in his human nature. It is high up as goodness is high up above evil and as perfect blessedness is high up above the uttermost misery.

“As often as we kneel down again, and begin to pray, we are to think of ourselves as at a far greater distance from God than we ought to be, and now desire to be. All true prayer is a rising up and a drawing near to God: not in space indeed; not in measurable miles; but in mind, and in heart, and in spirit. ‘Oh for a mountain to pray on!’ thou criest. ‘A mountain and a temple on the top of it; high and exalted, so that I might be nearer God, and that God might hear me better; for He dwelleth on high!’ Yes, He dwelleth on high; but all the time, He hath respect to the humble. ‘Wouldst thou pray in His temple?’ says Augustine; ‘then pray within thyself; for thou thyself art the true temple of the living God.’”

The English preacher, G. A. Studdert Kennedy, back in the 1920’s wrote the following penetrating words in his book *THE WICKET GATE*. “What is heaven, and where it? Is it a place, or a state of mind? Is it here or hereafter? What is hell? Is it a place, or a state of mind? Is it here or hereafter? Heaven is where God is. God is here, and now, and so is heaven. God will be hereafter, and so will heaven. Hell is, where God is not, and that may be here and now for us. Hell is where God is not — and that may be hereafter for us too. Ah, God is even there, but to us it is as though He is not, for He is unperceived. Heaven is the truth about earth. It is what earth really is. It is the true meaning of life, both now and hereafter. Men have cried, ‘Our Father, which art in heaven!’ It may be doubted whether the best of them ever bothered their heads about the distinction between a place and a state of mind; and it is doubtful whether we need bother our heads either, for a place is never very much but a state of mind. A place is always what a man sees in it, and thinks of it. It is to him what it means to him. I remember standing with a friend of mine, who was not born again — or, at any rate, if he was born again, his eyes were still shut like a kitten’s. We were watching the sun go down behind the blue Welsh hills, and turn the still wet sands of Dee into a glory of rainbow colors. I was honestly struck dumb for a time by the wonder of the scene, but he continued talking about the extraordinary powers of his new motor bike, and when I said, ‘Is not that glorious?’ he replied, ‘What do you mean?’ We were both in the same place; and yet I was in heaven, and, if he was not in hell, he was getting close to the jaws of it. He was utterly unconscious of the true meaning and value of the place wherein he stood. He stood, as we all forever stand, on holy ground; but he took off neither hat nor shoes, because his soul was blind.

“Heaven can be, and often is, wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, and He stands there in the midst of them. But, although that heaven is so near, closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet, yet it is a long way off; because the road that leads to it is the way of the Cross, the way of sacrifice, which all men fear to tread; and because they fear to tread it, they are always postponing it, or, having started, are always turning back. That is the real danger of putting off heaven to the hereafter. It means that we do not set out in earnest to find it here on earth; and if we do not begin to find it here, we certainly shall not find it hereafter. I have no reason whatsoever for supposing that I shall be any nearer heaven by the mere act of death than I am now; neither mere living nor mere dying can in themselves bring me nearer heaven. Everything depends upon how I live and how I die. Mere lapse of time cannot lead us to eternity. Heaven is not another world from this, as a matter of time. It is another world from this as a matter of kind. It is this world and the next seen in another light, the light that never was on land or sea, which shines in the eyes of those who have been quickened by the Spirit of God. Postponing heaven means doubting its truth — that is the only sense in which it can be postponed. The distance from heaven to earth is measured not in moments, nor in miles, but in terms of faith or of doubt. If we put it off to the hereafter, it tends

to become an ideal rather than a reality; and an ideal, which is not recognized as a truth, is something which everyone is expected to honor, and no one is expected to attain.

”Our fathers tried to drive men into heaven by threatening them with the horrors of hell. The truth is, that a man cannot see the horrors of hell until he has caught a glimpse of the joys of heaven. You cannot learn the Love of God through the fear of hell. You can only learn the fear of hell through the Love of God. Less and less do men fear God, and less and less can be accomplished by preaching the fear of Him. I do not fear God. I reverence Him, but I am not afraid of Him. He could not, and would not, do me any harm, anywhere, or at any time. If I have any fear of Him, it is a fear that is born of love, a fear of grieving Him, which love begets. He is, and always has been, and always will be, pure, infinite, unmitigated Love. His justice cannot be separated from His Love — justice has no meaning apart from love. If He is the Judge of the world, He is not in the least like a human judge, for a human judge does not administer justice in any true sense of that word. Human justice is a caricature and a travesty of the Divine. The human judge administers those pains and penalties, which a chaotic and sinful community believe to be necessary in order that some measure of order and decency may be maintained; but, in the nature of things, the man condemned must often be less of a sinner than the jury that condemns him. What mainly governs the penalties imposed, is, not what is calculated to redeem the criminal, nor what is the absolutely right retribution for his wrong — but what is assumed to be necessary to deter others from committing like crimes.

”We have really nothing to fear from God, and I am not afraid of Him; but I am terrified of life without Him, for that is hell. Apart from God, when the sense of His presence grows dim and disappears, when men lose their hold upon goodness and beauty and truth, there appears to be no accursed cruelty, no damnable crime, no hideous villainy of which they are not capable. Men without God are infinitely lower than the beasts. A man who does not believe in hell, and who fought in Flanders and in France, must be as blind as forty bats in a room lit by a searchlight. A man who does not believe in hell, and has lived in Ireland or in Russia for the last ten years, must be almost past praying for. Hell! good Lord, it’s all around us, every day and everywhere; not only in those crude and brutal forms of it, which we see when large bodies of men lose their hold on God, but in countless individual lives which touch upon ours every day. I have talked today with a man in hell. He believes in nothing and in nobody. He sneers at righteousness, and laughs at the idea of spirit. He is forever enjoying himself, and yet I never saw anyone so utterly devoid of joy. He is without God in the world, and therefore is in hell.

“Hell is life without God; and that can be, and often is, the most terrible of all realities. That is what I am afraid of — life without God, life outside of heaven. I am afraid of it for myself, and I am afraid of it for my people. When I used to walk about the slums in which I worked, passing from house to house among broken and despairing women, hundreds of whom had taken to drink — and when I get near to the heart of the West End of London with its drugs and its prostitution — I murmur to myself, ‘They lie in hell like sheep, and death gnaweth upon them.’ And there seems to me to be for them no morning, no fresh dews of early dawn, and no sweetness of the sunshine ever, unless the Eternal Love can find a way to turn their darkness into light.

“A linnet that had lost its way
Sang on a blackened bough in hell,
Till all the ghosts remembered well
The wind, the trees, the golden day.
At last they knew that they had died,

When they heard music in that land,
And Someone there stretched forth a hand
And drew a brother to his side.

”Then hell was hell no longer. For hell cannot be where love and beauty and God are. God grant we may find it true, ‘Even if I go down into hell, Thou art there also’” — end quote.

Chapter 10

Hallowed Be Thy Name

What a depth of thought, what a wealth of meaning, what a world of reality, the model prayer contains that the firstborn Son of God has given for His many brethren with the opening words, “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name!” This is the first petition of the Lord’s prayer. But while it is the first upon our lips, I fear that it is often the last in our minds and hearts. Even in the secret place of prayer, many of us think first of ourselves and our own needs. “Oh God, bless me, help me, make a way for me, speak to me, meet my needs, heal me, use me...” and on and on we go. But Jesus does not put our needs first. “Hallowed be Thy name” comes first because it is the gateway in the mind and heart of the Father. Before we pray for the coming of the Kingdom, before we pray for God’s will, before we pray for daily bread, before we pray for the forgiveness of sins, we are to pray that the name of God — God Himself — be hallowed.

What does it mean to hallow? To many it suggests cloistered halls, ivy-covered walls, long robes, dismal chants, halos, musty dim cathedrals, solemn music, and other tired, religious traditions. Because the old Anglo-Saxon word “hallowed” is not used so much in our modern world, we shall do well to remind ourselves that it means “sanctified,” “separated,” “held sacred,” “reverenced.” It means to be set aside for a specific purpose. For example, if I said to you, “Please set that bowl aside for the dinner with our friends tonight,” then the bowl would become “hallowed,” that is, set aside for a specific function. It would not be used for any other purpose until the special dinner.

The words “saint,” “holy,” and “hallowed,” are synonymous. In the King James version of the Bible the first two translate two Hebrew words, GADOSH and HASIDH. The root idea of the first is separation, and in a spiritual sense it means that which is separated or dedicated unto God, and therefore removed from secular use. The word is applied to people, places and things, as: the temple, vessels, garments, the city of Jerusalem, priests, etc. When God set Himself to teach the world about holiness He called a man, Abraham, to Himself and separated him from all the people of kindreds, tribes, and nations. Throughout the history of Abraham’s descendants the Lord called for one separation after another to show what He meant by holiness. The idea of holiness pervaded all the ceremonial worship of the tabernacle and the temple; each ordinance was designed to reflect holiness upon the rest until the idea, expressed intently in so many ways, was applied to God Himself. The animals of the land were divided into clean and unclean; from the pure class the purest was selected, one without spot or blemish; this was to be offered in sacrifice by a class of men set apart, separated from all other men — the priests; this separated group must wash the pure sacrifice in clean water, separated from all other water. And so on and on.

If a person, activity or thing is separated unto God and for God, the Bible calls it “holy,” being separated unto holiness. For example, the Lord Jesus in Matthew 23:17-19 shows us that gold, if used for the temple, and a gift, when placed upon the altar, becomes “sanctified” or “holy”. All the gold in this world is for human use and is therefore common; however, if a portion is separated and placed in the temple for God’s use, it becomes sanctified or hallowed. Again, if an ox or a sheep are among the herd, they are for human use and are common. When chosen and placed upon the altar, however, they become an offering unto God, being

separated unto holiness. It is altogether a matter of whether they are for human use or whether they are separated and belong to God. Before they are separated, they are common; after they are separated, they become holy. Simply speaking, holiness means all that pertains to God, and all that is of God, unto God, and for God!

Holiness or hallowed means to be separated and different from all else. In the whole universe only God is inherently separate and different from all else; thus the scriptures affirm that ONLY HE IS HOLY. However, if a person, place, thing, or activity is separated unto God and for God, it is also called holy, being separated unto holiness. Objectively, the saints are God's chosen and peculiar people, belonging exclusively to Him by virtue of His own choosing and grace. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are NOW THE PEOPLE OF GOD" (I Pet. 2:9-10). Subjectively, we are "called to be saints" and unto this end are experientially being separated from all sin and defilement, yes, and also separated unto all that is just and pure. HE is the set apart One. Even in the days of His flesh, He was separated, cut off, without the camp, set apart from all that bespoke of man, flesh, self, tradition, religion, and set apart unto all that bespoke of the fulfillment of the will of God. There are days, seasons, experiences, circumstances where we feel so separated, cut off, in a barren place. But we come to realize that it is not so much our separation, as it is HIS SEPARATION. To go without the camp, bearing His reproach, would be far more than we could endure, were it not for the fact that actually this is HIS SEPARATION, a part of HIS BECOMING OUR SANCTIFICATION, as we are separated in union with Him.

The saints are God's chosen and peculiar people, belonging exclusively to Him, made one with Him, to bear His nature and glory, that HE might be glorified in the earth. One more and more comes to know what it means to be a saint as he follows on into deeper and deeper measures of His 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 which 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.

Many times it is most grievous and perplexing to those who know not 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 following hard after the Lord, 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. Truly HIS DRAWING leaves us no choice but to FOLLOW ON that we might know HIM in all His glorious and eternal reality! As we follow on to know the Lord, earth and friends fade away in the exceeding brightness of our vision of Christ. Our eyes are fixed with a steadfast gaze upon Him who has gone before us, opening up the way into that fuller glory which lies BEYOND THE VEIL.

As someone has written, "Those apprehended to be conformed to the image of the Son of God 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. Those called

to this high calling are being separated from all that binds them to a lower order, that they may enter into His fullness. Many people find it a lot easier to be “one” with the Babylonian religious systems, where the crowds are, and the excitement, than to become separated and go out beyond, leading the way for others to follow. How I rejoice that God is now calling a people — saints — separated ones — to a realm beyond the norm of religious activity, beyond the programs and promotions, beyond the sensationalism and hand-clapping, beyond the revivals and crowd assemblings, into the new and seemingly strange paths of HIS LEADING. The separations are not easy, friends and loved ones and brethren do not readily understand, especially the preachers and organizations who try to hold you to their own programs — which programs are often BEING USED OF THE LORD to enrich many lives with salvation, infilling of the Spirit, healings, etc., with their methods and techniques for an outreach to bless the world. We praise God for His blessing on every level where He chooses to work, but when the call comes, FOLLOW ME, wait upon ME in deep separation and holy brokenness for the greater glory soon to be revealed, those “called to be saints” come aside to make ready for the next great move of the Spirit!”

“Hallowed be Thy name!” That is what I desire above all things. I desire in my own life that sense of the majesty of my Father that will sanctify and make sacred all that I think, say and do. Thy name be hallowed in me! That is first and foremost. And I long for this knowledge of the presence and love and power of the Father to be in all men in my world. So my first and unending petition is for the name — the character — of my God to be recognized and responded to and participated in among men.

TAKING GOD’S NAME IN VAIN

The third commandment is, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain” (Ex. 20:7). We live in an age where profanity is commonplace and blasphemy is equally commonplace, where cursing and swearing are habitual and looked upon not as heinous sins, but actually as virtues. Many Hollywood film producers feel that unless films are filled with profanity, vulgarity and blasphemy they will not have a good box office. It is tragic that the state of morals and spiritual life in our country has descended to such a condition that producers would seek to make vulgar films in order to gratify the public. When reverence toward God and purity is lost, then reverence for integrity and human life goes with it. One of the reasons why there is so much violence and crime in our streets today is because men and women have lost their reverence for the living God and the goodness that proceeds only from Him.

Woodrow Wilson’s father, a minister of the Gospel, was at one time in the company of a group of men when one of the men used God’s name profanely, and then looked over and saw Dr. Wilson. The man apologized. “Oh, excuse me, Dr. Wilson. I didn’t realize that you were present.” Dr. Wilson answered, “It is not to me, sir, that you owe your apology.” It is amazing how many times people have apologized to me for their blasphemy and profanity, when it is not my name that they profaned. How absolutely incredible it is that people are more concerned about offending a mere man that they are about offending the holy God of the universe!

But — men often put far too narrow an interpretation on the words, “Hallowed be Thy name.” We limit their application literally to a name or title such as “God,” “Jehovah,” “Yahweh,” “Lord,” or “Jesus Christ.” As though it meant we are not to misuse the name, but always treat it reverently and discreetly, and to speak it with bated breath. When someone vulgarly uses the expression, “God d---,” we say they are “taking God’s name in vain.” Or when in exasperation

or anger they cry out, “Jesus Christ!” we accuse them of “taking God’s name in vain.” But when we come to look at the real meaning of the name of God, we find that it has much wider bearings and much deeper significance.

The real profanity of man is not some swear words we use. Those words are more stupid than sinful. The true profanity is our thoughts, desires, attitudes and actions that fall short of the character of God, that reveal and express a nature baser than His in a life that is professedly His son or daughter! The way we hallow that wonderful Name of names is by living what we preach, by revealing in our lives the nature and character of God. If through our spirit we at all times express the heart of our Father, then we do indeed hallow His name. To walk as a worthy son is to sanctify the Father’s name in the earth. It is the sweetest incense in the temple of worship.

The Jews held the sacred name of Yahweh in such reverence that they would not even pronounce it lest it be profaned upon their lips. Yet these Jews, with all their seeming reverence, were continually taking God’s name in vain! Oh, they were not cursing or using profanity — but the name of God was called over them in vain. As a people they had become the vehicle of God’s revelation in history, but again and again they had proved false to the trust. Many of them, while scrupulously hallowing God’s name with their lips, were defiling it in their hearts, attitudes and actions. They read into God’s nature their own ignorance and prejudices, and made Him altogether one like unto themselves. They did exactly as the idolaters whom they despised; they built up a God for themselves, not out of wood and clay in the image of a beast or a man, but out of the materials their own hearts supplied; and He was harsh, narrow, vindictive, bigoted, and cruel as they were. And the secret of the bitter hostility of these men toward our Lord Jesus Christ was, that He came to teach them a new God. His work was to depose this glorified Tyrant whom they worshipped, and set in his place a loving and tender Father, infinitely just in His dealing with sin, but infinitely merciful in His dealing with sinners. In the eyes of Jesus Christ, the theology of the scribes and Pharisees did real dishonor to God. It libeled His character, besmirched His reputation, and took His name in vain.

When we hear people cursing, using the title of Christ, God, or Jesus, we regard them as taking God’s name in vain. The reality is, such profanity has nothing whatever to do with “taking God’s name in vain.” In order to take God’s name in vain one must first “take” God’s name upon him. It is not by words spoken — it is in a standing, position and relationship. To take the Lord’s name is to take His nature and authority, for the name expresses the nature and character of God. Most folk who curse and swear with the Lord’s name have never taken the name, or yet taken God as their Lord and Master. They have made no effort to take the Lord’s name upon them, or to live and function in His name. At every wedding the minister or officer says to the bride, “Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?” She responds, “I do.” She “takes” the man for her husband and she also “takes” his name. She is no longer Sally Smith — now she is Sally Jones. She has taken a husband and she has taken a name. Now, if after taking this man and his name she does not love him, refuses to live with him, spurns his support and fails to fulfill her responsibilities or receive her privileges as Mrs. Jones — she has “taken his name in vain.” It is all to no avail, for naught, in vain. She is called “Mrs. Jones” — but it is in vain.

Today an alarming number of men and women have taken the name of the Lord in vain. They call themselves Christians (Christed ones) or children of God. Yet they deny the nature and the character of the One whose name they have taken. They do not live up to their responsibilities as the people of God, nor do they walk in the privileges of their relationship to God. When a

woman loves her husband, shares all with him, makes a happy home and compliments him in every way — his name is hallowed, honored, enhanced, enlarged, exalted and magnified. This is what the Lord has in mind with His people. “I will mention the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel...so didst Thou lead Thy people, to MAKE THYSELF A GLORIOUS NAME” (Isa. 63:7,14). “God at the first did visit the nations, to take out of them A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME” (Acts 15:14).

Ray Prinzing has commented upon this: “The loving-kindness of the Lord, His great mercy to us-ward stagger the mind, and stir deep into our spirits, when He illumines the fact that HE IS APPREHENDING A PEOPLE TO BECOME HIS NAME, to be a living expression of His nature and character in the earth. Under the blessings of obedience promised to Israel, God declared, ‘And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord’ (Deut. 28:10). Evangelicals for years have quoted the scripture, ‘If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land’ (II Chron. 7:14). We do rejoice in this promise, though we do well to remember who it is that is called ‘My people,’ or, as the margin gives, ‘upon whom my name is called.’ First of all, this was written for the WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. God gave them His name, placed it upon them, and thus identified Himself with them. But just as much as the law was written on tables of stone, and not on the fleshly tables of their heart, so also they carried His name on the outside, but they had not BECOME HIS NAME WITHIN. Outward profession, and inward state of being, are often two different things. They mouthed allegiance to their God, but their hearts wandered far from Him. ‘Ye turned and polluted my name’ (Jer. 34:16).

“How could they pollute His name? It was HIS NAME, it stood as a revelation of His nature and character, and His nature and character remained pure. It was because He placed His name upon them, so they polluted His name when they polluted themselves. In the measure that they bore His name and then went and corrupted their own lives, they were also polluting the name of the Lord. Thus it is written, ‘Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity’ (II Tim. 2:19). Everyone who ‘names himself’ by the name of the Lord, takes upon himself His name, needs to watch how he bears that name, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless if he bear that name in vain. Christendom looks with horror at those who use the name of ‘Jesus Christ’ in their curses and profanities. We agree, THIS OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE. But we also see that Christendom has been far more guilty in polluting the name of the Lord by calling herself by His name, and yet not manifesting His character before the world. HIS NAME becomes mixed in with all their selfish pursuits, all their ego-kingdom-building schemes, and it is a reproach unto His name. ‘So didst Thou lead Thy people...’ with one purpose in view, with one rare objective to be fulfilled, ‘TO MAKE THYSELF A GLORIOUS NAME.’ If He already had a name, He wouldn’t have to MAKE one. The fact is, there is a whole composite company which become a NEW REVELATION OF HIS NAME” — end quote.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

In order to learn the meaning of this prayer, let us go back to the beginning, to God’s original intent for man. CHRIST is the image of God, the scripture says. I know these words may seem to be incredible, but they are truth — the very first mention of the “image of God” is applied, not to Jesus Christ, but to our forefather ADAM. “And God said, Let us make MAN IN OUR IMAGE, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...so God created MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, in the IMAGE OF GOD created He him” (Gen. 1:26-27). As we consider the wonderful advent of man created “in the image of God,” we can only conclude that this is a spiritual man

brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God Almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power and attributes. The image of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus, man is the true image of God. The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shed upon mortals the truest reflection of God and lifted man's sights higher than their poor thought-models would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning and as he ever shall be world without end — THE IMAGE OF GOD. Of Him it is written, "He is the expression of the glory of God — the Light-being, the outshining of the divine — and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature..." (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). Christ, and humanity in Christ, is like a ray of light that comes from the sun — man, the extension of God, emanates God.

Some years ago a brother shared a word of revelation with which I heartily concur. In the following paragraphs I will share as faithfully as I can the concepts he set forth. In that wonderful day when the Lord God planted a Garden in Eden for the man in His image, God stood in the boundary between heaven and earth and did a most incredible thing. He stretched forth His hands of omnipotence and took this terrestrial ball in one hand as with the other he grasped the heavenly realm. He moved the two toward one another. He brought the spiritual realm, the timeless realm, the dimensionless realm toward planet earth and moved earth toward the heavenly realm. The two moved closer and closer until they kissed each other. The two realms touched — entering into union with one another. The area where heaven and earth met together and overlapped He called Eden. The place where these two realms met, overlapped and interfaced became unlike earth and unlike heaven, that which had never existed before — not heavenly and not earthly — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth! The only thing that it can be likened to is the resurrection body of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was visible, but utterly spiritual. He brought His physical body out of the tomb and appeared in a body possessing an earthly form and appearance, but it was a glorious metamorphosed body limited neither by time or space. Here in this realm where heaven and earth meet and mingle all that is visible becomes spiritual, and all that is spiritual becomes visible. Everything upon this earth that is seized upon by the spiritual is transformed by the spiritual, and there is created here the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. When you take the heavenly and the pristine earthly and join them together, what is formed by that blessed union is far more beautiful and glorious than either.

Man, formed of the dust of the ground, lay just outside this realm of the interface. God came to man there — just beyond the shining Eden, just outside the glorious spiritual-physical realm. God came to man in the lowlands of the earth realm. He breathed into the man, so magnificently formed of the earth, He breathed into him the spiritual realm, the life-giving winds of heaven. Man is the only being into whose nostrils GOD BREATHED THE BREATH OF LIFE. Man's "breath of life" is not air — it is the Spirit of the Almighty which giveth understanding — intelligence and wisdom! All other creatures also had a "breath of life," but it was not breathed into them from God. Only the light that God IS was more glorious than this exquisite creature — man in God's image! And the magnificent wonder is that this man could see right into the heavenly, spiritual world. The animals can't peer into that realm, the fish have no knowledge of that realm — no creature on earth can see beyond this gross material realm except the man in God's image. Please mark this! Here is a physical, visible creature who can see the unseen. He is not frightened by it, nor is he intimidated by anything or any creature he beholds in that glorious realm. He is at home with who he is and who they are. He looks around and all things are open to him. He sees all, perceives all, understands all. The face of

God bent down and looked into the face of man, and man looked up into the face of God, and they looked like each other! They looked like Father and son. They bore an incredible, remarkable resemblance. God stretched forth His hand, Adam stretched forth his hand, and stood up from the dust and faced his Creator. He belonged to this planet, but the winds of heaven were within him. He belonged to the heavens as well as the earth. He is the only creature that has ever been, is now, or ever shall be, that BELONGS TO BOTH REALMS!

Man in Christ, man in God's image, is God's government in the Kingdom of God. Was not this magnificent purpose burning in the heart of the Most High when on the sixth creative day He proclaimed the wonderful decree: "Let us make man in our image...and LET THEM HAVE DOMINION over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). In this shadowy type we behold a vivid portrait of God's purpose for man, that when man comes fully into GOD'S IMAGE he shall be, first, the ruler of things beneath, the lowest realms of the bottomless, typified by the fish swarming in the depths of the seas, and the creeping things; next, the things upon the earth, typified by the cattle, and all the earth; and last, the things of the heavens also, typified by the fowl of the air. One may find it difficult to embrace so great a truth from so small and insignificant a type, but it was upon this very Edenic type, as reiterated by the prophet David in the eighth Psalm, that the writer of the book of Hebrews enlarged when by the Spirit he wrote, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? 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 honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands; Thou has 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. But we see Jesus..." (Heb. 2:5-9).

By such rulership committed to Adam we get some idea of what kind of beings we are. One might be so impressed with the majesty of the silent, speechless mountain that lifts its white peak high above the clouds as to worship in silence at its altar; so suggestive is it of the infinite. But what is a mountain, or a star for that matter, or billions of galaxies of stars and suns and planets and moons as compared with a man? They think not, speak not, neither do they feel or hope or love or plan or build or have a duty or a destiny. Man is God's image and likeness! It is interesting to note that the almighty Creator fashioned and formed everything of nature throughout the unbounded heavens and unto the depths of the earth and then, after completing and ordaining all, He gave us the true estimate of man's greatness and purpose when He said, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness; and let them have dominion." Man therefore is not only the most important creature on the earth, but the most important creature anywhere in the universe. Even mighty angels are not made in His image, nor are they given dominion over all the works of His hands. Can we not see by this that Adam stood in the midst of the vast creation as the revelation of God to it all. In man in God's image the invisible God became visible to the material creation. God's purpose was to reveal Himself to His creation and bring everything everywhere into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Himself.

Adam was God's special gift to the entire creation. He came not from the brute ancestry, nor from the muck of some primordial sea, nor from the mire of the jungle, but from the hand and spirit and breath of the Divine Creator. Time will not allow us to dwell on the glories of man in God's image, but Adam was perfect, pure, powerful. He was without spot or stain, taint or tarnish. Pure in character, perfect in holiness, powerful in personality. He was the embodiment of all wisdom and knowledge. He was able to do on the morn of creation what no sage,

scientist, or naturalist could do today. He found himself surrounded from the beginning with vast kingdoms of living things — fish, birds, animals — many more than exist today. These were brought to him and at the command of God he gave them names. In the typology of scripture a name denotes a nature. Make no mistake about it, my friend, Adam did something greater far than merely classifying all the creatures which God had created in the world. When he “named” these creatures the wonderful truth is that he “natured” them — that is, he spoke creatively into them the nature that his mind of wisdom and knowledge conceived. Sovereignty and authority rested like a crown of glory upon the head of Adam. He was made the Lord over all the creation of God to rule and reign as the visible expression of the invisible Creator. In him God was to be seen and known and touched by everything everywhere.

We are never told how long Adam lived in that wonderful Garden where the glory of God was revealed through him in dominion and blessing to creation, but that glorious reign of wonder and peace under the direction of a son in the image of God was but a dim figure of the day when a whole company of sons in God’s image would reign in splendor over all things in all realms throughout all worlds and all things in heaven and in earth would be gathered together into union with God in His life and purpose. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the first and Head of this glorious company, and as typified and shadowed by the first man Adam He is the connecting link between God and creation — the revelation of the invisible Father to the physical worlds. A God who is unseen and unknown, or who is only the product of inferences from creation, or providence, or the mysteries of history, or the wonders of my own inner life, the creature of logic or reflection, is very powerless to sway and influence men or to affect creation. The limitations of our physical faculties and the boundlessness of our hearts both cry out for a God that is nearer to us than that, whom we can see and love and know. The whole world wants the making visible of Divinity as its deepest desire.

Christ meets this need. How can you make wisdom visible? How can a creature see love or purity? How do I see your spirit? By the expression and deeds of your body! And the only way by which God can ever come near enough to the natural creation to be a constant power of eternal life and light and love is by creation seeing Him at work in a man who is His image and revelation. Christ’s whole life is the making visible of the invisible God. He is the manifestation to the world of the unseen Father. Jesus Christ in all His words and in all His works is the perfect instrument of the heavenly Father, so that His words are God’s words, and His works are God’s works; so that, when He speaks, His gentle wisdom, His loving sympathy, His melting tenderness, His authoritative commands, His prophetic threatenings, are the speech of God, and that when He acts, whether it be by miracle, by wonder, by transforming grace, by creative energy, what we see is God working before our eyes as we never see Him in any other creature or thing anywhere in the whole vast universe.

The grand fact is that this Jesus of Nazareth, by the sheer force of His personality, has so impressed Himself upon mankind, and upon human history, and upon principalities and powers in the heavens, and upon spirits in the darkest underworld, and continues to impress Himself, that the only adequate description we can give of Him is EMMANUEL — God with us; that in the Man Jesus dwelt and dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, under bodily conditions. In Him all we can ever know of the invisible Creator becomes concrete, and therefore becomes powerful to save. And if all this has been effected by one son of God revealing the Father to creation, what, I ask, shall be the result when A VAST COMPANY OF SONS SHALL BE BROUGHT TO RULE AND REIGN in His glorious image and likeness over all the earth and throughout the vastnesses of infinity forevermore. Ah! What an Eden of God’s glory it will be when judgment is given TO THE SAINTS of the Most High, when all the OVERCOMERS out of all the ages SIT WITH THE CHRIST OF GOD IN HIS THRONE even as He overcame and

is set down with His Father in His throne; when SAVIOURS shall come up on MOUNT ZION to judge the house of Esau (flesh) and the Kingdom shall be the Lord's (Obadiah 21). Then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Then shall all things in heaven and in earth be reconciled and gathered together into one in Christ. Then shall God be All-in-all.

The firstborn Son said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. I have glorified Thee on the earth: and now, O Father, glorify Thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (Jn. 17:1-5). To "glorify" God means that man's total expression of life would emit the very presence and effulgence of God. An illustration of what it means to glorify God can be seen in the simple incandescent light bulb. Screw it into the socket and the invisible electrons flowing through it are transformed into the light and heat energy that causes the halo of light. The bulb is glorifying the invisible electricity making it visible and beneficent to mankind. The sons of God are thus ordained to glorify the Father, emitting His presence, revealing His character, manifesting in a visible way His invisible glory.

John Wesley, it is recorded, was one day preaching in a rough neighborhood of London, where raucous and vulgar sensualities were in command, when two ruffians appeared at the edge of the crowd. "Who is this preacher?" they asked, roughly. "What right has he to come here spoiling our fun? We'll show him!" A moment or two later, each with a stone in hand, they began elbowing their belligerent way through the throng. But just when they were ready to "let fly" at Wesley's face, he began talking about the power of Christ to change the lives of sinful men. In that instant something dramatic happened. Even as he was speaking a serene beauty, a celestial glow spread over his face. The two men, obviously quite overcome by this unusual radiance of glory, stood there momentarily, their arms poised in mid-air. Then one turned to the other, and said, "He ain't a man Bill; he ain't a man." Their arms came down. The stones dropped from their hands. As Wesley continued to preach, the altered expressions on their countenances spoke of the softness that had stolen into their hearts. The sermon over, Mr. Wesley began making his way through the crowd. The path that the people respectfully opened for him brought him within arms length of where these tough boys were standing. One of them, almost tenderly, reached out and touched the evangelist's coat. At that, Mr. Wesley paused, placed his hands on the heads of the lads, and said, "God bless you, my boys!" As he passed on, one of the ruffians turned to the other, and said, "He is a man, Bill; he is a man. He's a man like God!" We hallow God's name by living and walking and shining as God's sons in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

We are all aware, I believe, that in each of us there are areas where God's name is not hallowed, where God's name is still taken in vain, where He has not written His name. No matter how we try to arrange every step of our lives to express Him, there is a fatal weakness, a flaw that somehow makes us miss the mark. When we say, "Father, there is no area in my life that I'm not willing to let you deal with me about, that I am unwilling to submit to your judgments" — that is saying, "Hallowed be Thy name!" When we pray that way, and mean it, we discover that God will walk into the dark closets of our life where the odor is sometimes too much for us, even us, to stand and clean them out and straighten them up and make them fit for His dwelling.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Jesus said. All death is not the same death. Many think that when the scriptures speak of death they always refer to the death of the body. The truth is, in the New Testament death only occasionally speaks of the death of the physical body. When Jesus says that we must take up

our cross and follow Him, He does not mean that we all must be martyrs, laying down our bodies to fly away to heaven. Jesus died physically on the cross, the symbol and the pattern of the death of old Adam. But Adam in us is not crucified by hanging on an outward, wooden cross. Paul says, "Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth..." (Col. 3:5). Paul said, "I die daily." He said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In none of these passages is he talking about leaving this body and going to some far-off heaven somewhere; he's talking about dying to that outward, that external, that realm of appearances, that natural, that physical, that human, that carnal realm of old Adam's life. That's why he's saying, "To die is gain." There is no gain in going to the cemetery, but to die to the carnal mind is to gain the mind of Christ. To die to the natural is to gain the spiritual. To die to the Adam nature is to gain the divine nature. God gives us the opportunity every day to die. Are we taking up our cross and following Him to mount Calvary? "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The death of the cross was the death that was reserved for criminals and for the vilest of men. What would you think of a person who had a gold chain about their neck with a pendant of an electric chair on it? Or a hangman's gallows? Or a guillotine? Or a gas chamber? Or a hypodermic needle? "How gross, how repugnant, how macabre, how gruesome, how insensitive," you say. "How terrible to think that anyone's mind is that death oriented!" Let me tell you something, my beloved — in the day of Christ the cross was an instrument of execution, no different than the gas chamber or the electric chair today. It was the place where criminals were put to death. And Jesus said we are to deny ourselves and take up our cross — our gas chamber, our electric chair, or hangman's noose — and follow Him. It's a place of execution. It's the place where you are brought to your extremity, where old Adam reaches his final catastrophe.

The church world knows very little of these great truths of which I now write. The church world understands very little of the depths of Jesus Christ. They are too busy seeking to be blessed, to be protected, kept, provided for, watched over, pampered, healed, delivered and to go to heaven when they die, or meeting Jesus in the air. Those are their great and consuming concerns. They want to get others saved, too, so they can be blessed and go to heaven when they die. But when it comes to laying your life down, being broken and melted before God, taking up your cross and being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, the church world for the most part has never even spoken of it. They have no idea of what this really means.

My surname was inherited from my father; I didn't choose it. Much of my natural constitution, also, is not of my own making. It is inherited — including my small stature, bald head, and premature graying. To a great extent, in the natural, I am what my parents made me. I am known by their name and have sometimes been recognized, even in far-away places with strange-sounding names, as an Eby because of my physical features. I bear a facial, and sometimes a behavioral, resemblance. This bearing of the family name involves a certain responsibility on my part. I must seek to honor my parent's name. I must not hold it unworthily. Either my behavior must be consistent with what my name stands for, or I must be responsible enough to change my name. This is exactly what we mean when we pray the great prayer, "Our Father...hallowed be Thy name!" If He is your Father, you are His son or daughter and you bear His name. Creation looks to you as God's son, and men hope to observe in you the family characteristics of God. At one time or another, we've all heard it said of someone, "He's just like his father." That is the witness that must be given of every son of God. In the words of the popular country-western song:

I'm seein' my father in me,
I guess that's how it's meant to be;
And I find I'm more and more like him each day.
I notice I walk the way he walks,
I notice I talk the way he talks,
I'm startin' to see my father in me.

God's name has been conferred on us, not by virtue of our imitating God, or keeping certain rules or regulations, but by virtue of our birth into the God-family. The story goes that a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village saw an old man sitting by a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one of the visitors asked, "Were any great men born into this village?" Without looking up the old man replied, "No, only babies." The greatest men were once babies. The greatest saints were once toddlers in the things of the Spirit. Saints are born to become sons of God, but become such only after the divine process has been completed.

We hear of the new birth and think we understand it. Faintly we hear the truths of sonship and imagine we are already sons of God. We have seen through a glass darkly, but face to face we behold all things as they really are. The mists that have hung like shrouds upon the distant majestic peaks are fleeing away before the rising sun of righteousness that we may know as we are known. In the true and eloquent words of another: "Believers of all ages have sold themselves woefully short on all the great promises of God. We have been content to say that every believer was born again and needed but to wait until some distant day when he would fly away to heaven either by death or by rapture. I remember seeing this sign vividly portrayed by the public highway: Except a man be born again, he CANNOT GO TO HEAVEN. That statement, I fear, has been the sum and substance of Christian belief, but we have missed the true meaning of the truth given to Nicodemus so long ago. To be born from above is to be BORN FROM A HIGHER REALM. Spirit is higher than flesh even though both should grow together in one body. To be born of the flesh is one thing, for there you are born into a natural realm capable only of partaking of natural things. But to be born of the Spirit is to be born into a new and higher realm where the eternal things are clearly seen before us even as natural things are seen by the natural man. Without the birth from above it is impossible to see the Kingdom of God, for natural men have not been given the power to see spiritual things.

"The realm of the new birth is the REALM OF SONSHIP. It is the realm where Jesus Christ, the Son of God, LIVED AND MOVED AND HAD HIS BEING. Not that He was born again, for he had never sinned nor died and needed not the regeneration of ordinary men. But He lived and moved in the realm of sonship full and complete. He walked out the full potential of birth into the family of God. He lived and moved in the realm of the Kingdom which He came to proclaim and which for three years or more He demonstrated in the earth. As Moses led Israel to Kadesh Barnea where they could actually see the promised land but through unbelief turned back to the wilderness, so Jesus led the whole world to a sort of spiritual Kadesh Barnea where the glory of the Kingdom came into full view only to be lost sight of in a spiritual wilderness in which we have wandered for almost two thousand years. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived in a realm above and beyond the realm of ordinary men, for while we have lived as sons of men, He lived as the Son of God. While we have been from beneath, He was from above. While our kingdoms have been of the earth, He was not from hence. While this is undeniably true to any honest man, yet, praise be to the eternal purpose of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became the Son of man that we who were born sons of men might become sons of God" — end quote.

How wonderful are these things! They are far beyond our expression or the ability of the most eloquent to describe! It is a marvelous fact that the very life of God is communicated to the believing heart via the new birth. But what is the life of God? It is the content of God and God Himself. All that is in God and all that God Himself is are the life of God. All the fullness of the Godhead is hidden in the life of God. The nature of God is contained in the life of God — His wisdom, knowledge, will, power and glory. Every facet of what God is and can do, is included in the life of God. With any kind of living thing, all that it is rests within its life. All its capabilities and functions issue out of its life, and all of its outward activities and expressions originate from its life. It is that kind of living thing because it has that kind of life. Its being rests in its life. God is the supreme living Being, and all that He is, of course, is in His life. All that He is — whether truth, holiness, light or love — is derived from His life. All His expressions — whether goodness, righteousness, mercy or judgment — are derived from His life. His life causes Him to have such divine capabilities and functions inwardly, and such divine actions and expressions outwardly. The reason that He is such a glorious and powerful God is that He has such a glorious and powerful life. Hence His being God rests in His life.

Oh, to be able to grasp the greatness of our calling! We have been born again of the very life of God! When we have matured and God has brought us experientially to the full potential of His life in us, there will be nothing impossible to us. We will even have creative powers. We will be creators! Can your faith go this far? If we are born of God we are born of the life of the Creator. This is the life that Jesus lived and demonstrated. Twice out of a few rolls of bread and a couple fish, He created enough food to feed five thousands of people, and He said we would do the same. “The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do...” I want to know the life of this God! I want to know experientially the power He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. I want to know and experience all His holiness, righteousness, love, power and goodness. To this end I seek to completely surrender myself to Him and I am asking Him for grace to be able to do this.

Gracious Son of God, reveal the Father to us in a way we have not known before! Make us overcomers, that you may be able to write the name of your God, the Father’s name, the name of the city of your God, and your new name, on our foreheads. God is in the process of preparing a people FOR HIS NAME — a company that will bear His name, that will be called by His name, those who know His name and will hallow His name in all the earth. To these the Son reveals the name of His Father, He reveals the Father unto them. They will bear the name of Yahweh for they will be filled with His fullness and they will do His works, for the fullness of His power and understanding and nature will be in them. He will be in them in the measure that He was in Jesus, and will speak His words and do His works through them. They will be like His first-begotten Son, they will be conformed to His image, the express image of His person.

Jesus, the Son, knew the Father and He was the only one in His day who did. The Lord said to the religious, as He undoubtedly says to the religious today, “...ye say that He is your God; yet ye have not known Him; but I KNOW HIM and keep His saying” (Jn. 8:54-55). “As the Father knoweth me, even so KNOW I THE FATHER” (Jn. 10:15). The first-begotten Son knew the Father and it is this knowledge He imparts to the rest of His brethren, that they also may know the Father, and knowing Him, shall reveal Him unto creation. All creation waits for this manifestation of the sons of God. For two thousand years creation has continued to wait for this manifestation, but the time of their waiting is fast drawing to a close. The hour is at hand. The Spirit has spoken this from one end of the earth to the other through the mouths of His holy prophets in this our generation. It is a sure word. It has been attended by mighty dealings and processings of God in the lives of those who have received the call to sonship. In the fullness of time, “...the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits” (Dan.

11:32). We will be this people "...if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. 6:3). Father, grant it to be so. Amen.

There is a Jewish story in which rabbi Nahman once asked rabbi Isaac to bless him as they were saying good-bye. Rabbi Isaac replied: "Let me give you a parable. A man traveled a long way in the desert. He felt hungry, weary and thirsty, when suddenly he came upon a tree filled with sweet fruits, covered with branches that provided delightful shade, and watered by a brook that flowed nearby. The man rested in the tree's shade, ate of its fruits, and drank its water. When he was about to leave, he turned to the tree and said, 'O tree, beautiful tree, with what shall I bless you? Shall I wish that your shade be pleasant? It is already pleasant. Shall I say that your fruits should be sweet? They are sweet. Shall I ask that a brook flow by you? A brook does flow by you. Therefore I will bless you this way: May it be God's will that all the shoots taken from you be just like you.'" Ah, that is it! We bless God, we glorify God, we hallow the name of God by being like Him, the radiance of His nature, power, and glory in the earth. This is how God Himself is blessed. And this is most truly what we mean when we pray as the firstborn Son has taught us to pray: "Our Father...hallowed be Thy name!"

Chapter 11

Hallowed Be Thy Name

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name...” (Mat. 6:9).

A name, in our modern usage, is a mere sign, badge, or title by which we call a person — a means of identification. It has no significance except to distinguish that person from everyone else. It does not tell us anything about a man, except that he exists as a person and is himself, not someone else. His character, his exploits, his attainments in life, his history, are not contained in his name. It is a mere mark of identity, and no more. But it was quite different in Bible days, and more especially among the Semitic peoples. In the Old Testament there is abundant evidence that names were looked upon as very sacred and pregnant words.

There is not much meaning in our modern names. “Edgar” means a javelin to protect property, though few Edgars own a javelin, and many of them no real estate. “Irene” means peace, but I have personally known Irenees who had little inner peace, they were often upset, frustrated and miserable. As for our surnames, they have been so changed by the years that they are now only a tag by which the mail carrier marks us off from our neighbors. The name “Eby” is, we have reason to believe, an ancient Celtic name, but previously was spelled Ebi or Ebee, and is now sometimes spelled Ebe or Eaby — and who today knows what it could mean? Most of our names originally came from one of four sources. A name may have come from a characteristic that an individual had. He could run very good, so he got the name Swift. He was sloppy, so he got the name Hoag. He was shrewd, so he got the name Fox. Sometimes men got named by virtue of where they lived. There was a fellow by the name of John and when somebody was asking for him, and another person knew him, he said, “Oh, yes, that’s John — he lives over the brook; so he got the name Overbrook. Or there was a guy named George. “Oh, yes, we know him — he lives at the water; so he became known in the course of time as George Atwater. Sometimes we got named by virtue of our father’s name. You see, men did not always have second names — that’s relatively recent in history. There was a man by the name of John and he had a son. People said, “Oh, yes, that’s John’s son, or that’s Ander’s son, or that’s Robbin’s son,” so we got names like Johnson, Anderson and Robbinson. At other times we got names by virtue of the trade in which men worked: Cook, Taylor (tailor), Smith, etc.

Biblically, names had the concept of describing some characteristic of an individual which set that individual apart from other individuals. The idea of a name was to express as dramatically as possible the nature or characteristic of the bearer. In this connection there can be no separation whatsoever between a man’s name and what he is as a person. Some are said to have a “name of integrity,” while others are declared to have a “bad name.” In such instances “name” and “character” are one and the same. In the Bible the innermost being of a man is expressed in his name. Take Jacob, for instance. He starts life by holding on to his brother’s heel to keep him from emerging first from their mother’s womb. Then comes his opportunistic acquisition of his brother’s birthright in exchange for a bowl of lentils; and then the climax — deceiving his blind father Isaac to receive his blessing by posing as the first-born Esau.

Spurred on by his mother, who plots the deception, Jacob is an all-too-willing participant. He dresses up in goatskin so he will feel and smell like his brother, the hunter, and when asked who he is he lies and says, "I am Esau, your first-born." Even though the old man appears to have some doubt, the ploy works, and Jacob receives the blessing. This is why Esau declares of his conniving brother: "Is he not rightly named Jacob (Supplanter, Schemer, Deceiver, Trickster)? for he has supplanted me these two times" (Gen. 27:36). But in later years, after wrestling with the angel of the Lord he underwent a change of attitude and an alteration of character that was accompanied by a change of name. Having seen the "face" or nature of God he was no longer the same man that he had been before his encounter with the Lord. Since name and character are absolutely identical there had to be a change in Jacob's appellation. The angel of Yahweh, therefore, said, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28). There is a feeling that one's name actually possesses a certain power over its bearer because it cannot be separated from the essence of his personality. In the name Nabal, the husband of Abigail, is found the expression of his essential character. Seeking to excuse him she says, "As his name is, so is he! Nabal (fool) is his name, and folly is with him" (II Sam. 22:25).

"To him that overcometh will I give...a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). "Him that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God...and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12). "And they shall see His face (nature); and His name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:4). A new name bespeaks of a change of nature in those He is dealing with. But God has also revealed the various sides of His own nature and character through His names. At the beginning of history God revealed Himself by the name Elohim, the plural of Eloah meaning strength, might. This name reveals the plurality in God, His many-sided wisdom, His diverse attributes, powers, and abilities displayed like the colors of the spectrum through the unique expression of each of His multitudinous offspring — His sons and daughters, the body of Christ, the family of God, or the God-family. In the name Elohim God has revealed Himself first as Creator and second as a plural God.

Then when Abraham came along God revealed Himself as El Shaddai, the almighty, the all-sufficient. El Shaddai means literally "the breasted one" or "the one who has breasts." We never thought of God as having breasts, but He revealed Himself to Abraham in this way as the nourisher, the One from whom he could suck and draw strength. This enabled Abraham and Sarah to have Isaac when they were past age for having children. Abraham was a hundred years old and Sarah was ninety when they had their baby.

God later revealed Himself to Moses, not as Elohim, not as El Shaddai, but He made Himself known to Moses as Yahweh, which generally is pronounced in English as Jehovah. Yahweh was the lawgiver. Yahweh was a stern God, the One who commands and says, "Do it, or you die." Yahweh was a warring God, the Lord of hosts (armies). Then, of course, when Jesus came we have a combination of all these, for in Him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Finally, after Jesus, comes all of us. The question follows — Who are we going to reveal?

THE NAME IS THE NATURE

The name of God is more than a group of syllables or a configuration of letters of the alphabet. It is the meaning of the name that is most truly the name. It is His nature and His character revealed to us. The names of God reveal all that God IS, all that God HAS and all

that God can DO. So when we pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," we ask that our idea, our understanding of God's nature, power and glory may be purified and made more true; that we may be delivered from unworthy conceptions and false notions of God, from superstitious beliefs and folklore learned from religion; that there may be nothing in our thought of Him and the living out of His life in us which shall cast any reflection on Him, that is beneath His glorious and eternal reality; that He may become more and more known to us and His nature loved by us and fulfilled within us.

George Wylie wrote some years ago: "In His high priestly prayer, recorded in John 17, twice the Son of God said that He had manifested and declared the Father's name unto those the Father had given Him. 'I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to me; and they have kept Thy word' (Jn. 17:26). Also in the last verse of this prayer He said, 'And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' If we examine these two verses closely we will see something that may have escaped our notice previously. First of all the Lord said, 'I have manifested Thy name unto the men Thou gavest me...and they have kept Thy word.' Part of the Word He gave them was the Father's name, and this was the Word they kept. Now notice the importance of the Father's name. 'Holy Father, keep through THINE OWN NAME those whom THOU HAST GIVEN ME.' It is through the name of the Father that we are kept. There is power in the name of God to keep us from evil and the evil one, and it was through the power of this name that the Son asked His Father to protect and keep those the Father had given Him. Then He said, 'And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it...' Now notice the result of His declaring unto them the Father's name — 'That the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' It would seem from these words that the fullness of the love of God being in us, and the Son Himself dwelling in us, is commensurate with the fullness of our knowledge of the Father's name. 'I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' How much do we really know God's name?

"I would like to quote these verses from some other translations. Most translations, as well as the Aramaic and Greek, in which these scriptures were originally written, say 'name' — but Goodspeed renders it this way, 'I have revealed your real self unto the men you gave me from the world...I have made yourself known to them and will still do so.' Phillips says something similar, 'I have shown yourself to the men whom you gave me out of the world...I have made yourself known to them and I will continue to do so that the love which you had for me may be in their hearts.' It would appear from these scriptures that there is some connection between knowing the name of God and knowing God Himself, and having His love in our hearts. I don't think it was because the disciples were ignorant of what God's name was, that is, the form of His name in letters. How could they be? For it was written in the Old Testament scriptures thousands of times: so how could they not have known what the name of God was? There must be a difference in knowing what the name of God IS, and knowing His name. This may sound strange, but I will try to explain.

"There are many things said about those who know the name of God. For instance, 'Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high because he hath KNOWN MY NAME' (Ps. 91:14). Would this promise apply to all who merely knew what His name was? The children of Israel all knew what God's name was, but because of their sins and iniquities they were cast down, chastised by the Lord, and given over into the hands of their enemies to be tormented. But then God spoke comfort to them, and told them the days of their chastisement were over. By their sinful ways they had caused His name to be blasphemed among the Pagans, but now God was going to exalt His name and His people

would know what His name really meant, when He had delivered them from their bondage. 'Yes, Yahweh says this: You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money. Yes, Yahweh says this: Once my people went down to Egypt to settle there, then the Assyrians bitterly oppressed them. But now what is there for me here? — it is Yahweh who speaks — all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. My people will therefore KNOW MY NAME; that day they will understand that it is I who say, 'I am here' (Isa. 52:3-6, Jerusalem Bible). In that day when God had delivered them from the bondage of their enemies, having redeemed them by His great power, they would know His name. They would know what His name meant, and know Him experientially in the meaning of His name. They would know the power that was in the name of Yahweh. They knew what His name was, but they did not know experientially the reality of it. This is what we need to know. The disciples knew what God's name was, the scriptures were full of it, but it took the Son to manifest and declare to them the name of the Father that they might know His name, and knowing it, they would come to the knowledge of God Himself.

"I will now quote a few more verses where God emphasized His name. 'Sing unto God, sing praises to His name, extol Him that rideth upon the heavens by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him' (Ps. 68:4). YAH is the short form of Yahweh. The Hebrews did the same thing we do, we shorten some names such as Joe for Joseph, Sue for Susan, Bev for Beverly and so on. They often used just EL for Elohim, ADON for Adonay, and YAH for Yahweh. 'I am Yahweh; that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images' (Isa. 42:8). 'Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know. I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is Yahweh' (Jer. 16:21). To know His name is to know His might, His power and majesty. 'And Yahweh shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Yahweh, and His name one' (Zech. 14:9). The Son of God came and manifested and declared His Father's name unto His own, in fulfillment of the prophecy given in Psalm 22:22, 'I will declare Thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.' God wants His people to know His name, and to know Him; this is why Jesus came and manifested His Father's name. To know His name is to know Him, and to know Him, the only true God, is life eternal. It is blessed to know His name. There are great benefits promised to those who know and love His name. 'The name of Yahweh is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe' (Prov. 18:10). 'And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee; for Thou, Yahweh, has not forgotten them that seek Thee' (Ps. 9:10)" — end quote.

When it is said, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God," the meaning is not that they will recall the letters or pronunciation of the word YAHWEH, but that their confidence can be strengthened and maintained by reflecting upon what God has taught and proven concerning Himself, which is also contained in the meaning of His name. When it is said, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee," it does not mean that those who know the word YAHWEH will put their trust in Him, for multitudes have known that name and have never walked in confidence in God; but whoever has that idea of God that He Himself by His dealings and teachings has made known to us in our lives, will trust in Him. This name we are not left to find out for ourselves, for from the first it has been the care of God to spell out Himself to us.

There are many names and descriptive titles of God in the scriptures. He is called Counselor, King, Shepherd, Rock, Shield, High Tower, Strong Arm, and many, many others. Someone has said that there are about two hundred names for God in the Bible. The moment one begins to splinter the absolute wholeness that God is, to examine all His multi-faceted aspects and attributes, the number of splinters are as infinite as God is infinite. Each name of God, as He

progressively revealed Himself, was a fresh and fuller revelation of the nature of God. One was a revelation of His might, another was the unveiling of His grace. One revealed something more of His wisdom, another of His holiness, another of His tenderness, and yet another of His judgment.

In I Samuel 18:30 we read, “Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.” They were not esteeming the letters in his name nor the pronunciation of the name. They were not writing “DAVID” in large and beautiful characters on some enormous banner and stretching it over the main street of Jerusalem. The fact that his name was esteemed meant he himself and his triumphs were esteemed. We say today, “So-and-so has made a name for himself; So-and-so has a good name.” We mean that there is something good and honorable about his character — worthy of our praise. David is said to have “behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by (precious).” God told him, “I have made thee a great name like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth” (II Sam. 7:9). When an Old Testament writer wished to forcibly express the determining qualities of a man, he said he shall be called “So-and-so,” as when Jerusalem, after it has been purged from unrighteousness, shall be called “the city of righteousness” (Isa. 1:26); and the Messiah shall be called “Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6), meaning that HE ACTUALLY WILL BE THESE THINGS. Thus the name of God means the character, qualities, attributes of God — that which makes Him what He is in Himself, and in His manifestation to man.

“I will set him on high because he has known my name” (Ps. 91:14). To know His name is to become, in union with Him, the name-nature of God in an every-hour, every-day reality. To know His name is to enter into the pure inner life of God, and exude His nature, His life, His character, being one with Him. To know means more than mere intellectual understanding or carnal knowledge. It means intimate “union” as when “Adam knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain” (Gen. 4:1). Some people think because they use or pronounce El Elyon, Yahweh, or Yahshua and all the others they have dug out of the concordance, that this makes the use of these names magical, procures favor with God, or is a mark of spirituality. People without a revelation from the Lord, or participation in His life, are disposed to go back and use the “letter” of that given to past generations of men of God. Let me quote Psalm 9:10 again: “And they that know Thy name will put their trust in thee.” The message is clear: “They that have experienced the inworking, the development and formation of Thy nature will confidently trust in Thee.” If this has not been your experience yet — that is, the inworking and formation of His nature within — then you do not yet know the name of the Lord though you may be zealous to consistently use the words Yahshua, Yahweh, and all the other name forms in the Hebrew Bible.

“After this I will return, and build again the tabernacle of David...that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the nations, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord” (Acts 15:16-17). The “name” here means a surname. That is the precise meaning of the Greek word EPIKALEOMAI used in this passage. Correctly translated it says, “That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the nations, upon whom my surname is called.” The nations have been surnamed! Surname is from two Greek words, EPI and KALEO. EPI means “upon”, and KALEO means “called”. EPI means identification, as in the laying on of hands on or upon a person, designating them for some special purpose or blessing. God has chosen to identify with us and bring us into relationship with Himself and He has placed His name upon us — has surnamed us. Surname, by definition, is “a family name as distinguished from a given name; a last name.” God came and surnamed us, gave us His family name. We have an altered name,

indeed, a NEW NAME! God altered Abram's name, Sarai's name, and Jacob's name and they got a new nature. It was only after Abram's and Sarai's name change that they gave birth to Isaac, the promised seed. And it was only after Jacob's name change that he fathered Joseph and Benjamin. You won't birth nobility or kings or a "son of the right hand" until you get altered — surnamed. I meet a lot of folks I would like to alter. You may have a husband, a wife, children, boss, neighbor or mother-in-law you would like to alter. And you are probably an expert on all the ways they need to be altered! But I do not hesitate to tell you, precious friend of mine, that only God can alter anyone — only God can call His name over a man, woman, or child, only God can give a surname, a new name, a new nature.

The scripture declares that "the name of Yahweh is a strong tower." There are many precious revelations coming forth these days concerning the names of God, and the depth of meaning therein. Some immediately get caught up with an emphasis on the mechanics — the spelling, syllables, and pronunciation of the names — dealing with the outward or "letter" of the Word. But it is the "letter" that killeth — that is, there is no life in those things. They strike no chord deep in my spirit. In fact, they leave me somewhat cold and uninspired. The "spirit" of the Word gives life. The spirit is the substance, the reality of His nature that the outward name reveals. As Ray Prinzing has so aptly written: "Of this we are certain, there is a walk that is 'not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth LIFE' (II Cor. 3:6). When certain truths are set down as a doctrine, and one receives only the letter thereof, it does not serve to gender life within, it only becomes one more burden to bear, adding to the load of traditions and commandments. But when the Spirit of God illumines the inner man, quickens the heart to receive that Word of Life within, it is not some doctrine to contend for, but it is a LIFE TO BE LIVED."

Now listen — we have people today who will not call God anything but Yahweh. There are other people who only call God Jehovah. We have people today who refuse to call the Son of God Jesus, they call Him Yahshua — and that is His name in Hebrew. But that is not what is important. It is not important what the Hebrew form of a name is, or what the Greek form of a name is, or what the English form of a name is. Whether we say Petros, Pedro, Pierre or Peter — all these names are the same name in different languages, have the same meaning, and point to the same reality — a man whose character is that of a ROCK. It is important to learn what names mean. What is important is that we partake of the nature that the name is conveying. And so we need to know the name of God. We need to know the name of God because it reveals to us a side of God's nature. You see, there are different sides to all of us. I have one side as a minister of the Gospel. I have another side as a husband. I have another side as a father. I have another side as a grandfather. I have another side as a citizen of the United States of America. I have another side as a son of God. We have different sides to our reality. My wife calls me by my name as a husband — she calls me "Honey". My children call me by my name as a father — they call me "Daddy". My grandchildren call me by my name as a grandparent — they call me "Grandpa". Many of the Lord's people address me as a fellow member of the body of Christ — they call me "Brother". So we need to know what the name (nature) of the Lord is, because the name (nature) of the Lord is a strong tower. A strong tower is a defense. You run into a strong tower and you are safe, you are defended by that name.

If you know the nature of God and you become a partaker of that divine nature, there is a safety built into your makeup because you have run into or you have become identified with the name of God. A tower has height, a tower carries you heavenward. A tower is not a military bunker — if you run into a tower and climb the heights of that tower you are lifted above all the dangers arrayed below. That's what the name of the Lord does for us. When we know that name, becoming partakers of that nature, it elevates us in our outlook, perspective,

understanding, consciousness and state of being. It raises us up experientially into a higher dimension. It lifts us to a higher level of faith, trust and confidence, because we stand in His name. Knowing the word YAHWEH will not do this for you, but knowing the nature of Yahweh will! I'm not interested that you should learn the correct form and pronunciation — whether it be, as various scholars argue, Yahweh, Yahveh, Yahvah, Yehovah, Jehovah, or quite a number of other forms that are hyped as the “correct” Hebrew form. The best known, Yahweh, is only one among many. There is no value in wrangling over letters of the alphabet or ancient vowel sounds. There is no purpose in it. There is no spirituality in it. There is no profit in it. Our language is not Hebrew. I doubt if more than one or two persons among the thousands who read these writings each month actually speak Hebrew. There is no change of nature for you should you learn it, and all the names of God in Hebrew. And yet we have men and movements that place great emphasis upon names today — spelling them correctly, pronouncing them right. To which I respond — “Who cares?” That's not important. Furthermore, it is natural, carnal, fleshly. What is important is that you understand what the name stands for and partake of the nature that the name stands for. “And they that know Thy name — Thy nature — will put their trust in Thee.” You don't learn this name, this nature, from listening to sermons or reading printed messages. Those things are profitable — for we must hear the truth. But we must not only hear, we must receive a revelation of truth and follow on to experience truth.

“For God will save Zion...that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it: and they that love His name shall dwell therein” (Ps. 69:35-36). Those that love His name shall inherit and dwell in Zion, saith the Lord. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that we are not only come to “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” but we also are come “to mount Zion.” But what is mount Zion? To correctly unlock this expression we need to go back and consider the shadow. Israel was the whole nation; Jerusalem, the capital city. And while the government was seated in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem comprised all the ruling class, yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king. The fortress of David the king was on mount Zion. His was the highest pinnacle of glory attainable. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true mount Zion unto which we are come, for the prophet declares, “For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Ps. 132::13-14). And Paul tells us, “for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them” (II Cor. 6:16). David was king over natural Israel. Christ is king over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells in the spiritual Zion. And this spiritual Zion is composed of those who have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in the heavenly Jerusalem: those who, like king Saul of old, are head and shoulders above all others: those who have followed their Lord all the way to Calvary. These are those of whom it is written: “And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name (nature) written in their foreheads. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (Rev. 14:1,4). When you follow the Lamb He leads you to mount Calvary, the place of death. But from Calvary He leads you to glory and exaltation upon mount Zion! Spiritual Zion is the “little remnant,” the ones who have attained the highest pinnacle of attainment in the spiritual realm, the overcomers who sit with Christ upon His throne and rule and reign over all things in the Kingdom of God. And you can only attain to this reality of Zion by loving the name of the Lord!

“Because he hath known my name, I will show him my salvation.” Are you interested in knowing the name of God? When you truly come to the name of the Lord, God will show you His salvation. The word for salvation is YEHOSHUA. “My salvation” is “my Yehoshua.”

Translated into English “Yehoshua” is JESUS. “Because he hath known my name, I will show him my Jesus.” When you know the nature of the Lord you will SEE JESUS! Jesus is the salvation of the Lord. That is the meaning of His name. He came in the nature and power of God’s salvation. He is the mighty Deliverer. He is the mighty Saviour. That is His name. That is His nature. Whether you call Him Jesus or Yahshua — until you meet Him as the mighty Saviour you have missed His name altogether. Millions of people repeat the name “Jesus” or “Yahshua” and yet know nothing of His wonderful name — His nature. They know the pronunciation of His name in a language, but they have never experienced Him in His name.

YAHWEH

The name Yahweh is derived from the Hebrew verb HAVAH meaning “to be,” or “being”. This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb CHAVAH which means “to live” or “life”. One can readily see the connection between being and life. Thus, Yahweh means “the self-existent One” or “the eternal”. He is the One who in Himself possesses essential life, permanent existence, derived from no source other than Himself and absolutely dependent upon no other person or thing for its continuance. Any being whose existence is dependent in any manner upon another, or upon conditions such as food, light, air, etc., or even upon some cosmic influence, is not SELF-EXISTENT. This quality inhered originally in Yahweh alone, as it is written, “The Father hath life in Himself” (Jn. 5:26). That means that His existence is not a derived one, nor a sustained one; not derived from anything nor dependent upon anything, but inherent and eternal within Himself. God did not get His life from any ancestor, nor did He have to eat a hamburger today to keep up His strength. The verbs “to be” and “to live” from which the name Yahweh comes denote both essential life and a state of being. Hence, God is not only eternal Himself, but all His nature, characteristics and attributes are as eternal and unchanging as is His life!

Anything that is absolutely eternal is not only unending, but is also UNCHANGEABLE. Anything that changes in any way is not eternal, for in the change some characteristic is left behind and a new one acquired. In every change something ends and something else begins. That which dwells in an eternal state knows NO CHANGE. Change is possible only in that which is limited, imperfect, or undeveloped. Yahweh declares of Himself, “I am Yahweh, I CHANGE NOT” (Mal. 3:6), and the inspired apostle says of Him, “with Whom there is NO VARIABleness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). God is never surprised. God has not learned anything this week, nor last year, nor in the last several trillion years. If God learned one thing today, it would destroy Him. He would no longer be the omniscient One who knows the end from the beginning, nor the omnipotent One who has planned and ordained it all, for known unto God are all His works from the creation of the world. God does not experiment. God does not become stronger, wiser, mightier, or increase Himself in any way. He CHANGES NOT. He eternally is all that He is without any decrease or increase or fluctuation whatsoever. Therefore He is the ETERNAL GOD — YAHWEH!

The origin and meaning of the name Yahweh are especially brought out in relation to Israel. When Moses at the burning bush says to God, “Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?” And God said unto Moses, “I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Ex. 3:13-14). The original of this name, I AM THAT I AM, is exactly the same as that of Yahweh — being, existence — and denotes the One who always has been, is, and always will be: personal, continuous, absolute existence.

“I AM THAT I AM” is Yahweh revealing what His name means — the UNCHANGEABLE One. In this name Yahweh is saying to the children of Israel, “What I am I always am. I never have been anything but what I am. I never will be anything other than what I am. What I was, I am. What I am, I shall be. I am what I am unchangeably, irrevocably and invariably! Tell the people of Israel that the eternal, self-existent, unchangeable One has sent you! Tell them that what I was to Abraham — I AM! What I was to Isaac — I AM! What I was to Jacob — I AM! What I was to Joseph — I AM! What I will be in the future, I ALREADY AM! And throughout all your days, in every situation and circumstance, even to the end of all times, when you shall seek my face and call upon me you will find that I will be, even then, WHAT I AM! Hallelujah! Long centuries later Yahweh spoke to the prophet Malachi these words: “I am Yahweh, I change not.” Of Him who came into the world as the embodiment and visible representation of Yahweh it is written, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

Jesus made a statement that the first Adam, in all of his glory, could never have made. He said, “For as the Father HATH LIFE IN HIMSELF; so hath He given to the Son to HAVE LIFE IN HIMSELF” (Jn. 5:25-26). LIFE IN HIMSELF! This is self-existent life, a life not derived from any source, not dependent upon any sustenance — inherent life! Thus Jesus could say, “I AM the LIFE!” No other man before Him could say that. But the exceeding great wonder of all is that not only did Jesus possess the self-existent life of God, but God has made Him to be “a life-giving Spirit.” Truly, “He that hath the Son HATH LIFE” and “this is the record that God HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is IN HIS SON” (I Jn. 5:11-12). Notice the result of having the Holy Spirit: “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. And if Christ be IN YOU —” the same life in you that was in Jesus when He walked this earth as a man — “the body is dead because of sin; but the SPIRIT IS LIFE because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:9-11). How plain. If the Spirit of Yahweh dwells in us, He imparts THE POWER TO COMMENCE ETERNAL, SELF-EXISTENT LIFE WITHIN US!

From the incorruptible seed of Christ, placed in the womb of the believing heart, comes forth that incorruptible New Creation which lives and abides forever. When John said, “He that hath the Son hath life,” he was speaking of that incorruptible life which Jesus is. When Jesus said, “He that believeth on me shall never die,” He was not teaching us merely of the possibility of extending our physical, Adamic existence for another thousand years so we would not go to the grave. He meant that He was planting an entirely NEW LIFE within this womb of flesh, even the incorruptible, self-existent life which He is. The life Jesus has made available is the life HE IS, the life of Yahweh, the abiding and unchangeable life of eternity.

How many of the Lord’s dear children understand not this one simple but sublime truth — they have within them the SELF-EXISTENT LIFE of God! How many weak and weary saints are constantly running around from meeting to meeting, from revival to revival, from conference to conference, from preacher to preacher, SEEKING LIFE. These precious souls are those who always need to receive some kind of “blessing”. Blessing seekers are yet babes. Certainly there is nothing wrong with being a babe — if one has been a babe for only a short time. Babies are so cute and cuddly — but they should grow up fast! You can always spot a babe in Christ because his whole world is on the outside. Babies are so weak and helpless. The baby is often in a mess, has colic, needs a diaper change, is too hot, or too cold, has a pain somewhere, is hungry or thirsty. In all these situations the one universally recognized fact about babies is that THEY CAN NEVER DO ANYTHING ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS THEMSELVES! The baby’s whole world is on the outside. He is totally dependent upon what others can and must do for him. Someone else must always be ministering to his

needs. If he gets changed, someone must change him. If he gets fed, someone must prepare the food and put it in his mouth. If he gets bathed, someone must do it for him. He is unable to solve any of his problems for himself, or secure any of his needs for himself. All must be ministered to from without. Thus we see that there are three characteristics that accompany babyhood: (1) The baby has more problems than most other folk (2) He is totally dependent upon others, unable to do anything for himself (3) When he has a need he lets it be known until someone comes and meets it. What a picture is this of the babes in Christ!

Baby Christians are believers who are always loaded down with problems. They are always sick, discouraged, depressed, frustrated, confused, offended, upset, worried, fearful, or... These are the ones who take up ninety percent of the ministers' time, strength and patience in most groups. You must constantly be praying for them, encouraging them, petting and pampering them, counseling them, delivering them, and lifting them up. These you will see answering every altar-call, standing in every prayer line, sitting in the chair in the center of the prayer circle, and following after every meeting, ministry, prophet, healer, or teacher where they may receive yet another "blessing" or "experience". These have the victory while everything is going good, when they are struck with some ecstatic spiritual experience, or when they receive a word of prophecy. But as soon as the "blessing" wears off they are so weak they can't make it without another spiritual "fix".

What's wrong with these folk? I will tell you! Their source of life is ON THE OUTSIDE! Being babes, they are not aware that all-sufficient, self-existent life dwells within them. They are unable to appropriate that life for themselves. Their senses have not been exercised to discern that HE THAT IS IN THEM IS GREATER than he that is in the world. They have not yet developed to that place of maturity where they know Christ as the substance of their inward life, their all-in-all, sufficient to conquer every enemy and transcend every problem within and without. And what a tragedy it is that so many preachers and churches keep their people perpetually on this baby level of existence by restricting their diet to "milk" and training their "babies" to always be need conscious, acknowledging their faults and limitations, and looking to the "pulpit" to be fed, encouraged, healed, delivered, pampered, taught and blessed.

God is raising up a people in this hour who are coming to know that they HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES! Let me present this glorious company of overcomers, even those who have life in themselves. They are strong. They are full of faith and the Holy Spirit. They have discovered the river of life flowing from deep within their own spirit, life full, abundant and victorious! They are never discouraged by any situation, nor upset by any circumstance, nor defeated by any test. They are constant — not "up" one day and "down" the next. They seldom have prayer requests, although it is perfectly alright to have prayer requests. They are always encouraging others, but never need to be encouraged themselves. They minister to many, but do not stop to be ministered to. They are not offended by what others say or do or fail to say or do. They are not petty, selfish, egotistical, or self-righteous. They are not depressed or "burdened". They are not fearful, worried or confused. They don't quit when the going gets rough. They don't talk about how "the old devil" has been after them all week! When trouble and testing comes they stand fast in confidence, waiting upon the Lord for direction, not blaming things on the devil or fighting the devil. They don't talk about their problems. They are not sad, sorrowful, or downcast. The Word of Christ dwells in them richly. They have been given a new song, even praise to their God! They walk in wisdom and understanding, in faith in the faithfulness and purposes of God. They rejoice in expectation of the glory of God. They always have the victory, are always positive, always rejoicing in the Spirit.

What is the secret of these people's victory? I will tell you! **THEY HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES!** Only one who has life in himself can be an overcomer. There was One who perfectly walked in this realm and He overcame **ALL THINGS**. Upon Him rested the fullness of the Spirit of Yahweh, the spirit of self-existent life. Can you imagine Jesus, on the road to Samaria, sitting down on a rock and calling to Peter, James and John, saying, "Boys, I want you to come over here and pray for me. I really need to be ministered to today, I need help. Ever since we left Galilee the old devil has really been after me. This terrible fear and depression has hit me and I want you to lay your hands upon me and rebuke this thing. I think it started last week when the Father showed me that someone close to me is going to betray me. I've been so upset ever since. Some other things have been troubling me lately and this pain in my body isn't helping any. If I don't get the victory soon I won't be able to minister in Samaria, but I know it's just the old devil fighting me. I've got to get victory over this; boys, I need your help. Minister deliverance to me!" Do you think the disciples ever had to encourage Jesus, or lay hands upon Him, or counsel Him, or rebuke the devil from Him, or minister to Him? Jesus said, "The Son of man **CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO**, but to minister, and to give His life..." (Mat. 20:28). Jesus came not to receive life for **HE WAS LIFE**. He did not come to receive life but to **GIVE LIFE**. He **HAD LIFE IN HIMSELF** even as the Father had life in Himself. In that life was contained every element of victory, wisdom, knowledge, righteousness and power He could ever need. If He needed power the power was in the life that was in Him. If He needed encouragement the encouragement was in the life within. This is a nature and a life that is not dependent upon anything without, for it is self-existent life, un-derived life, un-sustained life, all-sufficient life, unchanging life, eternal life — the life of **YAHWEH!**

This is the life we now have in Christ and which Christ is within us. Nothing brings greater joy to my heart than seeing members of Christ's body growing up into the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, growing up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" that they "henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind." Oh, may the spirit of wisdom and revelation illumine our minds, giving a mighty revelation of the glorious and eternal reality of the **CHRIST WITHIN!**

THE NATURE OF GOD IN THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

The name of the Son of God is Jesus. That is His complete name. That is His correct name. That is His full name. The name of the eternal Word of God who stepped across the stars to the planet earth to be born in a stable in the village of Bethlehem, is Jesus. That is His complete, proper, full name. His name is Jesus. The angelic messenger appeared to the virgin girl Mary and announced, "Thou shalt call His name **JESUS**, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mat. 1:21). Someone says, "But the angel didn't say His name was to be Jesus because that's English — His name was given as Yahshua." Incorrect. The people in Galilee did not speak Hebrew in the time of Jesus. They spoke Aramaic. Undoubtedly the name was given to Mary in the language she understood. We know it in English as Jesus. And whatever language it is spoken in it still means the same thing, "the salvation of Yahweh" or "the salvation of the Lord." So when the mighty Gabriel appeared, he said, "Call the child that which will be descriptive or characteristic of what He is going to be and do. Call His name that which will describe His accomplishment." The messenger said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, or thou shalt call His name Saviour, **FOR** He shall save His people...call Him God's Salvation because He is the Son of God **MIGHTY TO SAVE.**"

Since He would be the salvation of Yahweh unto His people, call Him Saviour. Some of you are saying, "Now hold the fort, Eby; isn't His first name Lord and His last name Christ?" **NO!**

Neither Lord nor Christ is a name. It is important that we understand that. Christ is not a name. Christ is a position. Christ is an office. Christ is a title, as also is Lord. Christ is a description of an individual who holds a particular office. If I were to say to you, "What is the name of the man who holds the highest office in the United States of America," you would say, "His name is Bill Clinton." And if I said to you, "What is his office?" you would say, "President." You understand immediately that his name is distinct from his office. Now we might call him "Mr. President," but that's not his name, we're calling him by his office. His name is Bill Clinton; his office is President. When I speak to you about King, that is an office. When I speak to you about Prime Minister, that's an office. Christ is an office — it's not a name. Christ comes from the Greek "Christos" and means "anointed," or better, "THE anointed One." When we're talking about the Son of God, we're saying that His name is Jesus — Saviour. His office is Christ — the Anointed One. Jesus is the Christ, the anointed One of God. God has made this Jesus to be both LORD and CHRIST.

But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God...for as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness to spring forth before all nations" (Isa. 61:6,11). The inspired prophet summed up in one bold statement what it means to be a priest of God. "Ye shall be NAMED the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God." There is marvelous significance in that word "named". Named! You shall be NAMED the priests of the Lord. This passage forcefully reveals the great truth that all who would be priests of God MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF NATURE, to become priests by name, by nature, so that priesthood is not merely a title given to them but a nature lived out through them. If our spiritual minds can grasp the fact, to be NAMED the priests of the Lord means to be NATURED the priests of the Lord, to so be imbued with the priestly nature until we become a priest in our very state of being.

Jesus, when teaching His disciples in Matthew 5:38-48, said these words, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." In other words, give back to people exactly what you receive from them. This is the way of the human nature. If someone blacks your eye, then blacken his in return. This is what the human nature desires to do. In a Sunday School class the teacher had been teaching on the principles in the Sermon of the Mount, and she inquired of little Johnny, "Johnny, what would you do if Tommy slapped you on the right cheek?" He answered, "Teacher, I would turn the other one." And then as an afterthought he said, "But boy, if he hit that one, I would beat the stuffing out of him!" This little fellow was just being true to his human nature. Jesus went on to say, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel you to go with him a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh you, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn him not away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Ah, to act thus is contrary to human nature. The human nature wants to retaliate in the way it has been treated. If someone loves us and is gracious to us, we seek to requite their love and kindness; but if they strike us, we want to strike back. If they curse us we return the same to them. Jesus said, "It is easy to love those who love us, the publicans and sinners do that." But to love those who hate you and despitefully use you, that is something else! To be able from the heart, by nature to do those things that Jesus teaches us here is evidence of the possession of the divine nature. Not to so act as one under law or compulsion; but to so love

and forgive and bless because it is within our nature to do this — then we are getting somewhere in God! It requires a change of nature. It is not natural to be a priest, it is not according to the human nature to respond to the shortcomings, insults, injuries, sins and wretchedness of men with understanding, compassion, mercy and redemption.

Jesus continued, “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.” You see, God makes no difference; He is not a respecter of persons. He treats the evil man exactly the same as He treats the good. He is as gracious and kind to the hostile and belligerent as He is to the gentle and obedient. This is OUR FATHER! And we are His sons, those who share His nature, who think as He thinks and act as He acts. This is what it means to be named — NATURED — the priests of the Lord! Let us note in passing, the Authorized version says, “that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven.” The Greek word here is HUIOS meaning “sons,” mature sons, not little children. Mature sons are NATURED priests!

Paul Mueller adds these inspiring words: “When Moses came down from the mount with the tables of the law, the people had turned to idolatry. They made a golden calf and were worshipping that idol just like the heathen. The Lord then told Moses that He would not go with them. But Moses replied, ‘If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up thence.’ Moses continued to intercede for the people, so the Lord said, ‘I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.’” Did this mean that God would merely speak His name in the language of man? No, it meant much more than that. Moses was then called up into the mount to receive the second set of the tables of the law. The Lord then descended in a cloud ‘and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, Yahweh, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty’ (Ex. 34:5-7).

“Remember that the Hebrew word for ‘name’ implies ‘honor, authority and character.’ Therefore, when the Lord proclaimed His name to Moses, He was in fact imparting His authority and character to him. The Lord proclaimed Himself as being ‘merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.’

“These are characteristics of God that were imparted to Moses when the Lord proclaimed His name to him. When the Lord declares that He will proclaim His name to His chosen ones, He is in fact imparting His character and authority. After the Lord visited Moses, He gave him this solemn promise: ‘Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee’ (Ex. 34:10).

“The Lord’s promise to Moses was that He would do marvels, ‘such as have not been done in all the earth.’ The divine promise to the remnant in this day has been given, ‘Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and wonders’ (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:13). They are ‘men of wonder,’ sons made like unto Him who is the Branch (Zech. 3:8). To the remnant of this hour the Lord says, ‘I will declare Thy name unto my brethren.’ And when He declares His name to His brethren, who are of the company of the sons of God, they too receive His authority, His power and His character, just as Moses did. Then we shall be priests indeed, priests after the order of Melchizedek, having His characteristics of mercy, grace, forgiveness, longsuffering and an abundance of goodness and truth. The Lord shall indeed manifest

Himself through this company. As it was with Moses, so shall this remnant also manifest His power and His authority. They shall do the greater works our Lord promised (Jn. 14:12).

“The Lord gives this promise to the overcomers: ‘I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem...and I will write upon him my new name’ (Rev. 3:12). Realizing the awesome glory and power that was given to Moses by the Lord when He proclaimed His name to him, we can well understand the significance of ‘the name of my God’ which is to be written upon all who overcome. It is certainly not merely the Hebrew name of the Lord, nor is it a new spiritual name which some are now using. Rather, it is an impartation of His authority and character. Let us clearly understand the truth of God’s holy Word. When He proclaims or writes His name upon His elect, He is in fact imparting to them His honor, His authority, His characteristics and His power.

“When the prodigal son returned to father’s house, he was given the best robe, shoes on his feet, and a ring on his finger (Lk. 15:22). The ring which the father gave his repentant son represented the father’s authority. The prodigal son represents the repentant remnant who are returning all the way home to carry on the work of the Father’s Kingdom. Just as in the parable, so our Father is in the process of putting the best robe on His sons, the shoes of the true gospel of peace on their feet, and the royal ring of authority on their finger. This robe is the new robe of the righteousness and life of Christ, the garment of His full salvation (Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:4). The new shoes of the Kingdom represent the gospel of peace and reconciliation for all (Eph. 6:15; II Cor. 5:18-19). It is ‘the everlasting gospel’ (Rev. 14:6), which is the good news of the ages, combining all truth, past, present, and future. It is the message of the deliverance of all mankind at the fall of Babylon. And the ring is symbolic of the authority of His Kingdom.

“The Lord is declaring His name unto His brethren, who are the sons of God. The fullness of all that He is, as represented in the robe, the shoes, and the ring, shall be imparted to this remnant. He who spoke forth as the thunder on mount Sinai, shaking the earth by His power, who set the bush ablaze by His mighty presence, causing Moses to declare, ‘I exceedingly fear and quake,’ is now being manifest in the greater glory of mount Zion. At Sinai His voice shook the earth so that those who heard it asked that He not speak to them again (Heb. 12:19). At Zion He shakes not only the earth, but the heavens also, thus signifying that the trembling, temporal order of the past is being removed so that only that which is of the immutable Kingdom of God may remain (Heb. 12:26-27). He who spoke twice on mount Sinai is now speaking clearly and regularly to His chosen ones. The same Voice that shook the earth then is now shaking both heaven and earth so that all that is of the dead past shall be removed to make way for His Kingdom of peace, power and plenty for all. His word is now finding lodging in our hearts, for it is here, in our hearts, where the Lord has begun the new order of His Kingdom. The scriptural admonition is more relevant now than at any time in the past: ‘See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven’ (Heb. 12:25.) — end quote.

Chapter 12

Hallowed Be Thy Name

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name” (Mat. 6:9).

The name YAHWEH is translated GOD about 300 times, and LORD more than 6,000 times in our English Bible. It is mentioned in scripture more than any other name of God. The Old Testament combines the name YAHWEH with other words to form what are known as compound names or the Yahweh Titles. Several of these are: YAHWEH-YIREH — Yahweh will see, or Yahweh will provide (Gen. 22:14); YAHWEH-NISSI — Yahweh my banner (Ex. 17:15); YAHWEH-MEKADDISHKEM — Yahweh who sanctifies you (Ex. 31:13); YAHWEH-SHALOM — Yahweh send peace (Judges 6:24); YAHWEH-SABBATH — Yahweh of hosts (I Sam. 1:3); YAHWEH-TSIDKENU — Yahweh our righteousness (Jer. 23:6); YAHWEH-SHAMMAH — Yahweh is there (Eze. 48:35); YAHWEH-ELYON — Yahweh most high (Ps. 7:17); YAHWEH-ROI — Yahweh my shepherd (Ps. 23:1).

Some other names of God used frequently in scripture are: EL — the mighty, the strong One; ELOAH — the living God; EL ELYON — the Most High; EL SHADDAI — the almighty, the all-bountiful, nourisher, the breasted One; ADON — the ruler; ADONIM — the plural of Adon, carries all the meaning of Adon but to a higher degree; ADONAI — the Lord.

English is a phonetically oriented language. Our poetry often depends on phonetic symmetry — rhythm and rhyme. Hebrew poetry, on the other hand, depends more on a symmetry of ideas than a symmetry of sounds. This is one of the reasons why the power of Hebrew poetry comes through in translations. So it is with Hebrew names. They are more oriented toward meanings than toward sounds. In the Bible names are generally descriptive of the person, of his position, some circumstance affecting him, etc. Thus, the “name” often came to stand for the person. This is illustrated by the fact that a Hebrew name may be a word, a phrase, or even a sentence. For example, Penuel means “the face of God”. Samuel means “Asked of God”. Examples of a name being a sentence are Abijah, “Yah is a Father,” and Eliab, “God is a Father”. To underline the fact that it is meaning that is important in a Hebrew name rather than the phonetic sound, compare II Samuel 11:3 and I Chronicles 3:5. Both scriptures give the name of the father of Bathsheba, but in the one case he is called Eliam, meaning “God is a kinsman,” and in the other case he is called Ammiel, meaning “A kinsman is God”. Still another example is king Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:6), who was also known as Jeconiah (Jer. 24:11). There are many other such examples in scripture where people’s names were said in different ways simply because the same thought was expressed in different words, though it meant approximately the same thing. This shows clearly that it was the meaning of the name that was important, not the way it was pronounced.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that the thing of importance is not the spelling or Hebrew pronunciation of God’s names. God never gave Himself a name because it sounded nice or because there were some magical powers in the combination of letters. God’s purpose in a

name is it's MEANING! You see, the name YAHWEH is absolutely meaningless in English. If you were to address God as "The Self-Existent," or "The Eternal," you would actually be saying His name in English, rather than merely pronouncing meaningless Hebrew syllables. I know many people who feel they mouth all the correct forms of God's name, but they know absolutely nothing about God's name, for they have never entered into relationship with Him IN HIS NATURE REVEALED BY HIS NAME. God's name is His nature.

The name YAHWEH is derived from the Hebrew verb HAVAH meaning "to be," or "being." This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb CHAVAH meaning "to live," or "life." One can readily see the connection between BEING and LIFE. Thus Yahweh means THE SELF-EXISTENT ONE or THE ETERNAL. He is the One who in Himself embodies essential life, permanent existence, derived from no source outside Himself, and absolutely dependent upon no other person, thing, or circumstance for its continuance. Any being whose existence is dependent in any measure upon another, or upon conditions such as food, water, light, air, etc., or even upon some cosmic influence, is not SELF-EXISTENT. This quality inhered originally in Yahweh alone, as it is written, "The Father hath life IN HIMSELF" (Jn. 5:26). That means that His existence is not a derived one, nor a sustained one; not derived from anything nor dependent upon anything, but inherent and eternal within Himself. The verbs "to be" and "to live" from which the name Yahweh comes denote both ESSENTIAL LIFE and a STATE OF BEING. Hence, God is not only eternal Himself, but every aspect of His nature and all His characteristics are as eternal and unchanging as His life!

Anything that is absolutely eternal is not only unending, but is also UNCHANGEABLE. Anything that changes in any way is not eternal, for in the change some characteristic is left behind and a new one acquired. In every change something ends and something else begins. That which dwells in an eternal state knows NO CHANGE. Change is possible only in that which is limited, imperfect, or immature. Yahweh declares of Himself, "I am Yahweh (the Eternal), I CHANGE NOT" (Mal. 3:6), and the inspired apostle says of Him, "With whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). God is never surprised. God has not learned anything this week, nor last year, nor in the last several trillion years. If God learned one thing today, it would destroy Him. He would no longer be the omniscient One knowing the end from the beginning, for known unto Him are all His works from the foundation of the world. God does not experiment. God does not become stronger, mightier, or increase Himself in any way. God is the omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal One. He CHANGES NOT. He eternally is all that He is without any decrease or increase or fluctuation whatsoever. Ah, He is the ETERNAL GOD, YAHWEH — the SELF-EXISTENT ONE!

It is a great and blessed fact that Yahweh is the eternal God. Transition, adjustment, change — these words seem to be constantly with us, until we fain would grasp for something that seems to be stable, solid, enduring. Much of the inner drive for change is simple evidence that man is not satisfied, has not found his completeness in Christ, for "beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM..." (I Jn. 3:2). Here is stability — immutability — the quality of His nature remains the same, HE IS THE ETERNAL! And this is the nature of which we would be a partaker, the fullness of which we find in Christ, and through union with Him we shall be changed until we become changeless in the absoluteness of that which He is. He who is eternal cannot be influenced, affected, moved, changed, altered, damaged, destroyed, or improved in any way. He cannot grow tired or old. The character of God is eternal, changeless, unaffected. The love, joy, peace, righteousness, and power of God do not rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall. Matters not what happens or what men or devils say or do, the love of God, the nature of God, the purpose of God and the power of God are steadfast, unmoved,

unquenched, undiminished, unaffected, without fluctuation. The eternal existence of God is certain for He is the source of all life. Death cannot touch Him for He is not dependent upon the sustaining power of another, He is Yahweh, the Self-Existent One.

With these lofty thoughts of God in our minds, our hearts respond with joyful accord when Christ in His wisdom shows that it is God's intention that he who walks in the blessed realm of sonship should be as constant and unchanging as is God Himself. To His disciples Christ spoke these incredible words: "For as the Father HATH LIFE IN HIMSELF; so hath He given to the Son TO HAVE LIFE IN HIMSELF" (Jn. 5:25-26). LIFE IN HIMSELF! This is self-existent life, a life not derived from any source, not dependent upon any sustenance, inherent life! Jesus could stand and declare, "I AM THE LIFE!" The exceeding great wonder of all is that not only did Jesus possess the self-existent life of God, but God has made Him to be "a life-giving Spirit." Truly, "He that hath the Son HATH LIFE," and, "This is the record that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (I Jn. 5:11-12). How plain. If the Spirit of Yahweh dwells in us, He imparts THE POWER TO COMMENCE ETERNAL, SELF-EXISTENT LIFE WITHIN US NOW!

THE JEWS AND YAHWEH

It is a clear fact of history that from the time the house of Judah was carried away in captivity to Babylon they laid aside the use of the name Yahweh, through a superstitious dread, but also because the Jews left behind the Hebrew language in the Babylonian captivity, returning to the land of Israel as an Aramaic speaking people — the language of Babylon. They substituted, therefore, the courtesy title "Adonai," or "Lord." Later the name was written with the consonants of the word Yahweh and the vowel sounds of the word Adonai. And in some time very late in history, probably about the time of the Protestant reformation in Europe, the English word Jehovah evolved from this hybrid spelling, since all "Y" sounds in Hebrew are "J" sounds in English. The history is curious, but it all derived from the Jews' superstitious refusal to pronounce the Name of God as revealed to them. In substitution for the Hebrew name they also used other titles such as "the Blessed," "the Name," "the Four Letters," and "the Tetragrammaton," also meaning "the Four Letters," referring to the Hebrew spelling of the name — YHWH. A striking example of this custom of using titles in place of God's name is afforded us in the dialogue between Jesus and the High Priest: "Art Thou the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus didn't correct the High Priest, telling Him that God's name is Yahweh — He merely answered, "I am." Not the Son of Yahweh — but the Son of "THE BLESSED"! Anything to keep from uttering the name Yahweh!

The third commandment is: "Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh thy God in vain; for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." No people could have been more scrupulous in their reverence for the name of God — the word YAHWEH — than the Jews. Their scribes wrote it with reverence upon their scrolls, but regarded it as blasphemy to repeat or read it aloud, lest it should become defiled upon their lips. The very Hebrew letters of it were considered sacred, and became a superstitious fetish — a thing to conjure with. They attributed magical powers to the Name (word) so that it became a talisman or a charm — indeed, an idol! The name Yahweh, in all of Israel, was pronounced only once a year, and then only by the High Priest when he entered into the Holy of holies on the day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. Whenever the scribes, who copied the scrolls of the scriptures, came to any one of the names of God, they would change the pen and pray and then write the name. Whenever they came to the great unpronounceable name of God, the name of Yahweh, they would stop, bathe, change their clothes, change their pen, confess their sins, pray to God and then, with great reverence, they would dip their pen into the ink only once. They would never dip it again

in the midst of the writing of the name. They were commanded that should the king speak to them in the midst of writing that name they were to pay him no heed at all — so intense was their superstitious reverence for the name Yahweh.

THE SACRED NAME

There is much misleading teaching in these days concerning what is known as the “Sacred Name”, and so, let us shine the Light of the Lord upon the matter, so that any darkness of confusion or error might be dispelled, and that His Truth might be seen in all of its glory. No child of God need be uncertain or doubtful about speaking of, and to, the Father in the words of his or her own language. We speak of the Lord God; we speak of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord — all wonderful words that spring out of the depths of our hearts, and speak volumes of an intimate love and reverence of our heavenly Father and for our Lord Jesus Christ.

God’s name is important! But — must we, as some claim, use only Hebrew names when speaking of the Father and the Son? Is salvation or true reverence based on the pronunciation of God’s name in a certain language, or on a certain set of sounds? The notion that we must use only God’s Hebrew names is of no ancient origin. Those names were not used by the early Church, nor by the Church fathers, nor by the great men of God through the ages. Actually, the Hebrew-names teaching had its beginnings less than sixty years ago, in the late 1930’s. At that time, proponents of the idea began to claim that it is gross sin to say the name Jesus Christ, which is an anglicized spelling of the Greek words *Iesous* and *Christos*. God’s name, they alleged, must be spoken only in Hebrew. This is an important prerequisite for entering God’s Kingdom, they claimed. These same few teach that the sacred name of our heavenly Father is Yahweh and that the name of the Son of God is Yahshua. The word *Elohim*, too, must be used instead of our English equivalent word *God*. They declare that when we pray or speak about God and Christ, we must use only these Hebrew names. It is wrong, they say, to translate the names of the Deity into English or any other language. In other words, we may freely read or discuss the Bible as translated into the English language in all terms except the names of God or Jesus Christ. Then we must speak Hebrew. It is alright to say *Mary* instead of *Miryam*, *Israel* instead of *Yisrael*, *Joseph* instead of *Yosef*, and *Jerusalem* instead of *Yerushalayim*. But using an anglicized form or substitute for the names Yahweh and Yahshua, we are told, could deny us salvation or a place of honor in the Kingdom of God! Are Hebrew names the only ones acceptable to God? Is He insulted by anything else?

I’m quite sure the name “Yahweh” does not convey to me the identical same thing it conveyed to the ancient Hebrews. I did not hear the word until I was in my early twenties. When I heard it for the first time, I was not impressed. In fact, the word did not even sound like a name. It was, for all practical purposes, meaningless to me. The word “God,” on the other hand, is a deeply meaningful word, as are the words “Lord,” “Eternal,” and “Father.” When I hear the word *God*, or when I say or think the word, I think of the Great Creator. The word means *Eternal Ruler of the universe*; it means *The Almighty*. It means *God*. Think about it! You can kneel in the presence of your heavenly Father and say, “My Father, my God...” with a certain depth of genuine emotion and meaning — for the words “Father” and “God” are meaningful to you. But when you pray, “O Yahweh, my *Elohim*...” something personal, deep, and intimate is missing. If your mind works anything like mine, the English terms enable you to express yourself before God with a greater depth of relationship than do the Hebrew words. So, what was appropriate for Moses may not necessarily be appropriate for you — as far as words are concerned.

There are three basic assumptions behind the “Sacred Name” idea. The first is that Hebrew is God’s language. It is somehow special and holy. The second is that the New Testament was written in Hebrew or Aramaic — thus the originals were not contaminated by Greek paganism. The final assumption is that the correct pronunciation of YHWH has not been lost in the mists of time. If any of these assumptions are false, then the doctrine of the Sacred Name crumbles.

Most Sacred Name people believe that Hebrew is a special language — the language of God — or at least the language He has chosen and ordained in a peculiar way on earth. They believe it is a sin to translate God’s name into any other language because it thus becomes “paganized”. The question follows — Is Hebrew God’s special language, or a normal, humanly developed language that just happened to already be the language of the first people God chose to reveal Himself to and choose for His unique purpose — namely, the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? All authorities on linguistics and archaeology agree that Hebrew was no isolated or divine language in Old Testament times. It was exactly what Isaiah calls it — the language of Canaan. “In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to Yahweh of hosts” (Isa. 19:18). Hebrew is called the language of Canaan because there were only minor dialect variations between Phoenician, the language of Tyre, Sidon and Gebal, and the language of the Canaanites in the land of Canaan, as well as the other nations living there. These all, as well as the Moabites who lived east of the Dead Sea, could understand one another without the aid of interpreters. As you can see by reading the history in your own Bible, from the very moment that the children of Israel entered Canaan and began the conquest of the land, there was never any problem in communicating with the cursed inhabitants of the land. They conversed freely with one and all. As the magazine Biblical archaeology has clearly pointed out, THEY ALL SPOKE THE EQUIVALENT OF HEBREW!

One of the common Old Testament names for God is the Hebrew word EL. EL creates real problems for the Sacred Name people. The name EL was in use among the pagan Canaanites long before Moses penned the first five books of the Bible. In the cuneiform religious tablets excavated at Ras Shamra (an ancient Canaanite city north of Israel), for example, EL (El the Bull) is described as the head of the Canaanite pantheon of gods, husband of Asherah and father of all the other gods. If it is a sin for us to use the English word God because pagan Druids used it to refer to their idols, or the word Lord because the name of the pagan god Baal meant “Lord,” then, by the same reasoning it is also a sin to use the Hebrew words Elohim, El, and all the other forms of God’s name containing El. Also notice that the Hebrew word Elohim is used 240 times throughout the inspired Old Testament to refer to pagan, heathen idols! This usage by the Holy Spirit Himself shows that it is just as permissible to use the English word God today for both our heavenly Father and for pagan idols. When used of our Father it is the meaning that is important, not the language, spelling, or pronunciation.

The Sacred Name avoidance of the word “Lord” is very curious because the Old Testament, which most Sacred Name believers use in preference to the New Testament, calls Yahweh Lord on several occasions. Ezekiel 2:4 is an example of this. Here the words “Yahweh” and “Adonai” (Lord) are used together to form one name or title — Lord Yahweh. Since the Old Testament uses the word “El” for God and “Adonai” for Lord, and these words are of human origin, and anciently used also by the pagans, how can it be wrong to use the English equivalent of these words today? EL or YAHWEH or ADONAI mean little to today’s reader, whereas God and Lord are pregnant with meaning to English speaking people. The Sacred Name believers cite Hosea 2:16-17 as proof that it is an abomination to use the word Lord. It says, “And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali (my Lord). For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they

shall no more be remembered by their name.” The passage clearly states that in the day that the Lord’s people no longer call Him “Baali” they will call Him “Ishi.” And yet — I have never met the person who goes around calling God “Ishi”! Those who use Yahweh and Yahshua do not go about calling God Ishi. They do not pray to “Ishi,” or cast out devils by calling over them “Ishi,” or heal the sick in the name of “Ishi.” Ishi is the intimate Hebrew word that could have just as well been translated “husband.” Furthermore, while “Baali” does indeed mean “my Lord” in the sense of a Master or a Husband, Baal in English is NOT “LORD” — it is BAAL! And in Hebrew that name has many compound forms just as Yahweh has many compound forms. And the fact that none of those compound forms of Baal anciently used by Israel in their idolatry is used by us today IS THE PROOF THAT GOD HAS DONE EXACTLY WHAT HE SAID HE WOULD DO — HE HAS TAKEN THE NAMES OF BAALIM OUT OF OUR MOUTHS!

Though the vast majority of the Old Testament was inspired in the Hebrew language, Daniel and Ezra wrote portions of their books in Aramaic or Syriac, the prevalent language spoken throughout the Persian Empire and elsewhere during their time. It had replaced Hebrew as the language of common speech of the Jews. When these men of God referred to the Creator in those passages, did they use the old Hebrew names, or did they translate them into Aramaic? Nowhere in the Aramaic passages do we find the names YHWH or ELOHIM. Those who have examined the manuscripts tell us that in dozens of places the writers rendered the Hebrew names for God into the Aramaic word Elah. That is the proof, right out of the inspired record itself, that the Holy Ghost approves the translation of the names of God into the language spoken by the various peoples of earth!

But what about the New Testament books? The original inspired language of the New Testament was Greek. Greek was virtually a universal language in the time of Christ and the apostles, widely understood by both Jews and Gentiles. Much of the New Testament was written by the apostle Paul, the apostle sent to the Greek-speaking nations who did not know Hebrew or Aramaic. When Paul wrote in Greek to the people who spoke Greek, did he pause in mid sentence to switch from Greek to Hebrew to write Yahweh or Yahshua when faced with a sacred name? Never! Paul invariably used the Greek word for God, theos, and the word for Lord, kurios. And he used the Greek name Iesous for Jesus. And so did the other writers of the New Testament books, as inspired by the Holy Spirit. In 665 places in the New Testament, the apostles translated the Hebrew word YHWH into the Greek word kurios. THERE IS NOT ONE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK MANUSCRIPT WITH THE NAMES OF GOD WRITTEN IN HEBREW!

In the face of these clear facts, the Sacred Name proponents have no choice but to deny that the New Testament was originally written in Greek. They assert — wrongly — that the whole of the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic (some even say Hebrew!), and only later translated into Greek. At the time of this alleged translation, they claim, the sacred Hebrew names were wrongly removed and pagan names substituted. THE BURDEN OF PROOF IS ON THEM. The evidence? There is none! For it is a totally false and contrived notion, devised out of necessity to justify a false premise! The Aramaic version of the New Testament available today is clearly a later translation from the original inspired Greek. The only copies of the original New Testament writings that have been preserved are in Greek — none in Aramaic or Hebrew. Nobody on earth can produce one single “original” copy in those languages!

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the Greek of the New Testament is inspired of God, for it is perfect in every way, including numerically. Therefore, as the Greek word kurios is used in the New Testament in quoting from the Old Testament, it demonstrates again that without doubt it is perfectly right and proper to TRANSLATE THE NAMES AND TITLES OF GOD

FROM ONE LANGUAGE INTO ANAOTHER. Again, as the Greek of the New Testament is inspired of God, we know that the Greek word *Iesous* is inspired, which is used, of course, to translate the Old Testament name *Yahshua*. As someone has said, the numeric design in the Greek New Testament is not a mere curiosity. We find that the numeric value of the name *Jesus* is 888, whereas the name of His satanic counterpart is 666. Eight is the number symbolic of the new order, resurrection, regeneration. In *Isaiah 53:10* it states that “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” The numeric value of the phrase “salvation of our God” in Greek is 888. Such examples could be multiplied hundreds of times. Obviously this is by DIVINE ARRANGEMENT, for no other Greek writings bear these marks of numeric design. Can we not see by this that *Iesous* IS the inspired name of *Yahshua* in Greek? In English, we obtain the name *Joshua* from the Hebrew, and the name *Jesus* from the Greek, all having the power of the same meaning — Saviour! Blessed be HIS wonderful name! No matter what language it is in! While Hebrew was the language, under God, of the times of the Old Covenant, Greek was the language chosen by God to set down and to reveal the glorious truths of the Gospel of Christ — the New Covenant. The time for the Hebrew language had passed with the Old Covenant. Its time, no matter the opinions and efforts of men, will never come again. The Hebrew language and the Old Covenant are inextricably and forever linked! But in the final analysis, the Hebrew language is no different from any other, for the Hebrew language is not the language of Heaven. God is a Spirit, and the language of Heaven is neither Hebrew nor Greek, but a spiritual language that can be known only in and by the Spirit. It is a communication from mind to mind, from spirit to spirit, in a realm beyond the languages of man. To speak of God as having names in the sense in which men have names is to limit Him as if He were a man, but He is an infinite Spirit who has deigned to reveal the many sides of His nature in the words of man, be it in one language or another!

In addition to these facts, there is acknowledged disagreement among Sacred Name writers and movements about the correct Hebrew form of God’s name. I have read a number of Sacred Name books and articles through the years and have found all the following (and more!) given as the one and only “correct” and “inspired” form of the name: YAHWEH, YEHWEH, YAHVEH, JAHVAH, YAHWOH, YAHVE, YEHVOH, YAHAWAY, YAHAWAH and YEWE. Each has his “proof” and thinks he, and he alone, is right! A dear brother wrote that he has six Sacred Name Bibles and not one of them agrees! Why? Simply because the true pronunciation was LOST through all the centuries when it was not used by the Jews, ten-tribed Israel, or anyone else. Unrealized by many, Hebrew words consist of consonants, and no vowels. The original Hebrew of God’s name is spelled simply YHWH, not Yahweh. Only by personally hearing the word pronounced could one know what vowel sounds should be in it. I speak some Hebrew and I personally know how confusing this can be. In general terms, I cannot correctly pronounce any word I see written in Hebrew unless I already know the word, what it is and what it means.

Since the pronunciation of God’s name in Hebrew has been lost for the past two and a half millenniums, it is as though God deliberately hid the “letter” of His name — that we might come to know Him by the Spirit! As a brother has written: “We may sum this up by saying that God gave the name YHWH to Moses as a temporary measure. When it had served its purpose, He obliterated its memory in three steps. (1) He allowed the Jews to have a spurious reverence for it, so that they did not dare pronounce it. (2) He caused Hebrew to be written without vowels, so that it could not be fully recorded, and (3) He did not allow it to be transliterated into Greek or any other language while its pronunciation was still known.” If the correct phonetics of His name were so important — indeed, if our very salvation depended upon it; if our entrance into the High Calling of God in His Kingdom depended upon it — then we are of all men most miserable. And, if we are blaspheming God by mispronouncing His name, or dishonoring Him

by not using the Hebrew form of His name, is it not true that all the Sacred Name people are just as guilty as anyone else with the possible exception one group? And who knows for certain which group that might be? It is like the law, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). Ah, my beloved brethren, if we pronounce the Sacred Name right — with the exception of one vowel sound — we have God’s name just as wrong as those who call Him Jehovah or Lord. In fact, Jehovah may be closer to the correct form than some of the Sacred Name forms listed above!

The solution lies not in the “letter” of His name but in the meaning of His name — understood by the Spirit! The work of God in our lives is not based on pronunciation! Those who would worship the sound of a name — treating it with superstitious and mystical reverence — make an idol out of that sound. Thinking they have some gift of greater revelation, they actually miss the whole point and intent of the scriptures, and engender needless strife and division. Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father.” Performance, not pronunciation, is of paramount importance to God. We honor His name by walking out His nature and character as His sons, not by mouthing a certain sound. Do not be misled by the naive and misguided “scholarship” of those who would make a “show of wisdom.” Their teachings are not substantiated by the Word of God, but are based on a multitude of woefully misapplied scriptures.

There is a powerful lesson about the name of the Lord in the life of Dr. Thomas Wyatt, an apostle of faith, mightily used of God in the earlier days of this century. I met him in the days of the great Latter Rain move of God. The well-known author, Basil Miller, in his biography of Thomas Wyatt, records the events in Wyatt’s life that immediately followed his conversion. He says, “Though Thomas Wyatt had found spiritual elation, the physical pain and body torment steadily increased. It was difficult for him to bend. Only with severe anguish could he carry the duties of the larger farm he rented the following year. Every move, every action was a knife stuck into his vitals. It became so serious that he decided to go to Rochester, Minnesota, and enter the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Mayo examined him personally, tested the flexibility of his back, asked him to bend over, twisted him from side to side. Only with great difficulty could Tom put one foot in front of the other as he staggered along.

“He was drawn and haggard. The doctor, after a complete examination, said, ‘The cushions between your vertebrae are causing your pain. The X-rays show that your vertebrae are all growing together. That is why you cannot straighten up. We recommend that you go back home and set your house in order. Your chances of living are slight. If you live, you will be a cripple throughout life.’ Dr. Mayo suggested that Tom return to Des Moines and have a specialist place him in a cast from neck to hips; this would have to be left on for eighteen months. He added, ‘Otherwise you will be drawn over completely until your backbone is solidified and you will not be able to stand erect — if you live.’ Back to Des Moines Tom went, and three times he attempted to see the specialist recommended by Dr. Mayo. But on each trip something intervened that made it impossible for the doctor to encast Tom’s body.

“Returning home, the emotional strain proved too great, and Tom went to bed. For eighteen months he was bedfast, a total invalid. A cousin came to oversee the work of the farm. Day after day the patient’s strength waned. Despite the fact that these were days spent in communion with the Lord, there was no thought or idea of calling on the great Physician for a healing hand to be laid upon Tom’s body. He became weaker as the months passed, until at length the twisted, pain-racked body could endure no more. Tom sensed death lurking in the shadows. He had been sinking for several days, and finally went into a coma. His relatives had

been called, and they gathered to be with him in his last hours. Funeral arrangements were made. Since the local newspaper was published weekly, the editor thought it wise to print Tom's obituary in the current issue, giving the day of his death, and the time of the funeral. The night before his supposed death-day, Tom dropped into a deep coma...then God stepped in with the miracle of Thomas Wyatt's healing.

"While his relatives were out of the room, Tom wakened from an eighteen-hour death coma. Utterly helpless, physically wasted, death appearing and inviting, he looked up and was touched by the finger of God. Regaining consciousness, Tom's eyes were fixed upon the ceiling. He lay there convinced he was dying. But he did not seem to care. In fact, he actually welcomed death. He had lived in pain so long. Life had been hard, filled with suffering and dire need. He felt that these were his last conscious hours. He had no regret at leaving loved ones, for he was tired of life's toilsome road. Then out of the eternities came a clear and distinct Voice. The Voice seemed to come from everywhere. In a firm and quietly-spoken tone the words of the Lord sounded: 'I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE.'

"How he reached deliverance's blessed mount he had no idea, but he sensed the rarefied atmosphere of the Supernatural. He had always believed God from the instant Christ had saved him, and now he was possessed by an instinctive urge to act upon this overwhelming truth spoken by the Lord. Shortly the relatives returned to the room. As they approached the bed they saw that he had regained consciousness. They leaned over, and in a faint voice Tom whispered, 'The Lord has come and healed me.' Tom had lain in bed without any overt motions for eighteen months. Now he asked his relatives to lift him up. He wanted to sit on the edge of the bed. When they protested, Tom demanded that they lift him up. As they lifted him, thousands of pain-needles shot through his body, and he fell over in a dead faint. They picked him up from the floor and laid him back on the bed, thinking this was the end. But Tom did not sink into another coma, though he remained helpless throughout the day and night. It was evident that the death power which had visited him earlier was broken and he had been delivered. Though he could not move, his heart was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

"Tom asked to be taken to the table to eat the noonday meal with the family. He was lifted from the bed, carried to the table, and set into a chair. The second day was a repetition of the first. Tom went back to the table for three meals. The return of strength was speedy after that, for faith had motivated action, and action had evidenced faith. For thirty days faith pushed Tom into act after act, until at the end of a month, not a trace of the old sickness remained. Having lived in the Bible and experienced Christ's marvelous transforming and healing power, Tom Wyatt would soon be ready to carry the message of total deliverance to all mankind. He could not pass by suffering humanity, as the priest and Levite had done, when he himself had experienced the warm fellowship of the Good Samaritan in salving his broken body" — end quote.

The point I beseech you to consider is the manner in which the Lord Himself spoke to Thomas Wyatt. The Lord says in Exodus 15:26, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy God, and wilt do that which is right in my sight...I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am Yahweh that healeth thee." The phrase in our English Bibles, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," appears in the Hebrew text as one of the great compound redemptive names Yahweh. It is YAHWEH-ROPHEKHA — "I am Yahweh your healer." God certainly knows who He is! And, while in the Hebrew He says that He is YAHWEH that heals, yet when this same ever-living God spoke sovereignly and audibly to poor Thomas Wyatt on his death bed, He did not say, "I am YAHWEH that healeth thee,"

but, "I am THE LORD that healeth thee!" God Himself called Himself "the Lord" and thereby honored the title most often used of Him in the English language. If "Lord" is the name of "Baal," as some contend, and is an abomination from which we must be cleansed, then the Lord Himself certainly made a serious mistake and a grave error in calling Himself "the LORD that healeth thee." I could cite scores of examples like this one of which I have first-hand knowledge. I am not aware of any supernatural revelation of the Lord to any non-Hebrew-speaking man or woman in this age of the Spirit in which God identified Himself as "Yahweh" or in which the Lord Jesus announced Himself as "Yahshua." He could certainly do so should He choose, and may have on some occasion, but it is almost unknown in the recorded history of God's dealings with men.

JESUS IS YAHWEH!

We ought not to be ashamed of calling Christ our "God," because He is Yahweh; He stands upon earth and calls to us "I AM!" And we need not make a big issue out of it, but fall down as did the disciples of old and cry, "My Lord, and my God!" In Him we know the living God, the Father in heaven. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (Jn. 1:18). Jesus was, therefore, the FULL REVELATION of the INVISIBLE GOD who indwelt Him. The Amplified Bible reads, "No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son...who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him — He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen...He has made Him known." So God put Himself into His Son to make Himself visible and available to man.

Jesus Himself said it this way: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (Jn. 14:7-10).

Now let us read Isaiah 9:6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given...His name shall be called...the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." It does not say mighty man, but Mighty God. A little child is called the Mighty God. All Christians agree with the prophecy of this verse. The child mentioned here refers to the child born in the stable in Bethlehem, who is not only named the Mighty God, but also the Everlasting Father. As a child born to us, He is called the Mighty God; as a Son given to us, He is called the Everlasting Father. This is very strange, is it not? When the child is called the Mighty God, is He the child or God? And, when the Son is called the Everlasting Father, is He the Son or the Father? If you try to figure it out you cannot do it. You must take it as a fact unless, of course, you do not believe the scriptures. If you believe the Word God has revealed through His holy prophets, you must accept the fact that since the child is called the Mighty God, it means the child IS the Mighty God; and since the Son is called the Father, it means the Son IS the Father! If the child is not the Mighty God, how could the child be called the Mighty God? And if the Son is not the Father, how could the Son be called the Father? Then how many Gods do we have? We have only one God, because the child Jesus is the Mighty God, the Son is the Everlasting Father, and "the Lord (Jesus) is that Spirit" (II Cor. 3:17).

God's name is written in Jesus. It would little avail to ask how we know the Father's name is written in Jesus. That would be like asking how we know that Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy" is

joyous. If a man were to say, "It is not joyous to me," he would not condemn the music; he would only reveal his own morbidness. The name of the Son of God is Jesus. That is His complete name. That is His correct name. That is His full name. The name of the eternal Word of God who stepped across the stars to the planet earth to be born in the little village of Bethlehem, is Jesus. The angelic messenger appeared to Mary and announced, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mat. 1:21). The name Jesus is exactly the same as the Old Testament name Joshua. Joshua or Jesus — it's the same name. In Hebrew it is Yahshua — YAH is Yahweh, and SHUA means salvation. In the Old Testament salvation is of Yahweh. Hundreds of passages speak of this. But now it is no longer just Yahweh, but Yahweh-Saviour — Jesus! So when the mighty Gabriel appeared he said, "Call the child that which will be descriptive or characteristic of what He is going to be and do. Call His name that which will describe His accomplishment." The messenger said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, or thou shalt call His name THE SALVATION OF YAHWEH, for He shall save His people...call His name YAH THE SAVIOUR because He is going to save and He is YAH." How few realize the fullness that is in our Saviour's name! Once we see that Jesus is a compound name of Yahweh, adapted to the new age, we will no longer wonder why the name Yahweh has almost disappeared from God's people. It occurs about a thousand times in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! Jesus said, "I have come in my Father's name" (Jn. 5:43). To "come in the name of someone" is a Semitic way of speaking which means "to bring the name of someone." So Jesus says again, "I have manifested Thy name" (Jn. 17:6,26). Jesus did all His works "in my Father's name" and He prays, "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me" (Jn. 17:11). The Father gave Jesus His name — His nature, His honor, His authority, His identity — not merely the title "Yahweh."

I know many people are struggling with the different names of God — is it Lord, Jehovah, Yahweh, Yehovah or something else, all of which wrangling is stupidity and ignorance. The name of God has ever been a progressive unfolding. "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Yahweh: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of El Shaddai, but by my name Yahweh was I not known unto them" (Ex. 6:2-3). So many suppose that "Yahweh" is the FINAL REVELATION OF GOD'S NAME. Not so! God has progressively revealed Himself by different names. Think! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not even know God as Yahweh! The very first sentence of the Bible reveals God to us as Elohim — the Creator. The Bible then reveals to us God as Yahweh Elohim — the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the One who formed and gave life to Adam. The Bible reveals to us God as El Elyon — whom all nations worship and of whom all nations seem to have the "God consciousness." The next great stage of the self revelation of God is as El Shaddai — the nourisher, the breasted One, sustaining the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The next stage is the further revelation of God as Yahweh — the eternal, self-existent Lord and Redeemer of Israel. The next great stage is the manifestation of God in the Person of Yahshua — Yahweh as salvation unto all the ends of the earth. It was God's plan from the beginning to reveal Himself from glory to glory, from name to name.

The people of Israel knew that there was only one true and living God — Yahweh. But the idea that God was a loving God was alien to them for the most part. Until Jesus came even they did not know the heart of the Father. They knew God according to superstition and after the demands and penalties of the Law. To them Yahweh was the Law-giver, harsh, demanding, vindictive, throwing lightning bolts off of Sinai. The Old Testament world stood before the thought of God as we sometimes stand before a summer thunder-storm — black, flashing with lightning, terrible — and with fear and awe they bowed in the dust. They conceived that God was exacting and full of wrath. God punished people and destroyed all His enemies. But that God was tender, that God loved them? God would accept their sacrifices,

certainly. God would even put up with them, and they would propitiate Him and appease Him (or so they thought!), but they did not in most cases truly love God.

God purposed from the beginning to reveal Himself BEYOND YAHWEH. And now He has delivered the Kingdom to His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father. Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things in the 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 King James version says that God has given Jesus “a” name above every name; but that is not how it is in the Greek. The Greek has the definite article — “the name” above every name. This title, ‘THE NAME,’ is a very common Hebrew title denoting office, rank, dignity, as well as honor and worship bestowed on the one on whom this name was conferred. Then THE NAME is revealed — “that at THE NAME OF JESUS every knee should bow...” And the wonderful name of Jesus is THE NAME above every other name both in heaven and in earth! Think of it! That certainly includes the name Yahweh. If the name of Jesus is THE NAME that is above every other name in heaven, then God has given Jesus the name that is above Yahweh! God Himself, yes, Yahweh Himself, has highly exalted Jesus and given Him the name above every other name anywhere. There is no name of God that He has ever revealed His nature in that is as high as the mighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, there is no revelation of God’s nature that is as high as the nature of God revealed in Jesus. Jesus is God’s nature revealed in its fullest. And that is what sonship is.

The consciousness of the power of God’s name was in the heart of every faithful Israelite. A young man was not afraid to stand before Goliath and say, “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of Yahweh of hosts” (I Sam. 17:45). That same young man, afterward becoming the “sweet singer of Israel,” was inspired to exhort every son of Israel: “Praise the name of Yahweh. Blessed be the name of Yahweh from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same Yahweh’s name is to be praised” (Ps. 113:1-3). As blessed and all-prevailing as was the Divine Name in the time of David, and even when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, a prayer offered today only in the name of Yahweh will rise no higher than the ceiling. You cannot get to God in the name of Yahweh!

There is authority in the name of Jesus because He inherited it. We cannot measure the vastness of the power in the name of Jesus without realizing that He inherited that name from God the Father. “God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath BY INHERITANCE OBTAINED A MORE EXCELLENT NAME THAN THEY” (Heb. 1:1-4). When we think about the name of Jesus we know that Jesus is the brightness of God’s glory, the express image of His person, the very outshining of God the Father, the heir of all things — and He has inherited HIS NAME. The greatness of His name is inherited from His Father. So the power of His name can only be measured by the power of God.

Those who cling to the name Yahweh are living under the Old Testament economy of God with fleshly Israel under the law. The administration of heaven and earth has been changed. When the Holy Spirit descended from heaven upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem, everyone was commanded to “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus

Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). From that day forward, among all nations, the great God ordained that “all things should be done, whether in word or in deed, in the name of Jesus Christ” (Col. 3:17). Salvation was preached in His name. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Devils were cast out in His name. Prayers were prayed in His name. The sick were healed in His name. Mighty signs and wonders were wrought in His name. Men called upon His name. Jesus came and put a face on God. All the Yahweh names, the compound redemptive names of Yahweh — all of these find their fulfillment in Jesus. Yahweh said, “I am Yahweh that healeth thee.” “Yahweh-Healer” was His name. “But in the New Testament it is: “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” Jesus is Yahweh-Rophekha, Yahweh the healer.

I write to you today of the power of the name of Jesus Christ. It is the name of omnipotence for our Lord Himself declared, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18). In that name the lowliest and most vile of God’s prodigal children may be saved and transformed. With the name of Jesus on their lips, martyrs have calmly and joyfully faced death by fire and sword. In His name multitudes have lived their lives of service, cheerfully doing their rounds of mercy and goodness. In the name of Jesus the first lisping prayers of infant hearts arise. The name of Jesus has comforted and sustained broken, bleeding hearts in hours of darkest sorrow. In His name the most glorious victories of faith have been won. The name of Jesus is all-conquering. It is the name that is above every other name in heaven and on earth. Therefore it is higher than the name Yahweh, and higher even than the name El Elyon! That name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. It is in this name that every knee shall bow and every tongue swear allegiance — of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things in the underworld. All hail the power of Jesus’ name!!

And remember, precious friend of mine, there is no need to say the name in Hebrew. It is not at all necessary to speak the name of Yahshua, although His name in Hebrew is just as precious and powerful to those who speak Hebrew as Jesus is to us. The greatest proof, to my mind, is the authority, power and value GOD HIMSELF PLACES IN THE NAME. I have seen devils come out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have seen cripples walk at the name of Jesus. I have seen every manner of sickness and disease healed in the name of Jesus. I have seen signs and wonders wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus. Untold millions of people have been saved, cleansed, delivered and transformed by faith in the name of Jesus Christ. All the works accomplished in all the great revivals in Germany, Switzerland, Wales, England, the United States, South Africa, and many other nations over the past centuries were done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be obvious to all that GOD HAS HIGHLY HONORED THAT NAME and that DEMONS RESPECT AND TREMBLE AT THAT NAME and that even dead men have lived again at the mention of THAT NAME. I have personally had hundreds of prayers answered in response to calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And now men refuse to speak that mighty name, and tell us it is sin to use that name. Shame on them! I do not hesitate to tell you that I have witnessed no special authority, power, life or holiness manifested through any of my friends who insist on using the names of God in their Hebrew form. Nothing I have seen done by the use of those names has even approached the outer court of the power I have witnessed and experienced at the name of Jesus. So you are too late, my friend, to convince me of that. I have failed to see the value or power gained by reverting to those names.

Let us exalt the glorious name of Jesus Christ the Lord! Let us with bowed heads and worshipful spirits say with deepest emotion, “Hallowed be Thy name!” Let us exalt Him to that resplendent heaven where He sits enthroned on the throne of the Father. Let us exalt Him as

the image of God, the only visibility of God, God manifested in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, the Man in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily — of whom we are members in particular and brothers in the great family of God. Let us exalt Him and put His name above every other name in which God has ever revealed Himself; and above every name that has ever been spoken into human ear or uttered by mortal lips. Let us shout it out in song, roll it forth on organ swell, blast it out in trumpet call, and proclaim on the lips of eloquence that His name is above every name; that God the infinite Father has exalted that name above all of His names and has ordained that in the name of Jesus all shall bow in worshipful adoration in heaven and in earth.

In closing let me add one more thought. The name of Jesus is more than the letters J-E-S-U-S. The power of a name, the life of a name, the reality of a name is not in the letters or pronunciation but in the meaning it embodies. Name means nature. It is the NATURE of Jesus Christ that has been highly exalted. He has been given a SAVING NATURE that is above every other nature in heaven and in earth. Every living creature possesses a nature. The dog barks and the cat meows because of their nature. There is the elephant nature, the lion nature, the horse nature. There are the natures of mighty angels and pernicious devils, and the nature of Adam — mankind. There may be myriads of creatures on other planets in far away galaxies of the universe, I do not doubt it for one moment. But the man Christ Jesus has been highly exalted into a Nature that is grander and more glorious and far superior to the nature of any other being throughout the vastnesses of infinity. It is the divine nature. It is the active side of the divine nature, a nature that is not content to just BE what it is, but reaches forth to impart to creation all that it is. It is the divine SAVING NATURE. This is the man Christ Jesus' new name — His NEW NATURE. In this name is the hope of sonship and the ministry of the manifested sons of God. These sons are destined to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption and this can only be accomplished by the saving nature of God. That is the highest expression of all that He is. That is His new name.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew (or had experienced), but He Himself” (Rev. 19:11-12). And to the overcomer it is promised: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12).

The key to receiving His new name is overcoming. The starting point in overcoming is with the little things, the little foxes that spoil the vine. You will be defeated if you start with the giants. You must first slay your bear and kill your lion before you take on Goliath. Start overcoming the little things, those little quirks and idiosyncrasies in your personality — those things you think, those words you speak, those attitudes you manifest from time to time, facial expressions, body movements, gestures, slothfulness, sins of omission — these little things that fall short and miss the mark of the nature of the Christ. God wants us to be changed! We will never be changed just by hearing the message and giving assent to it. We must take on — appropriate — a whole new nature that is absolutely contrary to the human nature. I'm not talking about warring with the “old man” or wrestling with the “devil.” I'm talking about so putting on a new nature until all that is contrary to that nature is put to death. I'm talking about so putting on a new nature until it becomes natural to be supernatural.

HE must increase, WE must decrease — and it must be in that order. You do not die in order to live, you live in order to die. By accentuating the positive you eliminate the negative. By

turning on the light you drive away the darkness. By the infusion of life you abolish death. Truth destroys error. Reality negates fantasy. That is the law of conformation into the image of Christ. You fill your mind with the Truth of Christ, you flood your life with the Word of God, and “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.” The “name” denotes the “nature.” If you have partaken of the nature of Jesus then every knee within you must bow before that nature and every tongue, every voice within you, must confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father.

My beloved, until this happens within us we are not Saviours to the world. We can talk about manifested sonship all we please, we can confess it, name it and claim it, teach it and preach it, blab it and grab it, and pride ourselves in our superior calling — but until the nature of Jesus rules within we are not one whit beyond the religious world around us. Every enemy within must be routed and cast out by the power of His glorious name, His glorious nature. Do you want power to cast out devils? Begin by having the devils cast out of you. That’s the starting point, you see. You say, “I don’t have any devils in me.” That may be true — but it is nothing short of amazing when the right testing, temptation, problem or pressure comes our way how many devils can be raised up in us! Sometimes it takes very little. But at the nature of Jesus every knee bows and every tongue confesses His Lordship within. “Believe on the name of the Son of God,” the scripture says. But the Greek is a little more definitive: “Believe into the name of the Son of God.” This means more than believing on the name of the man Jesus who lived two thousand years ago. It speaks of believing into His nature so that His nature becomes our nature. It is putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is hallowing His name in our lives. It is raising up and exalting the nature of Christ within. May God make it reality to all those blessed ones who read these lines today! HALLOWED BE THY NAME!

Chapter 13

Thy Kingdom Come

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...Thy kingdom come...” (Mat. 6:9).

I will do you a special favor today. I will change that prayer somewhat. But it is not really I that am changing it — the church world has changed it. When they were through changing it they liked it a lot better. From then on they have prayed it the new way: “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy saints go to heaven...” Isn’t that what a lot of people are praying for? Vast multitudes believe a false doctrine that is called “The Rapture of the Saints.” It means “The Going of the Saints.” This idea is based on the scripture that says, “If I go away you will also go away...” Ah — how does that text go? “If I go away I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” The Lord Jesus never said that He would come and take us to heaven; He said He would come and receive us unto Himself, unto a Person, not a place, unto union with Him in all that He is. What the church world is looking for today is not the Lord’s coming, nor yet the coming of the Kingdom of God, but their “going”.

The Lord’s prayer, however, does not refer either to the Lord’s coming or our going — its cry is, “Thy Kingdom come!” What is the Lord’s title when He comes? In what office does He come? We have said that He is coming as King. No, He’s not. People testify that Jesus is their Saviour, Healer, Baptizer and Coming King. But He is not a coming King. When He comes He does not come as King. He is already King. He is the King eternal. He rules over all. When He comes He comes as King of kings. There is a great difference. Let us put Him where He belongs. Let us not drag Him down to just a king level — for the world has had a bumper crop of kings. He comes as King of kings. But I’m going to tell you something — He had better come soon, because there are very few kings left in the world at present! If the revolutions continue and He waits any longer He will be unable to come as King of kings because there will be no kings left! But that is not what He is talking about.

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come...and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. 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. 1:4-6). Ah, my beloved, are you loved? Are you washed? Then you are also kings! Let me quote this passage to you another way. “Who hath made us beggars, orphans, and sinners saved by grace, hoping to make heaven our home — pray for us that we will hold out to the end.” Doesn’t that inspire, challenge, and give you great comfort and hope? Read it with me — “and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father,” and in chapter five He adds, “and we shall reign on the earth.” Oh, yes, He is truly coming as King of kings — and WE ARE THE KINGS. He is coming as Lord of lords — and WE ARE THE LORDS.

The Bible is a book of faith and hope. It looks, not backward or downward, but forward and upward. Its face is ever set toward the Dawn. It always points us toward the best that is yet to come — the completion, maturity, fullness, consummation. In its first pages we read of the heaven blest Eden; of a time when mankind was free from pain, sorrow and evil, because man

was free from sin. While man walked in his primitive state of innocence his home was a Garden — the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. He was destined to reign splendidly over all realms from the lowest to the highest, symbolized in the dominion given him over the lowest realm of the fish of the sea, the higher realm of the beasts of the earth, and the highest realm of all, the birds of the heavens. God was his familiar Friend and intimate Father. But we read on a page or two and a change comes over the order of things. Eden, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, disappears, becoming but a history recorded, a faint memory beyond the pall that hangs over the mind of man. Joy, peace, glory, power and life vanish, and leave in their wake sorrow, discord, weakness, shame and death. When man sinned, pain, limitation, frustration and death entered the world, man's heavens grew black with clouds; God no longer communed with him in the spirit of the Day, and he was driven out of the Garden, at the gates of which the cherubim were posted with swords of flame which pointed every way, as if to say, "No return, no return."

Then Jesus came! The message He gave was the Kingdom of God. It was the center and circumference of all He taught and did. It was His gospel, His good news. He lived and moved in the realm of sonship full and complete. He lived and moved in the realm of the Kingdom which He came to proclaim and which for three years or more He demonstrated in no small part. He began His public ministry with preaching the gospel of God, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the good news." On His first circuit through Galilee, He taught in their synagogues, and preached the good news of the Kingdom, Himself saying, "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent." On His second circuit through Galilee, He went about through cities and villages, preaching, healing, and bringing the good tidings of the Kingdom of God. On His third circuit through Galilee, He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. When He was near Bethsaida, and saw the great multitudes who were as sheep having no shepherd, He had compassion on them, and ministered to their needs, and spake to them of the Kingdom of God. Even when He presented Himself alive following His crucifixion, by many proofs, He appeared to His apostles during forty days, speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God.

And as He, the firstborn Son of God, preached, so He would have His many brethren preach. When He commissioned His Twelve, He sent them forth two by two, and charged them, saying, "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils." When He commissioned the Seventy, He sent them two by two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself was about to come, saying, "Into whatsoever city ye enter and they receive you, cure the sick that are therein, and say to them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh to you." When He was traveling through Peraea, and one of His disciples asked leave to go and bury his father, the King said to him, "Follow me; leave the dead to bury their dead; but do thou go and announce the Kingdom of God." And as the King bade, so His brethren did.

When the persecution arose about Stephen, Philip went down from Jerusalem to Samaria, and published the good news concerning the Kingdom of God. When Paul visited Ephesus, he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the Kingdom of God. When he summoned the Ephesian presbyters to meet him at Miletus, he reminded them of his habit of going about among them preaching the Kingdom. When he reached Rome, he summoned the leading Jews, and expounded to them the gospel, testifying fully of the Kingdom of God. During the two whole years he lived in his own hired lodgings at Rome, he gladly welcomed all that went in to him, preaching the

Kingdom of God. In his very last letter that has come down to us, he charges his son Timothy before God, and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, to preach the word; and he emphasizes his charge by reminding Timothy of Christ's appearing and Kingdom.

The petition for the coming of the Kingdom brings us face to face with the supreme concern and purpose in the heart of Jesus. The Kingdom was His dearest dream, the one consuming passion of His life. As a child, when He studied the holy scriptures and communed with His heavenly Father, the reality of the Kingdom of God was birthed in His life and set the fires of expectation burning in His soul. As He fulfilled His daily responsibilities, as He strolled in the solitude of the green Galilean hills, the hope that constantly throbbed within His breast and would not let Him go was that of the Kingdom of God. It was upon the Kingdom that He meditated when He went to worship at the synagogue. It was of the Kingdom that He spoke to His Father in the secret place of prayer. In the soul of Jesus the reign of God was supreme.

When Jesus turned aside from the carpenter shop that day, He set out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom was ever His dominant theme. By deed and by example, no less than by word, He toiled to expound it. With divine motivation He set out to bring the Kingdom of God to pass in the earth. The world of His day was mad — pagan, vicious, violent, wicked, and intolerant beyond description. His was the most impossible task of which we can conceive. But He was convinced that by the power of His Father all things are possible. He was absolutely sure that God was stronger than the devil. He was absolutely certain that sin and death in their every ghastly and hideous form should at last be driven out of the world and that God should reign in every human breast from the rivers to the ends of the earth. He longed, and bade us pray, that this glorious consciousness of, and obedience to, God's reign should be shared by every man, woman, and child that lives or has ever lived. That, surely, is what we ask when we pray as He taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come!"

"Thy Kingdom come." An incredible statement — three simple words in both English and Greek, yet they open to us a realm so vast and glorious that one approaches the thought like a little boy with a pail standing before the fathomless seas, wondering how to fit it all into his bucket. There is no way one can contain it, no way one can comprehend or articulate all that is here. The preachers in the church systems have misinterpreted this petition. They think that the prayer for God's Kingdom refers to the end of the world or the so-called second coming of Christ. But when Jesus teaches us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," He is not speaking of the end of the world, or the rapture of the saints, or the return of Jesus, but the coming of the Kingdom. He means that we are to pray that God may reign here upon the earth, yea, even here in this earth which we are; that men here may acknowledge Him as King, that life here may express and accomplish His will in earth as it is in heaven. "But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Lk. 12:31-32). Here it is revealed that it is God's will that we participate in or receive His Kingdom here on earth. I believe that every child of God ought to know and be assured that he can walk in the power and presence of the Kingdom of God today. One glorious day many years ago this message really struck home in my life because I realized most Christians had the idea that the major objective of God's salvation was to qualify for an escape from off this planet to go to heaven. In the Lord's prayer, however, we are taught that God's Kingdom comes to the earth and that His will shall be done on the earth as it is in heaven.

This is not a prayer that we might be taken away from this planet to some far-off heaven somewhere, but it is a prayer that heaven may come down to earth, that joy may swallow up sorrow, that peace may overtake strife, that love may overcome hatred, that fullness may

cancel limitation, that weakness may be overwhelmed by might, that mortality may be swallowed up of life, that sin may be banished by salvation, that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord might cover the earth as the waters cover the sea so that the earth itself and all within it may BECOME HEAVENLY. It is a prayer for the “new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” as men’s lives are brought under the sway of the Kingdom of God which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM?

The dictionary defines “kingdom” as “a government or country headed by a king or queen; a monarchical state; a realm or domain.” The word “kingdom” is made up of the noun “king,” and the suffix “dom”. “Dom” is a noun-forming suffix to express rank, position, or domain. For example, a dukedom is the domain over which a duke has authority or exercises rule, and in the abstract the rank of a duke. In like manner a kingdom is the domain and the people within that domain over which a king exercises authority and rule. It is the “king’s domain”. “Kingdom” is thus a contraction of “king’s domain”. The term, Kingdom of God, can mean no other than the domain over which God exercises rule as King. It is God’s declared purpose therefore that His people, His holy nation, His peculiar treasure, should be the domain over which He would rule as King, and ultimately all the earth and all things and every creature. The Lord’s greatest dominion at this time is in the lives of His elect and chosen ones. We are now becoming ruled and governed by the Lord totally and absolutely. He has extended the dominion of His Kingdom to our hearts and lives, and now the Lord will rule us with complete and undisputed dominion. And He will continue to rule and reign in our lives until every enemy within us is made subject to Him. This is the present truth of the Kingdom of God!

Many of us who do not come from a country where the king or queen is sovereign, may have some difficulty grasping this idea of a kingdom. But it should easily be understood that no king is a king unless he has a kingdom to rule over. No sovereign is a sovereign without a state under his control. The state is composed primarily of three things: people, territory, and government. Without people, territory, and government no man is a king. And though there be people and territory, except the king possesses SOVEREIGNTY — SUPREME POWER AND AUTHORITY — he has no kingdom and is not a king. The Kingdom of God, therefore, means the SOVEREIGN RULE OF GOD. When we pray, “Our Father...Thy Kingdom come,” we are saying, “Our Father, You who art Ruler in the realm of the Spirit, come and establish the conscious awareness of your sovereignty as well in the hearts of us men on earth. Your will be done in this earth which we are.” It means that there will be a visible demonstration before men of the power of God to fully transform. And viewing the reality that breaks forth, “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isa. 25:9).

How glibly the masses in the church systems pray this prayer! It is repeated hundreds of millions of times daily without any serious intention of it happening. People pray it without the foggiest notion of what the words mean, and have no disposition for it to be fulfilled in them personally in any practical way. There is far too much at stake. When all is said and done, most of us from our earliest childhood believe that we are the king of our own castle. We want to do things “our way.” We determine our own destinies, make our own decisions, chart our own course, set our own goals, choose our own priorities, arrange our own affairs, and govern our own lives. We become highly skilled specialists in selfish, self-centered living where all life revolves around the epicenter of me, I, mine. Millions sanctimoniously and religiously pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” thinking it is something outside of themselves, is some distant age, under other conditions — and have no intention whatever of abdicating the throne of their own

inner wills and hearts to the King of Glory. They are utterly unwilling to surrender the sovereignty of their lives to God. They are no more prepared to accept the sovereign rule of Christ than were those men who shouted at His crucifixion, “We have no king but Caesar!”

So, if I sincerely, earnestly, and genuinely beseech the Spirit of God to rule in my life and experience, there to establish His Kingdom, I can only expect that there will be a most tremendous confrontation. It is a foregone conclusion that there will follow a formidable conflict between His divine sovereignty and my self-willed ego. And this, precious friend of mine, is the true BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON! S. D. Gordon ably stated it this way: “With this prayer go two clauses that really particularize and explain it. They are included in it, and are added to make more clear the full intent. The first of these clauses gives the sweep of His will in the broadest outlines. The second touches the opposition to that will both for our individual lives and for the race and for the earth.

“The first clause is this, ‘Thy Kingdom come.’ The second clause is, ‘Thy will be done.’ In both of these short sentences the emphatic word is “THY”. That word is set in the sharpest possible contrast here. There is another kingdom now on the earth. There is another will being done. The other kingdom must go if God’s Kingdom is to come. These kingdoms are antagonistic at every point of contact. They are rivals for the same allegiance and the same territory. They cannot exist together. ‘Thy Kingdom come’ of necessity includes this, ‘the other kingdom go.’ ‘Thy Kingdom come’ means likewise, ‘Thy King come,’ for in the nature of things there cannot be a kingdom without a king. That means again by the same inference, ‘the other prince go,’ the one who makes pretensions to being the rightful heir to the throne. ‘Thy will be done’ includes by the same inference this: ‘the other will be undone.’ There are the two great wills at work in the world ever clashing in the action of history and in our individual lives. In many of us, yea, in all of us, though in greatly varying degree, these two wills constantly clash. Man is the real battlefield. The pitch of the battle is in his will. The greatest prayer then fully expressed, sweeps first the whole field of action, then touches the heart of the action, and then attacks the opposition. It is this: THY Kingdom come, THY will be done” — end quote. When I pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” I am willing to relinquish the rule of my life, my own will, my own ways, to give up governing my own affairs, to abstain from controlling my own destiny in order to allow the indwelling Christ to be raised up within me as the personality of my being.

The word “kingdom” is from the Greek word BASILEIA meaning “rule” or “reign”. Sometimes I wish that everywhere the word appears in scripture it had been translated “reign” or “kingly rule”. I think that says something that “kingdom” does not, at least to our modern minds. Kingdom makes us think of land and people, of riding horses, pomp and ceremony, maidens and knights, castles and moats and walls and laws and all of that. Even Pilate asked Jesus if He were a king, implying, “What kind of a king are you?” Jesus replied, “My Kingdom is not of this world — that is, my Kingdom is not after the order and systems of earthly kingdoms. It is the rule of God by the Spirit.”

To the first believers “evangelism” was merely the sharing of good news. In fact, “evangel” or “gospel” means good news. The good news of a new and marvelous Friend — the man Jesus who had walked the roads of Galilee with them, helped them mend their nets by the lakeside, played with their children, healed their sick, even raised their dead, talked to them in familiar yet fascinating words about the Kingdom of God — the glorious new order of the reign of God where sin, sickness, oppression, cruelty, war, famine, and death would pass away and all men would live in righteousness, peace, joy and power in the Holy Ghost.

THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER

There is very special meaning and deep mystery in the words, “Our Father...Thy Kingdom come.” Earth is full of misery, sin and death. Many are the schemes of science and politics for correcting and mending matters, and God knows they need mending. Each man has his own nostrum, every quack his own panacea — but every council and summit, every invading army and self-assertive leader, every carnal effort of man leaves God and His Christ out of account, making every plan doomed to failure. We shall mend matters only by finding God as reality, and deliverance comes only when HE is enthroned as King.

Someone says, “But — is not God King now? Is not the world His? Are not all men in His sovereign hands? Does not the Most High rule over all? Has He not always been King?” That is perfectly true! I do not forget for one moment that even now the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. “God is King of all the earth” (Ps. 47:7). He is a King upon His throne. “God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness” (Ps. 47:8). He has a regal title, high and mighty. “Thus saith the high and lofty One” (Isa. 57:15). He has the ensigns of royalty. He has His scepter. “A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom” (Heb. 1:8). He has His royal crown. “On His head were many crowns” (Rev. 19:12). He has His jura regalia, His kingly prerogatives. He has power to make laws, to seal pardons, which are the flowers and jewels belonging to His crown. Thus the Lord is King. He is a great King. “For the Lord is a great King above all gods” (Ps. 95:3). He is great in and of Himself; and not like other kings, who are made great by their subjects. That He is so great a King appears by the immensity of His Being. “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord” (Jer. 23:24). His center is everywhere, His circumference is nowhere, He is nowhere excluded; He is immensely great that “the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him” (I Kings 8:27). His greatness is manifest by the demonstration of His power. “He made heaven and earth” (Ps. 124:8). With a breath He can crumble us to dust; with a word He can unpin the world, and break the axis of it in pieces.

God is a glorious King. “Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory” (Ps. 24:10). He has internal glory. “The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty” (Ps. 93:1). Other kings have royal and sumptuous apparel to make them appear glorious to beholders, but all their magnificence is borrowed; God is clothed with His own majesty; His own glorious essence is instead of royal robes, and “He hath girded Himself with strength.” Kings have their guard about them to defend their person, because they are not able to defend themselves; but God needs no guard or assistance from others. “He hath girded Himself with strength.” His own power is His lifeguard. “Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?” (Ps. 89:6). He has a pre-eminence above all other kings for majesty. He has the highest throne, the richest crown, the largest dominions, and the longest possession. “He hath on His vesture a name written, KING OF KINGS” (Rev. 19:16). “The Lord sitteth King forever” (Ps. 29:10). Angels serve Him, all the kings of the earth hold their crowns and diadems by immediate tenure from this great King. “By me kings reign” (Prov. 8:15). What a mighty and glorious King! As someone has written:

While we deliberate, He reigns.
When we decide wisely, He reigns.
When we decide foolishly, He reigns.
When we serve Him humbly, loyally, He reigns.
When we serve Him self-assertively, He reigns.
When we rebel and seek to withhold our service, He reigns.

At a given moment in history it may seem to be true that the rulership of the world is not in the hands of God but in the hands of selfish and ruthless men. Caesar sits securely on his throne;

Christ perishes on a cross. So it appears. But not so. It was easy for the Roman Governor, Pilate, to make this mistake. How very impressive an empire that covered the whole of Europe and reached into Africa and Asia! How very substantial-looking those palaces and basilicas, those arches and amphitheatres, those roads and aqueducts and suburban villas which contributed to the grandeur of the city men called eternal! How very great and far-reaching and impregnable the power of Caesar! It was easy for Pilate to think Rome was reality. Nevertheless, it is God, and not Caesar, who reigns. It is the Kingdom of God, and not any earthly empire, that endures. In the New Testament it is said of Christ that He is the stone which the builders rejected but which God has made the cornerstone of creation. It is also said, "He that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces." And it appears to be so. On that stone the Roman empire fell, and was broken to pieces.

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! 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-manuevered by Him, not because they cannot help themselves, but because they love Him. It is reconciliation, union, 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 upon 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, the Father's Kingdom is a Kingdom of love! Yahweh's Kingdom was a Kingdom of power. God wants to be King not because He is Creator, but because He is Father. He wants 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; 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 KINGDOM — PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," points to the Kingdom as something still to be realized. How can that which is already fully realized be requested to come? As yet it is in some way in the future. And yet, in other places in the scriptures it is spoken of as actually existent, a present reality. How can this be? The reality is, both premises are true — the Kingdom is both present and future. There are many indications that for Jesus the Kingdom of God was not only future but present, not only coming but already beginning to come. According to Mark, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming good news from God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the good news." A number of

eminent scholars believe that Mark's Greek requires it to be translated, "The Kingdom of God has come." For example, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you," or "has overtaken you" (Goodspeed), or "has reached you already" (Moffatt).

Again, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go (or "are going" — Moffatt, as also Goodspeed) into the Kingdom of God before you" — not will go into some future Kingdom some day, but are even now entering the Kingdom that is. I do not hesitate to tell you that the Kingdom of the Father came when Jesus of Nazareth appeared among men. It came in the truth that He revealed. It came in the love that He made manifest. It came in the redeeming power that worked through Him, by which the blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the dead to live again, and the poor had good news brought to them and the sinful and despairing were lifted up into a new life of hope and glory. This power is now in the world, available to all men and able to save to the uttermost. The Kingdom of God is here! It is for us to receive it "as a little child," as Jesus said. You remember that when the Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation...for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you." The Pharisees were treating as future what was already present. The Kingdom of God was right there within them if they could have understood it. "But," you object, "surely the Kingdom of God was not within those carnal, hateful, legalistic, Christ-rejecting Pharisees!" Some say that the correct translation should be: "For the Kingdom of God is in your midst," or "among you," meaning that the Kingdom was present in their midst in the person of Jesus, "among" them but not "within" them. It cannot be denied — the Kingdom was indeed present among them in the very life of the Son of God, the King of glory! But that is not the meaning of this passage.

The clearest meaning of the Greek can always be ascertained by usage. The way a word is used reveals its true meaning — the meaning that the Holy Spirit of inspiration puts upon it, not the meaning our English translators give it. It is a thing of wonder — the Holy Spirit has faithfully, powerfully and indisputably recorded for us the precise meaning of the word here translated "within". The Greek word is ENTOS meaning simply, according to Strong's concordance, "inside; within." The word is used in only one other place in the whole New Testament, in Matthew 23:26. It is the Lord Jesus Himself that uses the word on both occasions, and notice what He says. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within (entos) the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." No one can argue that ENTOS means "in the midst" or "among" in this place — it clearly means "within". "Within" is contrasted with the "outside" of the cup and platter and plainly speaks of the pollution within the hearts of men, not in their midst or among them. The evil in men is not something apart from them or outside of them but something rooted deeply in the inward nature.

The question follows — how could Jesus say to the same Pharisees that both corruption was within them and the Kingdom of God was within them! It sounds like a contradiction. But it isn't. Paul spoke of a dual reality within man when he said, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my (spiritual) mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:22-23). Little wonder that he cried out, "O wretched man that I am!" It is really very simple. The carnal, soulish heart of man is the seat of all uncleanness, just as the deeper spirit of man is the root of all godliness. So it is not surprising that the Pharisees failed to discover the presence of the Kingdom within them, for they were not walking after the spirit, but after the flesh. Yet they were potentially capable of either.

So note — not to the disciples who followed Him and kept His sayings, but to the Pharisees in their spiritual blindness He spoke these amazing words: “The Kingdom of God is within you.” Yes, the Kingdom was indeed “within them,” as a bright and radiant possibility. This appeals to me, in a sense, as the most beautiful thing Jesus ever said. Consider what the Kingdom of Heaven was in His thought — the most pure, and perfect, and heavenly of all existing possible realities; then consider that He said this to His implacable enemies, and to the men, who, in their lives, exemplified the exact opposite of what He had come to reveal and establish. Within these men — religious intellectuals and scholars, hypocrites, men hateful and hating — there slumbered this lovely and lovable thing — the Kingdom of the spirit. They were possible members of that Kingdom; in their spirits were all the materials necessary for the development of the Kingdom of God. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of the spirit, for God is spirit. Buried deep within every man is the spirit that has come from God, for every man is body, soul, and spirit.

The Bible says that “God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 27:16; Heb. 12:9). We might ask, “Who, really, is entitled to think of God as Father?” God is the Father of all men. Some men walk as children of the devil, for they walk after the flesh, after the serpent nature. But God is still the Father of their spirit. There is a special sense in which God is the Father only of those who are reborn of Him through the Holy Spirit of re-generation. To these He gives, in a blessedly unique sense, the “spirit of adoption” or the revelation of their sonship, whereby they cry, “Abba, Father!” The Holy Spirit quickens their spirit to know that they are sons of God and to enable them to walk in that realm. Nevertheless, the fact remains, universal and unalterable, that God is the Father of the spirits of all men. If we had no spirit from God the Holy Spirit would be unable to quicken our spirit and make it alive unto Him. Father Adam is declared by the Spirit of inspiration to be “the son of God” (Lk. 3:38). He is indeed a “prodigal son.” But not withstanding his disobedience and banishment from Father’s house, he has never ceased to be a son; the Father, notwithstanding His anger and punishment, has never ceased to be a Father. And He is a loving and tender and gracious Father who waits patiently for every prodigal to come home. And they will come home! Blessed be His name. How precious beyond words to express is the blessed truth that God life abides within every man down in the depths of his spirit, although most men walk not after the spirit, but after the flesh. It is there, in man’s spirit, that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be found. There is the root, the base, the seed, the fountainhead of God’s life and God’s rule. The Kingdom of God is truly within every man — but he knows it not, and therefore walks unheeding its claims and powers. But if ever he discovers that Kingdom of Life and Light and Love, he discovers it within as his spirit is quickened by God’s Spirit, his consciousness awakened to the Kingdom of the spirit within.

While the Kingdom of God is thus present, it is also still future. Its full realization has yet to come. So long as there is in this world one man who has not surrendered unto the spirit of Christ, so long as there is a single area of life that has not been brought into subjection to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, so long will the Kingdom be unrealized, so long shall we need to pray this prayer, “Thy Kingdom come!” All the misery of this world is due to the fact that there are still multitudes of men and women walking after the flesh, there are whole arenas of human activity that are not birthed out of, or controlled by, the Spirit. The Kingdom is still imperfect, incomplete. Its full establishment lies in the future somewhere. Until that full establishment takes place, until God is experientially King everywhere and over everybody and everything in the union of love, the world’s “golden age” will not have arrived. For the elect of God the Day has dawned! The Sun of Righteousness has arisen within our hearts! Our old heavens and our old earth have passed away. We live now in a New World, we sing now a New Song, our night has turned to Day. Darkness has flown away, sin and sorrow and death

are swallowed up, God has wiped all tears from off our faces, and all things are made new! This is the present glorious and eternal reality of the sons of God in this wonderful Day of the Lord! This is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory of God within His chosen ones.

If I did not believe in the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God in all realms and everywhere and over every thing throughout the vastnesses of infinity, and if I believed that this world was to continue to be misruled and misgoverned as it is; if I believed that sin and sorrow and death and wicked men and vile institutions were to continue unto the end, I should despair of humanity and of God. But God never gives up. God reigns! The good news which our Lord Jesus Christ came to preach is “good tidings of great joy to all people.” Praise God for the good news! God reigns! — that is the good news. God shall be Victor! God shall put every enemy under His feet and our feet! He is Lord of ALL!

The gospel that Jesus preached was the gospel of the Kingdom. He announced that He had come to found a Kingdom; He claimed the title of King for Himself; and in the Sermon on the Mount He gave us the laws, the principles, the very constitution of that Kingdom. Well, what kind of a Kingdom is it? Across millenniums of time the answer of the great apostle Paul rings clear: “The Kingdom of God is Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.” There you have in one sublime statement the essence of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is righteousness, or, in other words, right-ness. There is cruel wrong in this world of ours. Man wrongs man, brother oppresses brother, nations war against and oppress one another, bosses become hard taskmasters, taking advantage of employees, pastors lord it over the flock and control and manipulate congregations, husbands beat and abuse their wives. The low realms of the earth are full of cruelty, maliciousness, violence and crime, and even in the midst of those who name the name of Christ there is iniquity also. But the Kingdom of God is righteousness and when His Kingdom comes, tyranny, oppression, strife, injustice and wrongs cease — men do right out of the loving nature of the King who reigns within. Forgiveness of sins does not secure such a transformation, but when the Kingdom of God comes with power, there is a mighty change!

Righteousness is right attitude, right motive, right living out of the spirit. You see, my beloved, it is not just righteousness by man’s standard, not external obedience to the law, not outward conformity to society’s norms, not mere human goodness. There is more than one kind of righteousness. Paul says, “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” (Rom. 10:3). The Kingdom of God is “righteousness...IN THE HOLY GHOST!” It is the righteousness that comes by a new spirit, a right spirit, or Holy Spirit. It is the righteousness of God Himself, a new nature. You can know righteousness, peace, and joy through the Holy Spirit while you live in America, Europe, China, Africa, or any place on this earth. These are not realities in heaven or in the millennium. The Holy Spirit does not say that “the Kingdom of God is righteousness...IN THE MILLENNIUM.” Nor does He say, “The Kingdom of God is righteousness...in the KINGDOM AGE.” Too long preachers and believers have interpreted the Kingdom of God as a future, physical, materialistic Kingdom, ordered by external laws, attainable in a future age or after death. God wants you to understand today that His Kingdom is not to be sought in that realm. That would make His Kingdom too cheap, materialistic, natural, worldly and earthly. All that the Kingdom is IN THE HOLY GHOST! That is why it is both the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. God is spirit, high above the earthly realm. Heaven far surpasses a place or locality somewhere out in the universe. Heaven is not a planet beyond the Milky Way. Heaven is a real dimension — the dimension of God’s own life. Heaven is the result of the presence of God and we can know and experience that realm right

here on earth. When you enter into the consciousness of God by the spirit you have stepped upon the territory of the Kingdom. It is in the Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!

The Kingdom of God is peace — peace in the heart, peace of soul, peace with God, peace between men, peace between nations. What is peace? Is peace real? What is its appearance? Have you ever seen peace? Is it long or short? Is it fat or skinny? Ah, peace is spirit. You cannot see peace apart from its effect upon people and circumstances. You can know when peace is present. You can sense peace, but you cannot touch or handle it. There is more than one level of peace. There is a soulish peace which men experience in a psychological way. It is a peace generated out of the conditioning or influencing of the mind, will, emotions and desires. It is the peace attained on a restful vacation, in the silence of the evening watching a sunset, on a psychologist's couch, relaxing with the television at night after the kids are all tucked in, or hiking a mountain trail. These and many other things give peace — but none of them have anything whatsoever to do with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not just peace — it is peace IN THE HOLY GHOST. It is God's peace. It is heaven's peace. It is divine peace. It is peace that passeth understanding. It is peace that rules our lives and keeps our hearts in the very midst of calamity, pain, disappointment, trouble, problems, difficulties and testings. It is a peace so deep that it comes only out of the spirit. It holds us steady, calm and confident in the blasts of hell. It is peace in the Holy Ghost. It is the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven!

The Kingdom of God is joy. Can joy be found in the world today? Certainly. But just as there is more than one kind of righteousness and more than one kind of peace, there is more than one type of joy. There is a superficial soulish joy experienced by every man, woman and child on earth irrespective of whether they be saint or sinner, moral or immoral, or what god they serve. It is the joy of a loved one coming home, the joy of a wedding, the joy of a newborn baby, the joy of the amusement park and the dance floor, the joy of delightful children who are an honor to their parents, the joy of accomplishment and recognition. Soulish joy is often a religious joy inspired by the singing of peppy choruses over and over and the clapping of the hands. There is nothing wrong with such joy, but if it can be "worked up" it is soulish, not spiritual. While such activity may be done "as unto the Lord" it should not be confused with the Kingdom of God. Many good things bring soulish joy to our lives, but none of these have any relationship to the Kingdom of God. You see, the Kingdom of God is not merely joy — it is joy IN THE HOLY GHOST. It is God's joy. It is heaven's joy. It is divine joy. It is spiritual joy. It is joy unspeakable. We are the people of God. We are the vessels that contain the Spirit of God. To have a conscious revelation of what Christ is in you arouses the consciousness of the Kingdom of God. When you walk in the spirit, you are walking in the power of the Kingdom of Heaven. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:17). The sons of God are also called "the sons of the Kingdom." When the Holy Spirit rules us, what other son could we be? The Spirit of Christ has come to rule our senses and our body. Christ is being raised up within us as the personality and power of our lives. We can now live and walk above every storm and trouble, above all weakness and limitation, yea, above even sin and death! Tears are wiped away from off all faces and there is joy unspeakable and full of glory as the Kingdom rules our lives!

Truly the Kingdom of God is IN THE HOLY GHOST!

Chapter 14

Thy Kingdom Come

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...Thy kingdom come...”
(Mat. 6:9).

The prophets of Old Testament times regarded the Kingdom of God as an event of the future. It was for them something yet to be achieved. They looked forward earnestly to the time when God would arise and come to judge the earth. They saw in vision the day when all nations of men would live in peace; when strife, war, tyranny, injustice, sorrow, hunger, want, pain and death would be vanquished. That age of perfection would bring blessings unparalleled and would be the rule of God in the midst of men. These beautiful dreams of an age to come of heavenly bliss on earth are among the most enchanting passages in the Bible.

There are two errors abroad in the land today in respect to the Kingdom of God. There is a tendency among God's people to limit the Kingdom either to this age of the Church, or to the next age called the Millennium or the Kingdom Age. The first group can see nothing in the Kingdom beyond our present experience. To these the Kingdom is identical with our salvation experience and the many gifts, blessings, provisions, and benefits of the Church age. This concept views the Kingdom as a “little flock” right up to the end of time, in the world, co-existing as it were with the world, yet not of the world, but never triumphing over the world. The Church and the world, or the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil both continue as they now are right up to the end of time when Jesus comes again and terminates the whole program, destroying the present heavens and earth, casting the wicked into everlasting hell fire and shipping the saints off to glory in eternal heaven. In this view there is no ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God over the kingdom of darkness, no consummation of the Kingdom where God becomes all-in-all. Instead of consummation these dear people settle for termination. God just “winds things up” and the whole program on earth comes to a jarring halt. According to this scheme the prophecy of Daniel will never be fulfilled: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME ALL THESE KINGDOMS, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). Nor, if these brethren are right, can the prophecy in Revelation 11:15 come to pass: “The kingdoms of this world ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

The second error recognizes no present literal Kingdom of God on earth, pushing the Kingdom off into a future age, making its present reality utterly meaningless. Men with their human theology have imagined that the Kingdom of God has not yet come on the earth and that it remains to be “established” during the “Millennium”. People often declare in no uncertain terms that Jesus is returning to “set up” the Kingdom. They proclaim that the Kingdom is an “age” of one thousand years duration. I do not hesitate to tell you that every shred of evidence is to the contrary. All such notions are utter rubbish and have no foundation in the spirit of Truth. At this very moment, when Christians are busily looking for a one-world government under the antichrist, the great tribulation period followed by the return of Jesus and the

establishment of the Kingdom, we who have followed on to know the Lord and have sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness have had our hearts ravished by this blessed reality: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON" (Col. 1:13). Let demons rage. Let fools and unbelievers hang their heads in shame. The Kingdom of God is a present reality to those who have been caught up into the high places of the Spirit! It is not a matter of this or that, now or then, this age or the next age. The Kingdom is none of those things. It is more than all. It is this and that, now and then, this age and the next — and much, much more!

The great truth I declare to you today is that Jesus Christ came two millenniums ago and brought the Kingdom and established the Kingdom within the hearts and lives of the sons of the Kingdom. "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). And again, "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). God has a plan for His great and glorious Kingdom! Indeed, God has a wonderful plan for this world! It is a plan of which the architectural drawings were made in eternity. It encompasses the minutest detail of all of creation. I assure you that when time has run its course, and the veil is dropped upon the final scene, we shall discover that that plan has been worked out to its tiniest detail, just as God planned it in eternity.

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

As men with the aid of God's Word have gazed into the vista of the future, it seems to have missed their understanding that God says very little in His Word about eternity, while devoting many hundreds of passages to His will and works wrought through THE AGES. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2). What tremendous statements we have here! God has spoken to us through His Son — literally, "spoke to us in Son," or, God spoke to us in

One who has the character that He is a SON, revealing the realm and relationship of sonship to God. This Son is heir of all things and, blessed be God! we are joint heirs with Him. "By whom also He made the worlds." Many people believe this refers to the creative act — "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It does not refer to that at all. The word here for "worlds" is AIONAS. It means ages — "...by whom He framed the ages." This goes beyond His being Creator of matter and its arrangement into multiplied billions of galaxies, stars, suns, planets and moons with their atmospheres and inhabitants. This lends purpose to everything. He is the heir who GIVES THE PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE! He planned and framed the ages, He ordained the end from the beginning; not only did He create everything, He did it for a purpose, and "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). Notice — the Amplified Bible says, "But in the last of these days He has spoken to us in the person of a Son, whom He appointed Heir and lawful Owner of all things, also by and through whom He created the worlds and the reaches of space and the AGES OF TIME — that is, He made, produced, built, operated and arranged them in order!" "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3), but it should read, "the ages were planned by the word of God." God made, planned, and determined the destiny of all the ages in and by Jesus Christ.

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

While the scriptures speak in the Greek of an age, and the ages, and the ages of the ages — one age proceeding from, or out of, a previous age until all the ages have run their courses — it also points to that glorious climatic age of all ages. We read the phrase, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Heb. 1:8). These words "for ever and ever" come from the Greek which literally reads TO THE AGE OF THE AGES. This is very familiar terminology in scripture.

Few men have been caught away by the spirit of inspiration as was the wise king Solomon when he penned the beautiful Song of Solomon. God dropped one thousand and five songs down into the heart of Solomon, but of these, only five comprising the Song of Solomon, have been preserved and found a place in holy scripture. Inspiration named it "The Song of Songs," that is, the one song that was above and beyond all the songs that have ever come from human heart and human lips. Just as the "Song of Songs" was chief above them all, just as the "Holy of holies" was the holiest place of all, just as the "heaven of heavens" is the highest heaven of all, just as the "King of kings" is the greatest King of all, so all through the scriptures, though obscured by many translators, we have this remarkable phrase TO THE AGE OF THE AGES. It points to that age that shall be the most glorious of all, and which finds its type in the year of Jubilee.

This is the Holy Spirit's way of expressing the superlative, and so far as God's plan of the ages is concerned this AGE OF THE AGES is THE AGE PAR EXCELLENCE of them all. A simple illustration of this is our expression, "a day of days," meaning a day that comes out of previous days, which crowns them all, and embodies not only what they contained, but the full fruition of all that was elementary in them. Eternity does not emerge full grown in man's consciousness until this wonderful age is ended. This AGE OF THE AGES is that glorious climax to His purpose and process of the ages, wherein He states, "Behold, I make ALL things new" (Rev. 21:5). When He says, "ALL," it is self-evident that there is nothing remaining in the universe that shall not be made new, else all is not all. "For He must reign until He hath put ALL enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25-26). When the last enemy is under His feet, destroyed, and there is no more death in any creature anywhere in all God's great universe, then shall God be all-in-all! The Amplified gives, "Be everything to everyone." Time comes to an end when the ages end and eternity, with God "all-in-all," becomes a conscious reality.

The Word of God is crystal clear that there is to be an increase of the Kingdom from age to age. The very fact that there are yet "ages to come" shows that the Kingdom advances from one age to another. Historically, every new age has superseded the previous ones, bringing greater light, a further revelation of God, and more advanced dealing with mankind. Each new age inaugurates a higher dimension of God's purposes in the earth. Nothing is clearer in the scriptures than the fact that THIS IS NOT THE LAST AGE. There is no "final windup" at the close of this present dispensation. We can expect, therefore, fresh and greater manifestations and administrations of Kingdom dominion as we move from this age into the next. What anticipation this evokes in our hearts!

The apostle James made a statement to the council at Jerusalem in which he clearly defines the complete outline of God's purpose for the so-called age of grace in which we live and the dispensation that is to follow. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, AFTER THIS (after God has taken out of the nations a people for His name) I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David (the fullness of God's glory in a people), which is fallen down (following the great apostasy); and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, and ALL THE GENTILES, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:14-18). Dispensationally, this is one of the most significant passages in the New Testament. It gives God's divine purpose for this age and the next age. James says that the purpose of God during this present age has been to visit the Gentiles TO TAKE O-U-T O-F T-H-E-M A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME. God's purpose for this age has never been the conversion of the whole world. God has not been trying to save the whole world. God has had no plan for "sweeping nations into the Kingdom of God." That never was God's plan for this dispensation. God's purpose, then, in this Church age, is to "call out" a people for His name. Out from among the billions of earth God is choosing an ELECT COMPANY to bear His name — His nature and His authority. God has been forming His Church, the body of Christ. The Church is the "ecclesia" — the "called out ones." That is the meaning of the word "church." Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost. The gospel has never, anywhere, converted all, but everywhere has called out some. It is here, in the true Church, which is His body, that Jesus Christ FIRST ESTABLISHES HIS GOVERNMENT that He might rule and reign on the throne of men's lives.

God's purpose in His Church is not to save men from sin and hell and take them off to some far-off heaven somewhere. God's plan is to first set up His government in the hearts of His

elect and then as they become totally committed unto Him to imbue them with His own mind, spirit, thoughts, will, nature and power until they have grown up into the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. But most Christians will not come to this! They are too busy playing church, rejoicing that they are not going to hell or that they are going to heaven when they die, and blundering around in the carnal programs and immaturity and shame of a wretched, fleshly, Babylonian religious system which falsely calls itself “the church.” But just as the dispensation of the law, at its conclusion, brought forth that which it typified and pointed to — Jesus Christ the Son of God — so this present Church age must, in these last days, at its conclusion, bring forth that for which it was intended and to which it pointed — a many-membered BODY OF CHRIST, perfected, matured, overcoming, and full grown into the exact likeness and full glory of its Head and Lord.

God never intended that Christ should rule over all the earth and all nations during this age. His reign is confined completely to that company of footstep followers who have heard His voice and follow Him all the way into sonship to God. Baptized in His fullness these sons of God become the very embodiment of His government in the earth. This may seem to be an extremely slow method and a very small Kingdom for such a great and exalted King, but we cannot over emphasize the importance of this lowly beginning for a government whose authority is destined to “subdue ALL THINGS.” So let us see that not only is God establishing His government in the lives of His elect, but through His dealings with them He is actually FORMING THEM INTO A GOVERNMENT — a ruling body of sons of God, kings and priests after the Order of Melchizedek! God is calling out a people to bear His name, to be His nature, authority and power in the earth. To bear His name WHERE? WHEN? HOW? To bear His name only through their fleeting years in the flesh? Not at all. James says, “AFTER THIS (after the Lord has completed His work of calling out a people for His name), I will return and build again the tabernacle of David...THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES...saith the Lord.” The “residue” of men denotes “all the rest,” that is, all who were not part of the “called out.” I tell you, my beloved, God is now forming a government composed of faithful sons (the tabernacle of David) whom He shall use in the coming age and ages as kings and priests after the Order of Melchizedek to bring God’s Kingdom to pass in all the earth and in all realms. Through this glorious anointed body of sons ALL THE REST OF MEN...ALL THE GENTILES...SHALL SEEK THE LORD. Hallelujah! This is not the “coming” of the Kingdom, it is the next stage of “advancement” and “increase” of the Kingdom. The Kingdom has already come! But this next step of the Kingdom’s expansion cannot come until the sons of God are fully matured, perfected, trained, prepared and equipped. God, through nearly two thousand years, has been slowly, surely and wisely choosing this body of sons, preparing them through the furnace of affliction and the discipline of testings to sit together with Him on His throne, for those that suffer with Him shall also reign with Him!

The promise is sure. “And He that OVERCOMETH, and keepeth my works unto the end (of the processing), 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” (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). “And now they sing again a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to break the seals that are on it, for You were slain and with Your blood you purchased men unto God — from every tribe and language and people and nation. And You have MADE THEM A KINGDOM AND PRIESTS to our God, and they shall REIGN OVER THE EARTH!” (Rev. 5:9-10, Amplified). This great truth cannot be any more forcefully presented than it is by the prophet Daniel when he writes, “These great beasts which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

But the SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL TAKE THE KINGDOM, and POSSESS THE KINGDOM for ever, even for ever and ever. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; and the time came that THE SAINTS POSSESSED THE KINGDOM. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High...BUT THE JUDGMENT (of the saints) SHALL SIT, AND THEY (the saints) SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS DOMINION TO CONSUME AND DESTROY IT UNTO THE END. AND THE KINGDOM AND DOMINION AND THE GREATNESS OF THE KINGDOM UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH, whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and ALL DOMINIONS SHALL SERVE AND OBEY HIM" (Dan. 7:17-18, 21-22, 25-27).

The work of the sons of God only begins at the opening of the age that follows the Church age. "Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and pass sentence was entrusted...blessed and holy — spiritually whole, of unimpaired innocence and proved virtue — is the person who shares in the first resurrection...and they shall be MINISTERS of God and of Christ...and they shall RULE WITH HIM a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4,6, Amplified). Ah, yes, they shall rule for that age but the Kingdom doesn't end there, for, "of the increase of His government and peace THERE SHALL BE NO END!"

It is my deep conviction that God's Kingdom program for the past two millenniums has been the calling out of the body of Christ, the formation of God's divine government of Kings and Priests after the Order of Melchizedek. These are called out by God, called out of the world, and called out unto God. Furthermore, they are called out of every religious system on earth including those man-made systems which have the audacity to call themselves "the Church," although their organizations are unscriptural, their programs unspiritual, and their ceremonies uninspired. They are in reality a pretense and a sham. The true Church is the ecclesia, the "called out" ones. They are called out by the Holy Spirit of God and they are called out unto God. Their ears know His voice and not the clamoring voices of strangers. Well they know by the Spirit that the Babel of voices which clamor to be heard from the pulpit and radio and television are too often the voices of strangers posing as the ministers of Christ who seek to draw away disciples after themselves, and not to point men to the Christ of God upon whose shoulder is the government of the world.

God has had no plan to save the world during the Church age, only to call out a people unto Himself. If God had purposed to save the world during the past two thousand years He most certainly would have done so, for His IS GOD ALMIGHTY. God's Kingdom program for the next age, as His Kingdom progresses from age to age in that glorious increase of which there is no end, is the subjugation and salvation of all the living nations on earth. The promise is sure. Hear what the Lord is about to do through His Anointed Christ Body in this, our day! "He that overcometh...to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON" (Rev. 2:26-27). "And 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 TO THE AGES OF THE AGES" (Rev. 11:15). "And all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and ALL THE KINDREDS OF THE NATIONS shall worship before Thee" (Ps. 22:27). "For the Lord most high is terrible; He is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and THE NATIONS UNDER OUR FEET" (Ps. 47:2-3). "Yea, ALL KINGS shall fall down before Him: ALL NATIONS shall serve Him" (Ps. 72:11).

Scripture could be piled upon scripture, but it should be clear to every honest heart that God has a plan beyond this age and beyond the Church, the called out, a plan that includes ALL THE NATIONS OF EARTH. The Church age is the age of the called out, the formation of God's elect into a Kingdom of Priests. The next age is the age for that Kingdom of Priests to take authority over the nations and bring the Kingdom of God to pass in the earth among all living nations. In the ages beyond God shall deal with all men who have lived and died from father Adam all the way down to this and future times. All these shall be restored to God and brought into the courts of His Kingdom. It is an extraordinary and awesome thing that the Lord by revelation of the Spirit gives His sons to understand that what He is doing on the earth today is merely a beginning. Nothing is finished yet. We are not even approaching the end of the world, or the consummation of the ages, or the great "wind up" of God's program. Nothing is so complete, so perfect, that it is to remain unchanged from what it was in its time. What the sovereign Lord has given us is a root and not yet a tree. The seed still must grow, the branches spread out; the blossoms will come later. In the end the fruit will come, for that is how the Kingdom develops, saith the Lord, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." This wonderful work goes on from generation to generation, from dispensation to dispensation, and from age to age.

Within this principle lies the nature of the Kingdom of Christ and the purpose He represents. God's Christ is for the redemption of creation — and how can that be completed in a day? How can that be finished in one earthly lifetime? How can that be accomplished in one age, or two or three? Creation took a long time — seven incredibly long epochs called "days" in the book of Genesis. In like manner redemption, restoration and re-creation — that requires time! It is not for just a few people or for several thousand or for one race or for the Church; it is for all mankind, for every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, for the whole creation. The Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end regarding the Kingdom of God and must reign until all enemies are under His feet, all things are made new, and God is all-in-all (I Cor. 15:25-28). No wonder there are yet AGES TO COME!

For many years now multitudes of preachers and people in the church systems would have us believe that God has been in this great work of the ages for the short period of 6,000 years. They tell us that in this day God is about to become so disgusted with the whole mess that He is going to close it down, take a few saints away to a planet called heaven, and give up on the rest of creation, the work of His love. What a WEAK and STUPID God some folk have and worship! They worship a God who changes, one who in the beginning did start out to bring about a glorious end, but somewhere along the line lost control of the situation and has now thrown up His hands in despair and decided to destroy the whole thing and content Himself with a "little flock" of followers for all eternity. What great pity I feel for such people and for the god they serve! For this is going to put their god in the unenviable position of being filled with regret throughout all eternity because He was unable to carry out His purpose, a large segment of humanity and creation forever lost to Him, and He will have to always remember that over in the hell He created is the vast majority of men for whom Jesus died suffering the tortures of the damned for ever and ever. What a prospect for God and His creation! What a prospect for God and His Kingdom! What a prospect for God and His Anointed body of Kings and Priests after the Order of Melchizedek! What an unthinkable prospect!

There are worlds beyond this one, scattered throughout the vastnesses of infinity, all created by our Lord Jesus Christ and all included within the scope of His ever-increasing Kingdom. Long millenniums ago God "created the heavens and the earth." A universe of raging infernos called stars came into existence. Astronomers estimate that their number is equal to 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 or one sextillion — yet, their utter extremity has never been

seen! There seems to be no end to the twinkling points of light. And scattered among these myriads of stars and nebulae are millions of solar systems composed of suns, planets and moons. Those worlds, too, are to be explored and God's great purpose fulfilled in them through the sons of God, for God's Christ is heir of A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S. Ages to come...it will take them all, precious friend of mine, though there should be billions or trillions of them, to complete the great and grand purpose of our Creator. What a calling! What a plan! What a destiny! How magnificently awesome and meaningful the words of the inspired prophet: "And of the INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND PEACE there shall be no end!"

When Jesus came revealing the great truth and reality of sonship and the Kingdom of God He taught us to pray, "Our Father...Thy Kingdom come." In offering this prayer we must not stop at ourselves. The prayer embraces the whole wide world in its sweeps and indeed all of creation. Thy Kingdom come! Where? Everywhere. All nations are to bow down before Him, all people are to serve Him, and unto all principalities and powers in the heavenlies the wisdom of God is to be revealed. Men discuss the question sometimes as to which race is likely to become the dominant race in the earth. Hitler thought that the Aryan race was the master race and set about to conquer the world. The Jews believe that they will eventually rule the earth. We who live in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, England and Northwestern Europe are sometimes inclined to believe that this unique destiny is reserved to the ten-tribed house of Israel — the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples. There is abundant evidence that the ten-tribed house of Israel migrated from Assyrian captivity into those areas which today are populated by the Anglo-Saxon race. But there is something I am more anxious about than the dominion of the Anglo-Saxon race, and that is the dominion of CHRIST. Above all else I am a son of God, born not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but from ABOVE, born of GOD. Such a birth forever and completely removes me from the question of race and initiates me into the higher realm of celestial citizenship. No men are subjects of the Kingdom of God by natural birth. As the firstborn Son of God explained to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God...for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Natural or fleshly birth introduces us to the privileges of nature and of flesh. Birth in time with its inherent seed of sin and death, introduces us to a passing realm that is crucified on Christ's cross. Spiritual birth gives us internal, spiritual, and divine advantages. Born of the Spirit of God, we are introduced to the eternal and abiding privileges of this Kingdom. It begins not on the outside, but within; it alters not our circumstances, but ourselves. It is called a birth because it is the beginning of a new life; a life that has no sin and meets with no death, nor needs any third birth to carry one onward to a yet higher state. It is called a second birth, because it breaks off the life that the first birth began, and swallows up the death by which it held us. It could not be called a birth if we had initiated it ourselves; it can only be called a birth, because we thereby become through the generation of another a creature that we were not before. Birth never originates with the one born, but always with another generating power of life. We are born again because "the seed of God" is quickening us. Men become citizens of the Kingdom of God, then, by becoming through a new birth the children of God.

As a part of the many-membered Christ of God I want to see the banner of HIS LIFE raised high in every heart and in every land. I want to see every nation, every tongue, every tribe, every people and every race acknowledging one and the same King of kings, even Jesus. I want to see the crown of the world on the brow of the Christ of God and the government upon His shoulder. And, brethren, I know that this shall surely come to pass! HE is seated upon the throne of the universe today and we, in Him, are destined to rule all things. The hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when that great company of the manifested sons of God shall arise to deliver creation from the long tyranny of sin, sorrow and death. This sonship is the hope of all

creation and, even now, every created thing on earth and throughout the vastnesses of infinity is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of an age and ages governed by the holy sons of Love.

What redemption there shall be! What reconciliation! What salvation! What peace and joy and righteousness! What health and blessing and life more abundant! The time is coming when every evil heart shall be made pure as the lily and clean as the driven snow. The time is coming when every man's life day by day shall be sweet and holy and happy. The time is coming when lying, deceit, greed, strife, violence and shame shall be banished from the earth. The time is coming when mental hospitals and penitentiaries shall no longer openly proclaim our shame. The time is coming when the drunkard, the drug abuser, the fornicator, the homosexual, the harlot and the criminal shall be no more, but the people shall be all righteous — a branch of God's planting, that HE may be glorified! The time is coming when there shall be no more weeping widows nor starving orphans, nor manhood and womanhood debased from the image of God. The time is coming when the clash of arms shall be heard no more; when there shall be no more war of armies or tanks or battle-ships; no more missiles streaking through the sky, or bombs bursting.

The time is coming when business and politics and pleasure shall be carried on to the glory of God. The time is coming when literature and art and television and movies and the media shall be cleansed from all their impurity, vulgarity, violence and immorality, and shall speak of God as our own hearts speak of Him today. The time is coming when the United States of America and China and India and Asia and Africa and Russia and Europe and all other nations small and great and the isles of the sea shall relinquish their governments into the hands of God's many-membered Christ. The time is coming when every idol shall be broken and every religious superstition, myth, tradition, fable and folklore destroyed, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The time is coming when righteousness, peace and joy shall in every heart prevail, and sin and limitation and sorrow and death shall be words only in some archaic dictionary, whose meaning men no longer understand. Lift up your hearts! That glorious age — the age of the ages — is coming! The next age is now dawning, the radiant beams of its Sun is even now enlightening our hearts! The darkness is past and the glorious Day is now breaking. Thy Kingdom come! It has come. Yet, it still must come. It will come. It will come and it will continue to come! The sons of God are now prepared for the hour of victory and "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in their hands." We look for a redeemed humanity upon a regenerated earth. And no combination of powers or persons, on the earth or elsewhere, can for a moment hinder the Kingdom of God from moving steadily forward to its predestined triumph and to ultimate victory in the earth and throughout the universe.

THE JEWISH VIEW OF THE KINGDOM

The children of Israel, especially when they suffered the captivity and bondage of Babylon, longed and prayed to be restored unto the Promised Land. They prayed and yearned for the coming of Messiah and the Kingdom of God. Again, when the gall and heaviness of the Roman yoke fell upon them, the Pharisees and scribes looked and longed for the coming of Messiah. Whenever the Kingdom of God would come the Roman eagles would no more scream in triumph over their land, and the hated heels of the soldiers would forever be silenced from their streets. Jerusalem would then be the capital of this glorious Kingdom, and every nation under the sun would do homage and pay tribute. On the throne of David in Jerusalem would the King of kings sit and sway His scepter of righteousness, love and mercy over His chosen people throughout eternity. Thus the Jews hoped and believed. Thus many of

my Anglo-Israel friends still believe. The Jews conceived of a visible material Kingdom, like that of David; righteousness was to characterize it, but it was to be enforced by military might, ruled by external laws, and administrated by political and economic institutions, attended with great prosperity and extended over all the earth. Most of the views of the church systems today respecting the second coming of Christ to establish His Kingdom in person on the earth CORRESPOND EXACTLY WITH THE JEWISH EXPECTATION. But this is not the view of King Jesus!

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

I do not hesitate to tell you that the sphere of the Kingdom is the individual heart. This is the end for which man was made, the final cause of his creation, that he might be a province and principality of God: the King eternal septering him throughout his whole nature, spirit, soul and body. When I pray, "Thy Kingdom come," I do not feel that I am praying solely for my city, my nation, the world, or the vast reaches of creation. I do not think first or foremost about the harlots, drunkards, drug addicts, criminals, atheists, or the masses of sinners throughout the world. When I pray, "Thy Kingdom come," I am not content with adding to the thought my unpleasant neighbors, the Mafia, or Fidel Castro. No! When I utter the prayer it is with the deep conviction that I am praying for myself. I am praying that God's rule may come fully and powerfully in my own heart, mind, nature and life.

Oh, yes, this prayer has reference to ourselves. There is a problem and that is that we have our own kingdom, the kingdom of man. My business, my enterprise, my family, my ministry, my church, my elders, my people, my thing that I am doing, that we are concerned with. And over against all that, Jesus sets His "Thy." "THY Kingdom come." When we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," we pray, "Father, come in Thy Lordship into my own heart; rule there; take Thy throne there; make me completely Thine." See what it means. It means that we are asking that every wicked way, every cherished sin and passion, every self-serving desire and ambition, every carnal thought, word and deed may be cast out of our hearts. It means that neither money nor pleasure nor prestige should have any power over us. It means that the Father's will and not our own may dictate fully our lives. It means that the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus so possesses us until all death is swallowed up into HIS VICTORY. Oh, that is a great prayer!

I have known men that loved their sins too much, their pleasures, their money, their position, their religion, their traditions, their power, themselves too much, ever to be able to pray sincerely, "Thy Kingdom come!" The Kingdom is, first and foremost, the reign of God in the hearts and lives of men. Less than this it cannot be; more than this it will not be. There is no department of human life where the Kingdom can rule unless first God rules the heart. God cannot rule nations until first He rules in the hearts of the citizens of those nations from the king, president or prime minister all the way down to the garbage collector and the shoeshine boy. God cannot rule over things or institutions until first He rules the hearts of those who form, own and control those things and institutions. Imagine God trying to rule over an army without first winning the allegiance of the general who commands that army and the soldiers who fight in it!

Is it not a right thing and a possible thing, that all men should in their hearts yield allegiance to God? And were this allegiance yielded, would it not necessarily result that all our relations with one another would be transformed and hallowed by the law of His life within? Would it not necessarily result that the whole constitution of the world, in all its domestic, political, social and economic arrangements, would be guided by the Spirit of God and would show in every situation and circumstance that God was ruling? You see, to bring the Kingdom of God to pass

in the earth does not require that all forms of government and all institutions be changed — but that the spirit of those who administer be changed! Capitalism or communism would, either one, work just fine if every person involved, from the top to the bottom, were guided and motivated by the spirit of love, generosity, faithfulness, honesty, goodness, brotherly concern, righteousness, meekness, and the mind of Christ. In order for the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ it is not necessary for many employments or relations of life to be altered, but it is needful that WE OURSELVES BE ALTERED!

As brother Paul Mueller has aptly written: “The Psalmist continued this Psalm, by saying, ‘The king is not saved by a mighty army; a warrior is not delivered by great strength. A horse (or any of man’s weapons of warfare) is a false hope for victory; nor does it deliver anyone by its strength’ (Ps. 33:16-17, N.A.S.). Indeed, God does not change the world by man’s armies, or by any of man’s carnal systems of government. The Lord is beginning to change the world by first changing the hearts, souls and minds of mankind. People shall be changed, not by human agreements or by war, but by the operation of the Spirit of God in their lives. The Lord also is beginning to dispel the darkness in the world by imparting the greater Light of His presence into the hearts of His elect. This is the method by which the just and righteous rule of the Kingdom of God is coming to the earth. In this way alone, all the evil and darkness in all the earth shall be completely dispelled. Then the blessings and benefits of the Kingdom of God shall be fully manifested in all the earth for the glory and honor of our sovereign and omnipotent Father. And His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea” — end quote.

This door into the Kingdom is open to every man on a personal and individual level. I wonder if you can get that. You cannot enter the Kingdom by multitudes, even if six billion people were brought into it in one hour. You have to enter the Kingdom individually, and enter in at the gate one by one. You came into this world one by one, no matter how many other babies were born the day you entered. Men pass out of this life one by one, and you must pass from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of Life, Light and Love one by one, giving up your self till it is no more “I” but “Christ” that lives. We must clear our minds of fantastic and carnal notions about the Kingdom. We must refuse to think of the Kingdom in terms of the overturning of human rule by the descent of legions of angels and the establishment of such military might, judicial authority and legislative coercion as never existed in any empire in history.

We are to clear our minds of the idea that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be in some far-off heaven somewhere, or anywhere else than our homes, our cities, and our world — by first being established in our minds and hearts. And we must relegate to the limbo of dreams the idea that the Kingdom has to be ushered in by a spectacular display of Jesus crashing down through the clouds with a vast army of robe-clad saints riding on white horses, a dramatic judgment day, and a glorified Jesus reigning from a physical throne over in the city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel. Learn this, my precious brother, sister, and you will know the deepest mystery of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the KINGDOM OF THE SPIRIT. The Kingdom is not physical or material to be seen with our eyes. The Kingdom of God is spiritual because God is spiritual. The Kingdom of Heaven is spiritual because heaven is spiritual. God is spiritual, but spirit is very real. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual dimension presently on this earth available to all who will believe. It can be attained and literally located within us.

The Kingdom comes not by observation or outward show, as our Lord Himself has taught us. The Pharisees came to Jesus one day with their crafty question demanding of Him when the Kingdom of God should come. They wanted to know when it would come and where it is. “Give

us some downright, concrete facts. We are not going to fall for any air castle of a Kingdom that nobody has ever seen. We have no intention of staking our lives on a phantom. Either you are a fairy prince, in which case you can go to grandmother and give her something to tell stories about, or you have something visible, tangible and literal on which we can depend. So tell us, Jesus of Nazareth, Where is your Kingdom, when is it coming?" Jesus' answer to that question was very strange and certainly, at first glance, not very satisfying. "The Kingdom of God comes not with observation — outward show. Neither do men say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! for, behold, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU!"

It is called the Kingdom of Heaven by way of contrast to the selfishness, strife, sin, sickness and death of earth. It is high, exalted. It is ideal, glorious. The Kingdom of Heaven is not bounded by the deserts of Arabia and Syria, not by the great sea and the river; it is not measured by the hills and valleys of Judah; it is not protected nor displayed by armies and navies; it is not centralized within the walled city of Jerusalem. No, the foundation of this wonderful realm of the Prince of Peace is found within the souls of redeemed men. Here the unseen scepter of righteousness and love sways over thoughts, words, and deeds, and here the Messiah, as the King of kings, reigns for time and eternity.

Two positive and incontrovertible facts are written of the Kingdom. It is said that the Kingdom of Heaven is "within you" (Lk. 17:21) and that it is "at hand" (Mat. 4:17). Notice — "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Where is your hand located? Is your hand not right before you? And are not all things reachable by your hand said to be "at hand"? If you were to ask me where my Bible is, because it is here on the desk before me, I might answer, "It is right here — at hand." On the other hand, if my Bible were at home I would say, "I'm sorry, it is not at hand right now." To be at hand means to be near, present, reachable, attainable! If the Kingdom of God was not to be established on earth until the millennium two thousand years later, how could Jesus have said, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the good news!" (Mk. 1:15).

There comes the time in the life of every son of God when he claims the Kingdom as a present tense reality in his life. The Kingdom of Heaven is here just as much as it will be there in some indefinable and indefinite future. It is not a matter of "here" or "there" at all — for "neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God IS..." This realization of the "is-ness" of the Kingdom is the first step to Kingdom reality. What blessed instruction we receive in the words of Jesus, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye (change your mind) and believe the good news" (Mk. 1:15). When a man or woman is quickened by the spirit of truth to say, "The time is fulfilled for me, right now," he enters into a new relationship with the Father and the present and the future merge into oneness. What is the good news of the Kingdom? IT IS HERE! One cannot have God without His expression, His realm, His rule. It is within you because God is within you.

It is a great folly to conclude that we can pray the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," by rote, in cool detachment. The Kingdom is not an antiquated Jewish dream, dusty with the history of centuries. It touches us at all vital points — if we are sons of God. It is an immediate and personal concern. It is God's plan of the ages, His time-abiding strategy for redeeming us from ourselves and the vanity of the flesh and the world. It is God's way of conforming us into the image of His Son and making us one in Him. We are faced then with the solemn truth that when we pray for the coming of the Kingdom we are not praying for the advent of some great world-wide political or economic program. We are not praying for the end of the world, or for the rapture, or for the millennium, or blessing upon the state of Israel, or the exaltation of the United States and Great Britain. It is far more personal than that. This is a prayer that storms

the gates of my own little kingdom, and breaks down the barriers between the will of God and me. It brings the rule of the Spirit in mind, heart and body until the glory of God arises upon me and His glory is seen upon me, bringing blessing and transformation to all He touches.

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

Let me close this Study with the question: “How is this Kingdom to be administered?” Let me first say how it cannot be administered. It cannot be administered by force. As a preacher of yesteryear ably wrote: “Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon and many others built up their empires with the sword, and cemented them with blood, but not so is the Kingdom of God to be established. 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. Mahomet followed this plan when he gave to men the alternative either of Islam or death. The Crusaders, spurred on by the burning 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, or enrolling him among the adherents of a church, or by calling him a Christian. Men must have their hearts changed. They must be willing to render glad obedience to their Father King before they become members of this Kingdom.

“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. To all ecclesiastical persecutors Christ says, ‘Put the sword up into its sheath.’ Not by the sword is the Kingdom to come, but by the Cross. Constantine of old, when on the eve of a critical battle, dreamed he saw a cross in the sky, and around it this legend, ‘by this conquer.’ That is the weapon we have to use in our warfare: **THAT IS THE WEAPON WHEREBY GOD’S KINGDOM IS TO BE ESTABLISHED.** We are to conquer ‘by the Cross.’ 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. ‘By this conquer’ is the charge given to us. Conquer by the Cross!” — end quote.

The Captain of our salvation is not General Joshua, but Jesus the Lamb of God. 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 **WORD 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. That, undoubtedly, is how he would reign if ever he got the chance! But that is not how God reigns. God reigns as a Father, not a despot. “Our Father...Thy Kingdom come!” The nature of God is entirely gracious in all His dealings with men. That is the way of our wondrous God and Saviour. It is not by

force, but through love. 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.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave...” From childhood most of us have heard these blessed words, yet they are so freighted with heaven's riches that one instinctively shrinks from talking about them. Who presumes to be able to measure the magnitude of God's love? “God so loved the world.” Charles Spurgeon once struck off a bold figure when he exclaimed, “Come, ye surveyors, bring your chains, and try to make a survey of this word so. Nay, that is not enough. Come hither, ye that make our national surveys and lay down charts for all nations. Come ye, who map the sea and land and make a chart of this word so. Nay, I must go further. Come hither, ye astronomers, that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which your imagination staggers, come hither and calculate imaginations worthy of all your powers. When you have measured between the horns of space, here is a task that will defy you: “God so loved the world!” Although we may completely despair of calculating the love of God, there are nevertheless in these classic words of Jesus some very clear statements that help us compute, to some extent, the greatness of the heart of God.

This little word so finds its definition, I think, in the object and gift of God's love. God loved “THE WORLD” — the world that then was and now is. That means His love sweeps around the whole earth and flows out to men of every race and tongue and nation; but it means more. It means He loves the men and women of the world who by their own evil have wrenched themselves away from Him. It means that He loves the blaspheming atheist, the scornful skeptic, the lecherous outcast, the criminal behind bars, the grafter who swaggers about as a good citizen and the unscrupulous leeches who drain the very lifeblood of widows and orphans. God so loved THE WORLD. ALL of it! And He loves it still. He loves the men living now upon the earth, and He loves those who have lived and died in dim and distant ages past. He loves them on earth and He loves them in hell. God so loved! Herein is manifested the love of God; He loves the unlovely, the unloving, and the humanly unlovable! Let holy and powerful angels from the extended galleries of heaven sing it! Let the redeemed in rapturous wonder take up the song and let sinners fall prostrate in penitence before the almighty Creator and Redeemer! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” It was in Jesus Christ that the love of God's great heart embraced us. But God still loves the world. As we move from the Church age into the age of blessing upon all nations, God so loves the world that He will now give His sons, the many brethren of the first-begotten.

The sons of God must be preeminently the Sons of Love. “God so loved the world...” And so will all who are called to sonship! Small wonder, then, that the glorious message of the

reconciliation of all things is sweeping like a tidal wave through the ranks of those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God. It could not be otherwise! Only those who are possessed with the spirit of Infinite and Omnipotent Love shall be able to minister on the level that will persevere through all obstacles and all ages until ALL CREATION is reconciled unto God and delivered from the realm of death. I do not hesitate to tell you that those who fight against the ultimate triumph of Jesus Christ, those who wage war against the salvation of all men for whom Christ died, those who set themselves up as Prosecutor and plead before us and God and His Word for the eternal damnation of the billions of helpless souls who have lived and died like beasts upon this darkened planet are not the sons of God at all — they are the DEVIL'S ADVOCATE! They plead not for the Kingdom of God, but for the devil's kingdom, demanding that he be allowed to keep and imprison and torture forever all those he has gained through subterfuge. These are not the sons of the God who so loved, yea, who is Omnipotent Love. They are the offspring of a weird, distorted, devilish notion of justice; and they will never reign as sons of God in His glorious redeeming Kingdom of life and light and love. THY KINGDOM COME!

Chapter 15

Thy Will Be Done In Earth

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Mat. 6:9).

There are three petitions in the Lord’s prayer that are inter-related. These are: (1) Hallowed be Thy name (2) Thy Kingdom come (3) Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. The three petitions are to one another as root, stem, and fruit; as beginning, middle, and end. In the hallowing of God’s name the foundation is laid for the establishment of His Kingdom; it is the unveiling within the heart of the nature and majesty of God. Thus the Kingdom is established as the heart of man prostrates itself before the King, renouncing all of self, and rejoicing in its new allegiance. But this is not all — there can be no stopping here. It is not enough to know the rule of God, that the Kingdom be established within and rejoiced in. There is an end, a goal, a great purpose for which all of this is wrought, and that end is that THE WILL OF GOD MAY BE DONE. From the name of the Lord we pass to the rule of God; and from the rule of God we press onward into the will. From the outskirts of His personality we pass to His heart.

This third petition of the Lord’s prayer springs directly and naturally out of the second petition, and is really explanatory of it. We have been taught to pray, “Thy Kingdom come.” God’s Kingdom does come, when His will is consciously done in earth, as it is done in heaven. The central idea of kingship is that of rule, authority, power. Kingship is only real and effective when the King commands and the people consciously obey. In looking to heaven as the model of our obedience to God’s will, we should consider the physical heavens which are the shadow of the true. The sun, moon and stars observe their seasons, traveling along their appointed orbits — all these are what they are, and do what they do, in obedience to God’s will. We see how unwearied all perform their function, the great sustaining the small, the small reflecting and enhancing the glory of the great; and, as members together of one system, obeying in peaceful harmony Him who calls them all by their names. We see how the sun, morning after morning, comes forth rejoicing to run his race; how the moon observes her appointed seasons, and the sun knows his going down; how all fulfill the will of God untiringly and unflinching. So is it in the spiritual heavens.

Throughout history, there have been those anointed of God who have seen some connection between the stars and the messengers of God. This connection can easily be made because both the stars and the ministering spirits are called “the host of heaven” in the Bible. There are several beautiful passages that provide the indisputable link between the two, of which I will cite only one. “Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the HEAVENS: praise ye Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His ANGELS: praise ye Him, all His HOSTS. Praise ye Him, SUN and MOON: praise ye Him, all ye STARS OF LIGHT. Praise ye Him, all ye HEAVENS OF HEAVENS” (Ps. 148:1-4).

The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the spiritual sun, Genesis 1:16 informs us that God made “the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. Here we first have the idea expressed of both the sun and the moon being rulers. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a “Sun.” “For the Lord thy God is a SUN and a shield” (Ps. 84:11).

Also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is in Malachi 4:2 called “the Sun of Righteousness.” He rules. Furthermore, we find, in reference to men, that II Samuel 23:3-4 reads: “He that RULETH over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the SUN ariseth.” And in II Samuel 21:17 we find David the king called “the LIGHT of Israel.” This same meaning is found in II Kings 8:19 where we read: “Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant’s sake, as He promised him to give him alway A LIGHT.” This is exactly the same promise that we find in Jeremiah 33:17 where the Lord says, “David shall never want a man to SIT UPON THE THRONE of the house of Israel.” David’s offspring were to be the “suns,” or RULERS of Israel, the source of light, influence, and direction. In Matthew 14:33 we find, concerning saints who are to be Kings and Priests and rule with Christ (Rev. 3:21; 5:9-10), that they are compared to the sun: “Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the Kingdom of their Father.” Of the same ruling saints Jesus says, “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” Then He hastily adds: “And I will give him the MORNING STAR” (Rev. 2:26-28). That is, “I will give him power over the nations — rulership — and I will give him the position as the morning star to give direction to mankind.” Now consider these meaningful words of Daniel the prophet wherein he foretells the manifestation of the sons of God in the end of the age: “And they that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness as the STARS for ever” (Dan. 12:3).

The truth of the stars of the heavens includes many wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the Spirit. The stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, where His life prevails. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the stars are used to represent HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION. Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God’s elect sons ARE THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD’S SKY! As the glory of the Lord arises upon His chosen ones they pierce the gloom of the dark night of sin and sorrow and bring deliverance, life, and order out of the chaos of man’s failure and despair.

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

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

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

There is no truth within the pages of God's blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating a new heavens and a new earth, and the constellations of the new heavens are not made up of the physical stars, but of living stars of God's sons formed and fashioned into an order and image through which to influence creation and rule over all things. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah: "And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE" (Isa. 51:16). In commenting on this instructive passage Ray Prinzing wrote: "When God has thoroughly planted His people in the heavenlies, they will be in a settled place, firmly secured by His grace, to dwell in Him, established in His love and grace, no more to be lost or wandering in the emptiness of selfhood. 'But God...hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show (display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2:4-7).

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

"All the hidden secrets of His righteousness will be revealed through those whom HE has planted in the heavens. What a union, what a oneness with Him, that HE shares the mysteries of His righteousness with these processed ones, and then places them in position to declare that righteousness. Not just by words, not just by some form of preaching or teaching, but by their OWN TRUE STATE OF BEING. They, themselves, shall be all righteous, and thus become a living declaration of His righteousness. Words fail us to express the wonder of this glorious truth that begins to gleam in our spirit with hope and joy" — end quote. Again I would emphasize the fact that the Psalmist establishes the position of the sun in the heavens. Of the heavens he says, "IN THEM hath He set A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN." In the Old Testament as well as in the New, the glorious sun that lights our day is set as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. He is also the Sun of God! And all the sons of God are the suns of God, the blazing stars of the hosts of the heavens with its constellations which rule all things.

In heaven — in that realm of spirit in which God dwells, where He is all that He is — God's Kingship is a reality. There is divine order there in all its perfection. The hearts of all who are one in Him there wait upon God. Mighty angels and holy saints delight to do His will. In heaven

— the realm of spirit which God inhabits, where all His plans and purposes originate — God speaks and it is done. This third petition is a prayer that all God's sons may grow up in His house and learn the ways of obedience and responsibility, so that His Kingship may be consciously as real and effective in the earth realm as it is in the heavens — the realm of the spirit.

In this regard J. D. Jones penned these inspiring and instructive words: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.’ Will it be hard? Hard? I know of nothing harder! This is the great feat of life. You can only learn to say, ‘Thy will be done,’ through struggle and agony and heartbreak. Obedience to God leads to the land of blessedness and peace, but the gate by which we enter — the gate of self-denial — is a narrow gate, and we have to agonize to enter in. God has a will for each of us, and His will concerning us often clashes with our own. The desires of the flesh and of the mind hanker after earthly comfort and wealth and ease. Scarcely a day passes but our desires and the will of God for us come into violent conflict. To surrender our own wills, to make God's will ours, means pain. It is a dying. It is a crucifixion. But there are one or two considerations of which I would like to remind you, which ought to make this surrender easier for us.

“The will we are asked to make our own is our Father's will. ‘Thy will be done!’ Whose will? Our Father's will! After all, it ought not to be very difficult to obey a father's will, to fulfill a father's desire, even when that will runs counter to our own, for we know there is love in that case. Remember, you are not asked to obey a despot; you are not asked to obey a tyrant; you are not asked to obey a slave-driver; you are asked to do the will of your Father — your Father, whose love is only to be measured by the Cross of Jesus Christ. It was the remembrance that the will He was called upon to obey was His Father's will, that helped Jesus in the Garden. It was a hard thing for our Lord to say, ‘Thy will be done,’ when He knew that involved the Cross and the Grave; for Jesus, let me say it with all reverence, had all a man's feelings, and He shrank from the bitter agony and shame. He would gladly have escaped the Cross and the Tomb. ‘If it be possible, let this cup pass.’ Then He remembered it was His Father who was bidding Him drink that bitter cup. That thought steadied Him, gave Him courage, made Him strong. He was ready for anything and everything that His Father appointed. ‘The cup which the Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?’ We, too, shall be strong to make God's will our own, when we remember it is our Father's will. For our Father is love — love at its best and highest. There is a story about a man who had in his garden a weather-vane which had on it this inscription. ‘God is love.’ A friend seeing it asked if it was meant to imply that God's love was as fickle as the wind. ‘No,’ was the reply, ‘I mean that from whatever quarter the wind may happen to blow, God is still love.’ Bear that in mind — God is love; the will you are asked to obey is your Father's will.

“‘Thy will be done!’ Notice, God's will is not simply to be endured or suffered — it is to be DONE. The petition is not ‘Help us to suffer Thy will,’ but ‘Help us to DO it.’ Do not narrow the scope of this prayer. You prayed this morning, ‘Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.’ What did you mean by it? I will tell you what you ought to have meant by it: ‘Help me, O God, to do what Thou wouldest have me to do, to be what Thou wouldest have me to be.’ That is what the prayer means. It means that we accept God's plans and purposes as our own, and resolve to realize them, at any cost. You can pray no nobler prayer than this, for in the doing of God's will lies the secret of the perfect life. We look at the life — the sonship — of Jesus, so beautiful, so pure, so perfect, so powerful, and we are lost in wonder and rapture. But the secret of that life is here: Jesus from the beginning to the close of His life was intent on doing God's will. He Himself let us into the secret. ‘I am come,’ He said, ‘not to do my own will, but

the will of the Father who sent me.’ ‘My meat and drink,’ He said, on another occasion, ‘is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work.’

“When a boy of twelve He had come to the sublime decision that every moment of His life should be spent in doing His Father’s business. Do not commit the mistake of thinking that it was only in Gethsemane and the Judgment Hall and on Calvary that the Christ was doing the will of God. He was doing it during those silent years at Nazareth. He was doing it when at school. He was doing it when He was at the carpenter’s shop, mending the tables and chairs and ploughs of the dwellers in Nazareth. He was doing it when He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom in Galilee. He was doing it when sharing in the festivities at Cana, and taking part in Matthew’s farewell dinner. He was doing it when healing the sick and raising the dead and comforting the lonely and lifting up the outcast. In fact, He was never doing anything else. Every day, every moment, Jesus was doing the Father’s will, and the result is the perfect life of sonship, the pattern for us all” — end quote. Ah, herein is found the secret to the life of sonship. The Lord’s prayer is the pattern prayer for sons. “Our Father” is the way it begins.

KNOWING GOD’S WILL

How do I know when I am in God’s will for my life? This is a question often asked by the Lord’s people. They say, “I have gone through many trials, nothing seems to be working; I appear to be going nowhere. It must be that I am outside of God’s will for my life. I desperately want to know His will for me and to be in it. If God would only write His will for my life in big letters on the wall of my bedroom, I would gladly do it. But I don’t know what His will is. How can I know the will of God, if it is not clearly spelled out?” That is a good attitude — we all need to be where He wants us to be, doing what He ordains for us to do. But it is not uncommon for saints to have idealistic notions concerning God’s will. We think that God only cares about great and mighty happenings — not the mundane things of ordinary life; certainly not the commonplace things of our lives! We want to have the power of Elijah, the wisdom of Solomon, and the strength of Samson — then we would know we were in God’s will!

We forget that in the New Testament saints were more apt to be in jail, to be misunderstood and despised, to be hated, persecuted and martyred as a result of being in God’s will. Certainly thirty years of doing nothing in Nazareth — the place of no good thing — could not be God’s will for one called to such a high calling as sonship! Surely being dragged before the courts, falsely accused, slandered, beaten, tormented and crucified between common criminals on a cross cannot be God’s will for a King-Priest after the Order of Melchizedek! After all, we are the “King’s kids” and we should live like one! You see, my beloved, we suffer from “the grass is greener on the other side of the fence” syndrome. We are quite positive that the place we are now in couldn’t be God’s highest will! It cannot be that our peculiar set of circumstances, limitations, adversities, problems and difficulties can be God’s will for one with the revelation, vision and calling we have! We conceive of His will as being under more favorable conditions, at some other geographical location, in some other job, or in another church. Some folks think God’s will is possibly with some other spouse. We feel like eagles on hummingbird’s nests. No! God’s will begins in that inauspicious place where you are right now. He lays out His way just ahead of you — the next step, and then the next. The next step may be no more glamorous than the preceding one. It is finding God’s way in your circumstances, not necessarily new circumstances. He is working in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. The work is wrought within. It has more to do with being than with doing. When you are in His way you are in His will. Well did George Warnock write: “Let us remember that the will of God is primarily a SPIRITUAL LOCATION IN GOD, and not a geographical location. True, as we walk in His will it is important that we find ourselves in that particular geographical

location that God would have us to be...but this is only incidental. To be spiritually located in the Land of our Inheritance is most important...and from then on the earthly and the material matters relative to the will of God find their proper sequence.”

The blessed firstborn Son of God testified: “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME” (Jn. 6:38). As the Son of God, Jesus spoke only that which the Father had given Him to speak, for this is characteristic of all “sent ones.” Herein may be known the difference between the messengers of religious Babylon and those apprehended as sons of God. It is this: “My meat IS TO DO THE WILL of Him that sent me” (Jn. 4:34). To do God’s will! That is what a son lives for; but it is also what he lives on. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of God” (Mat. 4:4). Nothing can satisfy the son’s appetite but this: he hungers to do God’s will. Nothing else will fill him. The truth of these words is simply this: the strength of life for a son of God is to do the Father’s will. Now that is a great and surprising revelation to many. Some will tell you that life is in keeping the commandments, others that life is in holding the right doctrine, another that life is in attending meetings, another that life is in taking communion, another that life is in water baptism, or in speaking in tongues, or in winning souls. But life is none of these things! It is more than all. Life is not to have an experience, or do this, or that, or the other — just to DO WHAT GOD WILLS, whether that be working or waiting, or winning or losing, or suffering or prospering, or living or dying. We feel helpless beside a truth so great and eternal. God must teach us these things.

Are we doing God’s will? The question just means this: Are we working out our common every-day life on the great lines of God’s will? In all we say and do, are God’s nature and character expressed through us? Is SELF swallowed up in HIM? Is CHRIST the CENTER of our lives? It is not a question of where we are and what we are doing — it is a matter of how we are doing it. You may be held within the limitations of a most difficult and contrary situation, in a very “un-son-like” environment. You may conceive that God’s will can only be found in circumstances more “conducive” to spirituality. But — God will hold you there until you learn that in living union with Christ, His will is done in any circumstance as naturally as breathing. If you, dear one, are struggling to know His will, then sit at His feet like a little child and learn the simple truth that God’s will may be done as much by hewing stones, or sweeping floors, as by preaching or prophesying. God’s will is THE LIVING OUT OF HIS LIFE! Seek not a dream, or vision, or great revelation of what you should do. Start where you are...LET HIM LIVE THROUGH YOU right there...His will shall begin to be done in you today! This will bring you to the blessed place where the will of God is like the air you breathe — it just comes naturally as you obey the still small voice of the spirit within.

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH

In heaven the will of God is done absolutely, totally, completely. Is it possible — faintly, vaguely possible — for God’s will to be done in earth in the same totality and completeness as it is done in heaven? Is it? You know about Sadam Hussein, of course. And you know about Fidel Castro, the Serbs, the Islamic Fundamentalists, the gangs, abortionists and humanists. If you took the terrorists into account, and all the liquor stores, the vulgarity and obscenity in movies and television shows, the divorce rate, the violence, the sexual immorality, the crooked politicians and the Chinese — do you still think that the will of God can be done in earth, as it is in heaven? I’m going to tell you something. You’re dreaming, it’s wishful thinking, you’re whistling in the dark, you’ve got your fingers crossed hoping for the best — unless you know which earth the Father’s will has to be done in first, completely.

It is significant to note that neither Luke nor Matthew record Jesus as asking for the Father's will to be done ON the earth, but rather, IN earth. "In earth" does not mean the outer world of mountains, hills and valleys, of rivers and trees, of cities and villages. Man himself is the earth, as the apostle says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7). Again, "The first man is of the earth, earthy" (I Cor. 15:47). And yet again, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" (I Cor. 15:48). "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). My interest is not "Thy will be done in earth..." and earth is that which is farthest away from me — the drug addicts, the terrorists, Iran and Somalia. The cry of my heart is: "Thy will be done in this earth that I am in the same totality and completeness and absoluteness as it is done in heaven. And when God's will is done in this earth that I am, and that earth that you are, and the other earth that your friends and neighbors are, soon it will take care of the whole earth, within and without.

But let me say to you: That is impossible. The whole will of God will never be done in your life. "But," you say, "evidently you don't know how spiritual I am. You're not aware that I'm totally committed. I've been walking with God these many years. I am an intercessor, and I have the gifts of prophecy, the word of knowledge, healing and miracles. I am in fastings often. I pray without ceasing. I don't drink wine, smoke, curse, lust, tell white lies or go to movies. I have given up much for the Kingdom. I have come out of Babylon. I have entered the Most Holy Place. I have the New Day revelation. I have received the call to sonship. Certainly the will of God would be done in me." Do you know why we say those things? Because we never had a real revelation that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18). There is no good thing in me. And, precious friend of mine, there is no good thing in you. When I discover that there is no good thing in you, then I have no reason to be angry with you, because you are just like me. I never get mad at sweet little ol' me! So the whole will of God can never be done in me. But there is one man in whose life the whole will of God HAS BEEN DONE. Therefore — "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore — "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus." If the Lord Jesus Christ lives in you, through you and as you, then the whole will of God being done in Him will be done in you.

It is like the story I read some time ago. Once there was a fine orchestra. And they had one of the finest first chair violinists ever. The word got out that this violinist had recently purchased a new Stradivarius violin, the finest made. The newspapers caught wind of it and made a big to do of his first performance on this new instrument. And so it was on the front page of the Calendar section. And there were posters around town. Articles were published that gave the history of Stradivarius and the many decades of musicians who had played this fine instrument. So the night of the concert comes. The theater is filled to overflowing with people who have come to hear this violin. The music begins. The orchestra's sound builds. Emotions swell. People are overcome by the beauty of the sound. The evening is a great success and at the close of the concert, applause breaks out. The star violinist stands and raises his violin above his head. With that everybody jumps to their feet and applauds louder. And at that, the violinist takes his valued Stradivarius and breaks it over his knee. Horror and silence sweep over the audience. The people were aghast. The musician held up the twisted and splintering rubble and said, "This thing did not make the music. I bought this at the pawn shop for \$150. It is not my Stradivarius." And he threw it on the floor. Then he added, "It is the Master who makes the music." Ah, Jesus Christ is the Master who makes the music — we are the violin! It doesn't matter what value you place on your life, or what power you hold, or what lineage you have. You may see yourself as a Stradivarius. You may see yourself as a pawn shop special. It really makes no difference. Jesus Christ is the Master and He can make the most beautiful

music through any life that will say and truly mean it, “Thy will be done in this my earth, as it is in heaven!”

And, let me add, God’s will shall be done ON that earth out there as well. You see, dear ones, the disruption of God’s will on this planet did not originate with the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. The rocks and waters did not disobey God’s command or rebel against His will. The sun, moon, and stars did not sin. MAN was the crowning glory of God’s creation. He was formed of the earth, and wonderfully and fearfully made in the image and likeness of God and given dominion over the earth and all things. And it was this man who did his own will rather than God’s, moving out of the divine order. Through man’s disobedience (Rom. 5:19) chaos fell not only upon the human family but upon the entire creation under man’s dominion — the whole creation fell with Adam (Rom. 8:19-22). The standing and state of the physical creation rises or falls with its master — man. Since it is by, through and because of man that the curse has come upon all material realms, this condition cannot be rectified by the things themselves — only by MAN HIMSELF. Therefore God’s will can only be done ON earth when it is first done IN earth — IN MAN. Jesus was striking at the root of the issue when He taught us to pray for God’s will to be done IN US, IN THIS EARTH WHICH WE ARE, as it is done in heaven. How awesome the thought — God’s will can be perfectly done in our earth! Yes, it can — by the Spirit of Jesus Christ living in us and acting through us. His will can be done in our mind, in our nature, in our body to the same degree it is done in the realm of spirit. The will of God in peace, righteousness and eternal life can come to pass ON earth only as it is fulfilled IN THE LIVES OF MEN.

GOD’S NAME AND GOD’S WILL

There is another great truth I share with God’s elect today. It is the truth that the name of God and the will of God are ONE. The name denotes God’s nature and character, what and how He is. The will bespeaks of energy going forth — it points to action, to effect — it is to be done. It is very needful for our spiritual understanding to remember this distinction, for the will of God always acts out the name of God. What God IS is what God DOES. What He brings forth into manifestation is precisely that which is true within Himself. God’s name and His will exactly correspond to each other. If the name of God is that which has been revealed to us of His nature and character, then the will of God will be the doing of those things that spring as actions out of His nature.

But there is a truth beyond this. When the name or nature of God has been formed in our lives, the will of God will then be done out of what is true within us. It is here that we no longer merely do the will of God, we become the will of God. George Hawtin wrote of this: “Truly DOING the will of God springs directly from BEING the will of God. You can never truly DO God’s will until you have BECOME God’s will. As soon as this happens, you find all the old things are done away. Your ambitions go and His ambition becomes yours. All the old ambitions fade out of your life to make way for God’s will. You no longer have a will of your own. At Gethsemane Jesus still had a will of His own which He surrendered fully to the Father. But after His death and resurrection He no longer had a will of His own. We have died with Him and we have been raised with Him to BECOME GOD’S WILL. When you step upon this blessed territory you no longer have a will of your own. God’s will is YOUR will, God’s plan, YOUR plan, God’s purpose, YOUR purpose. You kneel long in prayer before Him, but you have no requests to make. Your whole being proclaims, Amen! Amen! Thy will be done! And from the thousand corridors of your spirit echoes the joyful sound: Amen; Thy will be done! Thy will be done! Old things pass away all around you. They must pass away to make room for the new things. Everything changes. Everything becomes new. Your planning, scheming,

organizing, advertising until you are in a state of exhaustion is gone and in its place comes the rest wherewith He causes the weary to rest, and oh how sweet is the refreshing!"

I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven..." We are invited to consciously seek harmony with God's will. His will shall be done in any event, but every man must be brought at some point in time to personally and actually submit to that will. "Who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. 9:19). Who can interfere with His infinite, omnipotent purpose? Can we stop the advance of the tidal wave? Can we prevent the desolating rush of the tornado? Can we bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? No tumultuous furies of human passion, no volcanic outbursts of wrath and defiance can change one iota God's eternal, inscrutable purpose. The Psalms and Prophets are replete with this great truth. God sitteth above the water-floods, and God remaineth King forever. God turns to His own praise the wrath of men and the madness of people — God rules and overrules evil and makes it redound to His glory.

"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:34-35).

With what new and wonderful significance does the proclamation of Jesus Christ now echo through the corridors of our spirits as we hear the impelling words sound from His lips: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME" (Jn. 12:32). This speaks not of Christ being lifted up in our daily living, or in praise, or by preaching, but upon the cross of Calvary, dying for the sins of the world. The verse following the one quoted above makes this very clear: "And this He said, signifying what death He should die." And again: "...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (Jn. 3:14).

Whenever there is introduced into any revelation this "I WILL" of God, then you immediately erase the will of man, the self-efforts of man, and are brought face to face with the sovereign grace of God. In the face of the sovereignty of God's purpose all of man's hostility toward or unbelief regarding what God says He will do is as nothing, for whenever God decrees "I WILL do it," all of man's unbelief cannot deter the sovereign operation of His grace. Man has the tremendous powers of will. Man can say "I will," and he can say "I will not"; and when a man says "I will not," to God, he will go down as swift as an arrow to its mark, swift as a stone into the depths of the sea; he will sink to the deepest depths; he will be cast down to endure the judgment of fire and brimstone until his breaking comes. Learn this, O man, and you will know a great truth: man's will is subject to God's will! The will of God is always the higher will. In the will of God lies the origin of all creation — its very existence, its joys, its power, its glory. In the will of God lies the origin of redemption — the fact of it, its power, its glory. In the will of God alone lies the origin of the grace of God in the life of each of His children — its being, its power, its blessedness, its glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ became man in order to do the will of God, and also to teach us what is God's will, and how to do it. On one occasion we read, "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Mat. 8:2-3). I desire to impress upon your mind and heart, dear reader, these

words, the words of Jesus: "I will." The most important of all things is first to know God's will, and secondly to do, the will of God. I would call your attention to the prayer of the leper. That is a prayer which neither you nor any Christian should ever offer. It is a wicked prayer for you to offer. It is a prayer that will be fruitless. The leper said, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." That leper was ignorant. In his case there was this excuse for him: that the Lord Jesus Christ was only unfolding His mission, and that He had not fully revealed God's will. Ignorance of the Lord's will was the one thing that stood in his way of getting the healing. He saw that Christ was able. He said, "Thou canst make me clean." But he was in doubt as to whether Christ was willing. Therefore he said, "Lord, if Thou wilt." The Lord said, "I WILL," and the moment He said that, there was no more "If Thou wilt" in that man's heart.

Let me illustrate. Supposing now that you and I are talking together on the telephone, and after some remarks you say to me, "Bro. Eby, may I see you this morning?" You know many precious folk want to come by and see us, about the same time sometimes, and sometimes would like to stay and visit for a few hours, or days, and sometimes they cannot do it, because I am a very busy man, and have an immense number of things to do. The work load is such that I must spend a full fifty to sixty hours in my office each week with correspondence, study, writing, and attending to many matters pertaining to this ministry. Generally, when we have visitors, or when I go away for a few days, I must then work overtime the same number of hours in order to keep up with those things the Father has entrusted into my hands here. Many people do not understand this.

But you have said to me, "May I see you this morning?" and I say, "Yes, if you will come to my office I will see you at eleven o'clock today." Well, now, suppose you come to my office at eleven o'clock. You walk into the front office where my wife is the receptionist. Suppose you say to Lorain, "Bro. Eby told me that if I came he would see me at eleven o'clock." "All right," she says, pointing, "there is his private office door; knock there." Suppose you stand there in the entrance area and then you lie down on the floor, and begin to howl like this: "Oh, Bro. Eby! if thou wilt, if thou wilt, thou canst see me in thy office. Oh! Bro. Eby! If thou wilt!" Well, I wonder who is making all that noise, so I open the door and say, "Honey, who is out there making that noise?" "Oh, it is a person you told to come see you this morning, and I told him to knock at your door." "And what did he say?" "The person said to me, 'Oh, it is so good of Bro. Eby to invite me to come. Oh, I wish he was willing. Oh, if I only knew he was willing.' I said, Did Bro. Eby not tell you he was willing? 'Yes, and I wish I could believe it'" "Oh, Bro. Eby, if thou wilt, if thou wilt," and you keep on howling like that, and I say, "Honey, tell the person I am willing to see him. Bring him right in." You stand up and begin howling again, "Oh, Bro. Eby, if thou wilt." "Honey, tell that person to come in at once." "He won't come in, Dear." "Why?" "He says it is too good to be true; he won't come in unless you come out." So I step out and say, "My dear friend, I told you to come to my office at eleven o'clock, and I am willing to see you." "Oh, Bro. Eby, I wish I could believe it were true. Oh, if thou wilt, if thou wilt."

Now, would that not be great nonsense? But that is the way people talk to God and about God. Jesus said to the leper, "I will — be thou clean." And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. In this case the leper said, "Lord, if Thou wilt." And Jesus answered, "I will." But in John 12:32 no man is inquiring concerning the will of God. The omnipotent and sovereign Lord and Redeemer of heaven and earth issues the wonderful and certain fiat: "I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME!" When the Lord Jesus Christ says "I will," no man on earth has any right to even question whether or not He will. It is a wicked blasphemy to say that He will not do what He has said He will do. He said that if He was lifted up upon the cross He would draw ALL MEN unto Him. The WILL OF GOD is that all men be saved. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for ALL MEN; for this is

good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who WILL HAVE ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:1-4). And yet I hear many Christians, and some who profess to be walking in sonship, impiously saying, "I do not believe that God will save all men." To which I say, It doesn't make any difference what YOU believe, your unbelief does not make either the grace or the power of God of none effect.

Jesus says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME!" "It does not mean that," they argue, "it means that He will draw all of the elect, or He will draw all men who believe, or He will draw all kinds of men." "But how many does it say He will draw?" "All men," they are forced to answer. To which I respond, "If that proclamation is not true; if He is not strong enough, and purposeful enough, and loving enough to draw every spirit on earth and in hell, and throughout the universe, to Himself, then He has told a lie. If He can, but won't, then He is a mean, hard, vindictive, uncaring, sadistic tyrant. And if He can't, then He's not God." "Oh, Bro. Eby," they cry, "that is heresy!" "But," I say, "that is Jesus. Was He a heretic?" "Oh, no; you do not understand, we can explain all that away, and you must not talk like that." But they explain and I still don't understand!

Has the first Adam more power than the second? ALL were made partakers of the sinful nature through the fall of one man (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:21-22). Adam had power to take the whole human family down with him; even without their consent. If he being of the earth, earthy, could do this, how much more power will the second Adam show in lifting all again, through His death and resurrection! And if He does not, then the sin of Adam is more powerful than the redemption of the second Adam. The first Adam affected all; the second Adam can only affect some. Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He did not say He would draw them if they decided to come, or He would draw them, and they could come if they chose; but if He was lifted up (which He was), "I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME." It is not a partial drawing, an action to be yielded to or resisted according to the whims of the subject. It is a complete action, the subjects are drawn irresistibly and totally. If the drawn ones merely "sensed" His drawing but could resist, Jesus would have said, "I will cause all men to sense my drawing power." But the wonderful words "unto Me" denote the object and the end of the drawing. He says not, "I will draw all men toward me," but "unto me." A total, completed action. "I will draw all men UNTO ME" — all the way! Hallelujah! It should be clear to every thinking mind that the last Adam has more power than the first; that the Almighty cannot fail; that He has a plan by which He will cause ALL to come at the appointed time, praise His wonderful name!

Are you perplexed and agitated over the wayward condition of sons and daughters, or other loved ones? THEN REST IN GOD'S PROVISION, FOR HE HAS APPOINTED A TIME WHEN THEY, TOO, SHALL COME TO CHRIST. And if they are not responding to the many attempts to convert them, it is because GOD IS NOT CALLING THEM YET. But never fear, in due time, He will merely point His finger at them and say, "Come!" and it will be as when Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus and cried out, "Lazarus, come forth!" All of heaven's hosts will converge upon them to bring them to their promised and purchased salvation. At last they will know the power of sovereign, irresistible GRACE!

Paul Mueller relates the following story that so beautifully documents Christ's ability and power to draw all men unto Himself. "Some years ago, during our missionary tour in Nigeria, West Africa, we were told a fascinating story of a people who lived on an island off the coast of Africa. These island people were in a remote area, isolated from the mainland, but God sought to bring a significant number of people on this island to salvation. There were no missionaries or other Christians on the island, so the Lord gave a dream to the chief of the tribe. In the

dream, the chief was told to erect a cross and call the entire tribe to present themselves before that cross. As the people came bowing before the cross the chief had erected in obedience to the dream, they came without understanding of the significance of the cross. But they came nevertheless, for it was the command of the chief. However, as they came and bowed before that cross, they wept in repentance and their lives were changed by the power of God. Later, a missionary came to the island. He found the people serving God as best they knew, and he explained more fully to them the ways of the Lord” — end quote.

Beloved, when God wants to bring a people unto Himself, He is well able to do so, even to reach out to them without the use of human vessels, if need be. The Christ has been lifted up from the earth and now HAS ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. In due time He will bring His redemptive process into glorious fulfillment and consummation. If God wants to save some Russians, He has shown how powerfully He can demolish the iron curtain and take those lives unto Himself that are appointed of the Father. If He wants any number of Chinese, He is able to apprehend them unto salvation in spite of the iron rule of an atheistic government. There is no continent too dark, no people too enslaved by satanic powers, no man too wicked and incorrigible but what His power can reach them. Christ has been lifted up from the earth, and HE WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO HIMSELF. You can count on it!

In the meantime Christ invites us to be participators with Him in His great redemptive and reconstructive work by praying as He has taught us to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” And God will answer that prayer. May He begin the answer in each one of us today!

Chapter 16

Thy Will Be Done In Earth

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Mat. 6:9).

“Thy will be done!” In meditation I have come to the conclusion that these are the greatest of all words; and yet they can mean nothing, or worse than nothing, and often do. A cloud of false teaching surrounds them; all sorts of lies have been told in their name; all manner of evils have been tolerated under their auspices; they have covered for the most damnable hypocrisy, and the most devilish superstition. To say, “Thy will be done,” may either mean that you have found God, that you are taught in His ways, that you love Him with all of your heart, or that you know nothing of God whatsoever. These words may be the watchword either of the faith and obedience of sons of God, or of resignation to a passive fatalism devoid of any faith or obedience.

TO BE HIS WILL

“Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” This is not a prayer of passive Resignation, but of active Consecration. It is not the plea for patience and understanding of the evil that befalls us, though we need that, but the vigorous vow of a son of God coming to maturity. It is not a sigh of surrender when the devil walks all over us. It is the final bold and daring thrust to bring in the eternal reign of righteousness. Too often we have thought otherwise. And we have thought wrongly. In the midst of our disappointed hope and bashed dreams this has seemed to us a prayer which strengthens us to accept the catastrophe and clings to the mercy of God. The prayer has been too often a mournful wail. When the heart has been crushed by anguish, when the waters have overwhelmed us, when we have been beaten back and trampled down and when the sun has hid its face and darkness has invaded our land; when sin, evil, sickness, sorrow and death have robbed us of our inheritance in Christ, then we have tried to steady our faltering faith on God with this prayer of fathomless pain: Thy will be done.

The mistake is in supposing that this is chiefly a prayer of resignation to affliction and loss. Consider the words of the petition as our Lord teaches them to us: Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven — as in heaven, the realm of God’s Spirit, where there is no blight nor sorrow nor failure, where there is no sad resignation to the triumph of evil because there is no darkness there — God’s will is done and our prayer is that it may be accomplished in us upon this earth even as it is in heaven.

One of my many moments of being spiritually thrilled was upon examining the second statement of the Lord’s prayer: “Our Father which art in heaven.” But to be correctly translated it should read, “Which art in the heavens,” for it is plural, not singular. So, contrary to popular thought, God dwells in more than one heaven. Paul spoke of a man who was caught up into the third heaven, and God, our Father, is the God of all the heavens. God dwells in the heavens. He fills every heaven. He rules in every heaven. He is above every heaven, beyond

every heaven, higher than all heavens and greater than the reality of each heaven. And in our journey into God we pass through all these heavens. Jesus passed through all the heavens on His way into the glory of the Father. How do we know this? “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things” (Eph. 4:10). In His ascension to the right hand of Power He passed through — experienced — all the heavens. But not only did He pass through them, He has also FILLED THEM ALL so that God in Christ is the essence of every heaven. You will find Him on a different plane, in a different dimension, in a unique aspect of His life, in each heaven. Heaven is not a place, not a planet somewhere out in the vastnesses of infinity — it is a sphere or realm of reality. It is a dimension of life. It is the level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is as omnipresent as God is omnipresent. It is an absurdity to say that heaven is a place somewhere beyond the blue where God dwells, and then say that God is omnipresent. The omnipresent spiritual dimension is co-existent and co-extensive with the physical universe, but on a different level of reality and consciousness, on a different “frequency,” if I may use the term in an illustrative sense. It is the dimension of spirit reality, of spiritual being where God is all that He is.

Heaven is also the realm where God is revealed by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm where God is known by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm where God can be touched in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be experienced in the Spirit. God is the God of the heavens, and if ever you will see Him, if ever you will know Him, if ever you will touch Him, if ever you will experience Him — it will be in the heavens wherein He dwells, in the realms of His Being. Heaven means “height, eminence, elevation.” God is in heaven. God is spirit. Heaven is the high and holy realm of the Spirit where God exists. As the starry heavens are higher than the earth, so is the invisible realm of spirit higher than the tangible world. To be in heaven is to be in the Spirit. To experience God spiritually is to experience heaven. Thus, heaven is the realm of spiritual experience. To be “caught up” in the Spirit is to be “raptured” to heaven. The heavens are the various realms or levels of spiritual experience where we meet and know God. When God is revealed to you by the Spirit, heaven is opened and you behold heavenly things. In the lower heavens you know God in a more elementary way.

It is wonderful to know God in His heavens. Each heaven speaks of a plane of relationship with God by the Spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life, wisdom and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. As you pass through the heavens you come to know God in greater and grander measures. When a person dies physically, they no longer have any part in anything that is done “under the sun.” Their mortal thoughts have perished and there is no knowledge in the grave whither they go. But they live unto God in the spirit! Because they are now conscious only in the realm of spirit we say that they have “gone to heaven.” They haven’t actually “gone” anywhere, except that their body has gone to the grave. Their spiritual consciousness and being which they had in Christ exists still in that eternal and omnipresent dimension of spiritual reality, in the presence of the Lord.

So our Father is in the “heavens.” But when you come to the words, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” there is a significant change. Here the word heaven is in the singular. It denotes one specific heaven. How wonderful that is! “Thy Kingdom come” reveals the deep meaning of our Lord’s words. The Kingdom of God is the reign and rule of God. The Kingdom of God represents that dimension of heaven which is God’s throne — the realm of His almighty power and authority. “Heaven is my throne” (Isa. 66:1). It is there — in the sphere of God’s Kingdom Dominion that His will is perfectly done.

There are at least six billion wills on earth, and still only one in heaven. Out of the six billion and one, only one is holy, pure, omniscient and divine. Every other is vile, weak, carnal, limited and stupid. I trust that some of the wonder and glory of this is beginning to break upon your heart. In this prayer we are shown that our Father dwells in all the heavens — but as sons of God we want His will to be done in us upon this earth just as His will is done in heaven, or in the HIGH AND EXALTED REALM OF HIS THRONE, LORDSHIP AND DOMINION. Our prayer is for God to take the throne of our hearts which is the place of His dominion within. The cry within our hearts is expressed in the words of the chorus:

Take Thy throne, Lord; Take Thy throne.
Take Thy throne, Lord; Take Thy throne.
For our eyes have seen the King in all His glory,
Cleanse our hearts, so Thou canst take Thy throne!

I share the following words from the anointed pen of Paul Mueller. “Those who shall be considered worthy to rule and reign with Christ must first forsake their own will and enter into harmonious union with Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. We are now at our Gethsemane, as Jesus was. It is here, at our spiritual Gethsemane, where we shall lay down the last fragments of our own will and our own soulish desires and opinions, to receive His mind, by which we shall do only His perfect will. It has been our sincere desire that His kingdom should come to earth, so that Father’s will shall be done in all the earth, including our earth, even as it is being done in heaven. This is the hour of the fulfillment of that holy purpose, and we are the people.

“Jesus taught us to pray that His kingdom would come to earth, and that the will of God should be done in earth as it is done in heaven. In the heavenly, spiritual realm all is wisdom, truth, light, love, peace, and life. The carnal mind does not exist in the heavenlies. There is no deception, destruction, death or violence there. No carnal kingdoms exist there. No distorted visions or selfish works are allowed to defile that holy realm of God. But there, all is in harmony with the Father’s will. In that heavenly realm of His dominion, no foreign entity can ever interrupt the constant and continuing praises of the Father, as His will is being done in perfect and total harmony and peace. And as it now is in the heavenlies, so shall it be on this earth. We have prayed that His will shall be done in all the earth as it is being done in the heavenlies, and our prayers are being answered. Everything in and of this earth shall be blessed with the peace and harmony that can only come when the will of the Father is done everywhere, and for the benefit of all. It is His will that is being imparted to us now, even as we become the will of God in the earth.

“The purpose of the tests and trials of our wilderness journey has been to strip us of all self, including self-seeking, self-glory, self-exaltation and self-will. By the mind of Christ, we also may confidently affirm that the feet of the Christ body have been thoroughly tested just like all the other members of this Christ body have been tested. Though the elect are a small remnant in the earth, their numbers are sufficient for the task. Jesus Christ was the first of many brothers in this brotherhood of sons. He was only one at the time of His manifestation, but He alone was all that was needed to do the will of God and bring about a change in ages. When Jesus came to do the will of God, the former dispensation ended and a new age began. Today, more brother-sons have come forth with no other purpose than to become the will of God in the earth. Though somewhat small in number, they are sufficient to fulfill our Father’s purpose for this new day. And now, with our expressed desire and purpose to do only the Father’s will, the old age is passing away and a new one is dawning.

“There is no greater truth for this hour than the wonderful truth that we are now becoming the will of God in the earth. All who are ‘beheaded’ for Christ have received His Headship, and have become His will on earth. As the old age is dying and evening time has come, a people is coming forth to do only the will of their Father. And the Father’s will is the foundation of the new order of the Kingdom of God on earth. If the Day Star has risen in our hearts and we have no other desire but to become His will in the earth, then the kingdom of God has come to the earth. At the present time, the Lord’s chosen ones are enduring the tests and trials that prepare us for the glory of incorruptible life, to rule and reign with Christ. The kingdom of God is possessing us in a greater measure. While the worldly minded are gratifying self and the flesh, and seeking for the things of this dying order, God is bringing forth a people who have no other desire but to do the will of their Father. The first principle of sonship, and of the kingdom of God, is expressed in these words spoken by Jesus: ‘I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me’ (Jn. 5:30).

“In the midst of all the worldly confusion and the pursuits and ambitions of man, the Spirit of God has been calling out a people for His name. He has stripped them of self-interest, purged them of self-will, removed from them all personal ambition and self-seeking, and is causing them to despise the works of the flesh and of the carnal mind. From within them, out of their innermost beings, comes the joyful, liberating, age-ending cry of the spirit of the kingdom, saying, ‘Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God! Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven!’ All who express this holy desire have become His will in the earth. And we have also become the firstfruits of His kingdom. The will of God is the foundation of the kingdom of God. It is upon this foundation of the kingdom of God that the earth shall be established” — end quote.

There is indeed a time to resign ourselves to the will of the Father who knows what is best for us, accepting all that comes from His hand. But this prayer reaches beyond that. This is a higher, grander theme. It is the cry for the release of creation from the bondage that brings corruption and death. It is the prayer for the triumph of light over darkness, of righteousness or unrighteousness, of love over hate, of health over sickness, of life over death, of Christ over Belial. I adjure you, sons of God, pray this prayer — Thy will be done! Bind it upon your heart as a vow. Bear it upon your spirit as a passion. See it written in the sky above you and on the earth beneath your feet. Breathe it everywhere! Let life have no other grander meaning than this that vibrates in our living prayer. Thy will be done! IN us, BY us, THROUGH us, AS us — our Father, Thy will be done!

IF IT BE THY WILL

No prayer, to be a true prayer of faith, can contain the expression: IF it be Thy will! But let me make one thing very clear — there is a vast difference between the expression, “If it be Thy will,” and the declaration, “Thy will be done.” The latter is the form our Lord has taught us to pray, to desire and petition God’s will to be accomplished. It is a positive confession. This may be prayed in utter confidence, expectation, and faith.

One there is who, in the sphere of manhood, has done the Father’s will on earth even as it is in heaven. The will of God was the lodestar by which Jesus’ life was lived. What had He come down to earth for? To do the will of God. Why did the firstborn Son of God set foot on the stage of human history? To do the will of God. Why did He condescend to be born in a stable, to be raised among the commonest of men; to grow up as a man, the son of a carpenter in a remote Galilean village; to minister as an itinerant preacher; to preach, teach and heal wherever He went; to die the ignominious death of the cross, to be buried in a borrowed tomb, to rise again

the third day, to ascend back to the Father? All this was just to do the Father's will. From childhood to manhood He was evermore about His Father's business, having it for His food to do the will of the Father who had sent Him, to finish the work which His Father had given Him to do. And in that obedience of Christ the Head is the prophecy and firstfruits of the many-membered Christ body — even that pulling down of strongholds, and casting down of reasonings and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, which shall be achieved when every human thought and intent shall be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Then indeed shall earth see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

“Thy will be done,” is the deep cry of sonship. But the expression, “IF it be Thy will,” is a confession of doubt, uncertainty, hesitation, weakness, and lack of understanding and faith. Furthermore, it calls into question the nature and purposes of God. Many Christians begin their prayers boldly only to end with this absurdity, “If it be Thy will.” “If” is the weakest word in the world. I do not doubt that millions of prayers have gone unanswered because they were rendered impotent by the word “if” in the middle of them. The secret to praying according to God's will is to discern the will of God ahead of time, before you attempt to pray the prayer of faith. If there is a key to answered prayer it could certainly be nothing other than praying as God would have us to pray. It is only as our prayer corresponds to God's purposes that there will be any hope at all of their being answered by Him. Prayer — the soul's sincere desire offered unto God — must be then according to the way that God would want us to pray. That is why the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

The reality is, no one can pray the prayer of faith apart from the clear knowledge of God's will. If you are uncertain about the Father's will in a matter, you certainly cannot pray in faith for it to happen. But when you have positive assurance of His will the prayer of faith evoked by that assurance will certainly be answered. Precious indeed is the promise given in I John 5:14: “If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us...and we know that we have the petitions that we desired from Him.” If we ask anything — no exceptions — no limit to God's confidence in His sons! And why? Because He trusts them to ask right things “according to His will.” He is guiding them, even in what they ask, if they are truly sons after His own heart; so God sets no limit to His power. If anyone is doing God's will let him ask anything. It is God's will that he ask anything. Let him put His promise to the test.

Notice here what the true basis of sonship prayer is. The prayer that is answered is the prayer after God's will. And the reason for this is plain. What is God's will is God's wish. And when a man does what God wills, he does what God wishes to be done. Therefore God will have that done at any cost, at any sacrifice. Thousands of prayers are never answered, simply because God does not wish them! They have absolutely nothing to do with His plan, purpose, promise or desire. If we pray for any one thing, or any number of things we are sure God wishes, we may be sure our wishes will be gratified. For our wishes are only the reflection of God's! And the wish in us is really equivalent to the answer! It is the answer casting its shadow backwards. Already the thing is done in the mind of God. It casts two shadows — one backward, one forward. The backward shadow — that is the wish before the thing is done, which sheds itself in prayer. The forward shadow — that is the joy after the thing is done, which sheds itself in praise. Oh, what a rich and wonderful reality, this!

Asking anything, getting everything, willing with God, praying with God, decreeing with God, praising with God! Surely it is too much, this great promise. How can God trust us with a power so deep and terrible? Ah, He can trust His sons with anything! He is teaching us. Patiently. We are learning. Are you still asking for all the petty, selfish, carnal things you used to demand

from God? If not, you are learning sonship. "If we ask ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL." Well, if we do, we will ask nothing amiss. If we do, we will ask nothing to consume it upon our lusts. It will be God's will if it is asked. It will be God's will if it is done. For they are come, these sons, TO DO GOD'S WILL! May God grant that you and I may learn to live this great and holy life, remembering the solemn words of Him who lived it first, who only lived it all: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER which is in heaven."

DOING ONLY WHAT WE SEE THE FATHER DO

When I pray for God's will to be done in earth as it is in heaven, I bring myself into harmony with the infinite mind of the Father. When my will is harmonized with the Father's will His omnipotence becomes active in the sphere of my praying. How awesome the thought! What I do, He is doing. It is just as the Pattern Son has taught us, "My Father abiding in me is doing the works," and again, "I assure you, the Son is able to do nothing from Himself — of His own accord; but He is able to do only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does is what the Son does in the same way" (Jn. 5:19, Amplified). Consider the firstborn Son, our elder brother and example. Note that all of His prayers were answered; that whenever He approached His Father His prayers were heard. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always," Jesus said. Now, why was this? It was not simply because of His divine nature, but rather because of His human nature, or more specifically, the nature of His humanity. He is the One who can say, "I do always those things which please the Father." "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," testified the Father. Therefore, because of what He was, the way in which He walked out His sonship, His prayers were answered. His prayers were the desires of His Father.

Consider any parent and child. Every parent has some ideal or idea in mind about what he wants his child to grow up to be. He has some ideal for their education, their physical well-being, their sleep habits, their character and their destiny. Consequently, when a child comes to a parent and makes a request, this request, consciously or subconsciously, is filtered through the ideal the parent has in mind. If it is contrary or detrimental to what the parent has as the ideal for that child, if the parent has any backbone at all it will be denied. Children need to understand the parental ideal for their lives. They not only need to understand it but they need to conform to it, because as long as they are in rebellion to that plan and that ideal their requests are going to be ignored or turned down. As long as they do not understand what it is, they are not going to make requests in accordance with it. Often parents may have an ideal for their child and yet be mistaken. They may try to force the child to become an engineer when he is better suited to be a plumber. But our Father is infinite wisdom and infinite love, and therefore, when we submit ourselves to His ideal and His plan for our lives, it can be nothing other than that which is good and perfect.

There is the wonderful secret to Jesus' praying and Jesus' ministry! He did only what He saw His Father doing. His whole life was an apprenticeship to the Father. If He did not see the Father at work, He did nothing. He rested with the Father, and He worked with the Father. That is the mark of sonship. A son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father doing. That is why Jesus always had 100% results! He never spoke a word that didn't come to pass. He never prayed a prayer that wasn't answered. He never touched a sick person that wasn't healed. He never failed. He never lost a case! And that is why we often have such poor results, and so few prayers answered.

In this connection George Wylie wrote: “There is nothing wrong with praying for the sick, God has commissioned us to do this, but sometimes we pray for the sick when it is not God’s will for us to do so. The only prayer that we can pray that is effective is the one that is prayed in the Spirit. When we pray by the Spirit we pray according to God’s will, but when we pray from our own understanding and desires, we often pray contrary to God. From ourselves we know not how to pray as we ought, but, ‘the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses; for we do not know what is right and proper for us to pray for; but the Spirit prays for us with that earnestness which cannot be described. And He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit prays for the saints according to the will of God’ (Rom. 8:26-27, Lamsa). Only the Spirit, working according to the divine nature, knows what the will of God is, and prays through us accordingly. Because our human nature can be nothing else but opposed to God, any thoughts or desires that emanate from it will always be contrary to the mind and will of God. If we are to inherit the Kingdom we must know, and do, the will of God. How can we do the will of God, how can we pray the will of God, if we do not know it?”

People ask me sometimes to pray for things which I discern are not the Father’s will. Other times the Father reveals nothing to me about the matter. He is silent, He hides His purpose. I cannot see what the Father is doing. I cannot hear what the Father is saying. The things I am requested to pray about are often good things, seemingly desirable things, but they are not what the Father is doing. He has another plan, a different design and time schedule. When I do not see what the Father is doing, or when I see the Father doing other than what I have been requested to ask for, I cannot pray. I do not pray. It would be foolish to pray. It would be rebellion to pray. It would be a terrible waste of time and energy to pray. When my own father lay in the hospital dying, the Lord spoke to me in a dream and I saw him lying in a gray casket. I knew the Lord was going to take him. The saints called an all-night prayer meeting to seek God to raise him up. But I could not pray. I had already received the word of the Lord in the matter, and within two days he passed away, the all-night prayer meeting notwithstanding.

Ray Prinzing has shared some valuable insights into God’s will in prayer. “If two of you shall AGREE on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered IN MY NAME, there am I in the midst of them’ (Mat. 19:19-20). This is far more than just agreeing in the same letter of the word in our prayers. People say, ‘Agree with me that God will do this, or that.’ Yet I am not even sure that it is God’s will for that to happen. If we both know that this is God’s will, then we can agree in prayer — for true prayer is the expression of the Divine Will. Agreement isn’t just on the natural plane, it is when we are all so much one in His Spirit that we become a symphony — a harmonious expression of HIM, in all its manifold expression.

“It has been well stated that before we pray for mountain-moving faith, we do well to pray for understanding of His will — does He want it moved? And when? And where does He want to put it? There is so much more to this walk with God than just claiming miracles and demonstrations of His power. Oh, to know the mind and purpose of God, that we might be one in His will. ‘The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.’ A true son of God does not minister because he is ‘need conscious’ but ‘WILL-OF-THE-FATHER-CONSCIOUS.’ Needs are everywhere, and the Father knows all about them — not even a sparrow can ‘fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of much more value than many sparrows’ (Mat. 10:29,31). So the issue is not the ‘needs’ around us, but to LIVE OUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER, doing with our might what He leads us to do, and all unto Him, for His glory and praise.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much’ (James 5:16). ‘Ye also helping together by prayer for us...’ (II Cor. 1:11). This goes far beyond the utterance of our petitions filled with sympathy and natural compassionate desires that God do such and such for this one for whom we are praying. A lot of our sympathy is of the flesh, it would seek to hold them back from their cross, to help them escape the severer processions, as if we would bail them out of their troubles. But it is right and proper to pray for God’s grace to be poured out upon them, that is true supplication, and by this divine enablement they shall OVERCOME — whether the outward circumstance is changed or not.

“Yet beyond all this — we find an increased longing deep within to be able to pray in such a way that we become a part of the birthing of a new moving of His Spirit that will establish His righteousness in the earth, bringing forth His holiness among men, and a lifting up of the Christ, who will draw all to Himself. Even while we write these words, there is an inner sense that this deep prayer, inexpressible in words, is rising from the hearts of countless numbers of men and women. It is a ‘SPIRIT CRY’ which has proceeded from the Throne, into our hearts — to become an expression of His will in the earth, and now it flows back to Him from our spirits. It will be answered, because it is HIS OWN PRAYER — HIS WILL. A sovereign working of our God!” — end quote.

George Hawtin adds these words of wisdom: “If God’s dear children would turn the searchlight within, they would see that the multitude of their spoken prayers are nothing more or less than the desires of their own hearts, which they, alas! imagine to be the will and plan of God. I have seen people almost beat their heads against the wall in their determination to pray a revival into their church, but no revival came. ‘Well,’ you ask, ‘why did not God answer prayer?’ The answer is simple. The people were praying for something that it was not God’s will to do. ‘But,’ you reply, ‘was it not God’s will to revive His people? Was it not God’s will to save souls?’ The answer to that is simple also. God always does the things that are His will. Therefore, had it been His will, He would have done it, for if we ask anything according to His will we know that He heareth us and we have the petition that we ask of Him. The thing that many fail to see is that the people who pray in this manner are very often more concerned about seeing their prayer answered than they are about God’s will and purpose. They are concerned that a revival should come, a revival after their own liking, that they might have a thriving church and a real spiritual boom. But the idea never enters their minds that God, having now called His elect, may now choose to scatter the flock as He did in Jerusalem long ago (Acts 8:1,4).

“Oh, that men would heed the words of Jeremiah! ‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?’ (Jer. 17:9). So, you see, it is never safe to ask God for anything that proceeds from the natural mind, for the natural mind will hide its true ambitions behind a cloak of fervent prayer, availing itself of the subtle suffix, ‘We ask it in Jesus’ name,’ or, ‘We ask it all according to Thy will.’ But the natural mind cannot ask anything according to God’s will and it may as well not try. Paul the apostle further demonstrates the unfruitfulness of our human understanding by saying, ‘We know not what we should pray for as we ought’ (Rom. 8:26). Whether we wish to believe it or not, this is the naked truth, for man, whether he be a Christian or not, simply does not know what to pray for as he ought. He thinks he knows and he goes right ahead making all manner of requests according to his own will, but if he would stop his talking long enough to do some considering, he would see that his prayers are born, not of the will of God, but of his own wishing. Thus his wish is not only father to his thoughts, but father to his prayers as well. How often have I heard Christians dreamily say, ‘I wish the Lord would send us a revival.’ ‘I wish the Lord would save my husband.’ ‘I wish the Lord would heal my body.’ ‘I wish the Lord would send us a good rain,’ or some such thing.

Then they will make request in the congregation desiring people to pray that these wishes of theirs, which they call prayer requests, will be answered. Then when such requests go unanswered for years we wonder why the Lord did not hear us. Why should He hear us when the request is born, not of His Spirit, but of the natural mind?

“The coming of the will of God into a believer’s life is a personal experience far, far greater than the receiving of any spiritual gift. The coming of the will of God into your life is in truth the coming of the mind of Christ. It is the beginning of the very spirit of the kingdom within you. It is the crowning and enthroning of Jesus Christ in the throne room of your heart. As long as self sits on the throne, carrying out its private ambitions and ordering your life according to the human will, Jesus is still rejected, still despised, still crucified. The world is full of men and women who proudly boast that they want God’s will and only God’s will, yet they spend their whole lives carrying out their own ambitions and trying to fulfill their own purposes.

“At this trying hour we cannot possibly emphasize too strongly the need to seek to become one with the will of God, to cast off the carnal mind and let the mind of Christ dwell in us. As it is impossible for the oak that fell last winter to uprear its shattered stem, so also it is impossible for the natural mind to attain sonship. Only the indwelling mind of the Father can bring us to sonship, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. It is the Spirit of His mind that brings us into unity with the Father, unity with the Son, and unity with each other. Those rejected men who will come to the Lord, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name and in Thy name done many wonderful works?’ were not liars nor even deceivers. They were self-willed men who preached and performed miracles because that is what they wanted to do. They were not doing it because Christ had either called them or sent them. Therefore their works, though wonderful, amounted to nothing because they were done after man’s own will. The existing church system has an endless variety of this type of men and women who lay claim to being great servants of God, but who in reality are serving their own bellies” — end quote.

Jesus had 100% results in every aspect of His ministry because He ministered only to those the Father showed Him. On a particular day the Father showed Him to heal all who came to Him. At other times Jesus withdrew and could do no mighty miracles. When He saw nothing, He did nothing. When He heard nothing, He spoke nothing. Preachers today, however, are disposed to pray for every request they hear and lay hands on everything that moves. They even solicit “prayer requests” and suggestively attach the prayer request form to the offering coupon. And the results are very poor. God will only do what He purposes to do regardless of how many times we ask, how forcefully we command, or how subtly we use the name of Jesus. Evangelists will pray about anything. Faith preachers will command everything. Men with gifts will minister to anyone and everyone at all times. But in the end it will be seen with absolute and inviolable certainty that only what the Father was doing was done. All they plead for, all they command, all they rebuke, and all they prophesy to, apart from what the Father is speaking and doing, bears no fruit whatever. What an incredible waste! Many years ago, in the heyday of his ministry, Oral Roberts confessed that he felt fortunate indeed if one person out of five that came through his healing line received anything from the Lord. What divine wisdom is taught in the pathway of sonship where the Son does only what He sees the Father do, where the Son speaks only what He hears from the Father! This is the way of sonship.

Forty-seven times in the Gospel of John, Jesus says that He was under the Father’s orders, and that He never did anything, never said anything, until He received a command from His Father. He was listening every moment of the day to the inner voice of His Father and always saying, “Yes.” This perfect obedience was what made Him one with the Father and what gave

the Father perfect confidence in the Son. This perfect obedience is the reason that now “God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). Notice now the words of Jesus again and again: “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (Jn. 5:19). “I can of mine own self do nothing...I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (Jn. 5:30). “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me” (Jn. 7:16). “I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me...and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him” (Jn. 8:16,26). “I do nothing of myself...the Father hath not left me alone (to my own devices); for I do always those things that please Him” (Jn. 8:28-29).

Into that glorious realm of sonship we are called. This is what Jesus says again and again. It is what He came for. He came to bring many sons to glory. The glory He is bringing us to is the glory of the Father. This incredible calling is to be more than angels, it is to be a son of the Most High, a son of our heavenly Father, a member of the God family, as Jesus prayed, “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us...I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn. 17:21-26). After the resurrection Jesus said, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God” (Jn. 20:17). He invites us to His side, not on a golden street nor in a mansion over the hilltop — how carnal are such notions! — but He invites us to share His sonship. It is a family, a divine family, a Father and His children — we are the God Family! This is all one can make of these startling words which Jesus spoke of us being made ONE IN THE FATHER AND THE SON, THE FATHER IN HIM AND HE IN US AND WE IN THE FATHER — ONE IN THE GODHEAD. But this realm of sonship to God is marked by a perfect obedience, the kind Jesus gave to His Father every minute and every second of every day. “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!” “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” This is the spirit of sonship and the prayer and activity of all who treasure the blessed hope of sonship.

“I do only those things that I see my Father do.” It not only means that He did what He saw the Father doing, it means that He didn’t do what He didn’t see the Father doing. When He saw nothing, He did nothing. How different from the way we are prone to be! Oh, yes, we all profess a zeal to do the will and works of God. If only God will show us we will do it or burst! Our problem is not with doing what we see the Father doing — it is in not doing what we don’t see the Father doing. If we don’t see God moving then we try to move God. If the Spirit isn’t moving, we want to move the Spirit. We can’t stand to be still and quiet. It sets us on edge to do nothing. We are possessed of a spiritual nervousness when something isn’t happening. So — sing a chorus, clap your hands, stomp your feet, have a “Jericho march,” pray for needs — let’s do something and get the show on the road!

But Jesus wasn’t this way. That’s what held Him in Nazareth for thirty years while the world was gone mad and millions were dying and going to hell. What wasted years! the carnal mind reasons. But Jesus was doing exactly what He saw from His Father. Obviously, the Father wasn’t preaching, teaching, healing, saving, delivering, dying, rising, or ascending for those thirty years! The Father showed Jesus the carpenter shop and the solitude of the green Galilean hills. That is where Jesus waited upon God and grew in His knowledge of the Father and the ways of the Kingdom.

DEATH COULD NOT HOLD HIM

In the light of such truth as this I draw your attention to the deeply meaningful words of the apostle Peter, spoken on the day of Pentecost to the amazed multitude that gathered to witness the wonder of the mighty works wrought at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Standing up with the eleven he said to the assembled crowd, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT” (Acts 2:22-24).

The thrust of Peter’s message was that God raised Christ up from the dead. He loosed the pains of death. And there was a glorious reason behind this event. The reason is stated in these words: “Because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.” In plain language that means that it was an utter, total, absolute IMPOSSIBILITY for the grave to hold Jesus Christ! Why? It is my deep conviction that it was impossible for death to hold the firstborn Son of God because NOTHING ELSE COULD HOLD HIM. Nothing could influence, motivate or control Him except the will of the Father. He had absolutely no correspondence to the desires and lusts and passions and demands of the fleshly realm of this world’s bestial system.

One day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus, His mother and His disciples were bidden to the wedding. In all likelihood the family was closely related to, or very friendly toward, the family of Jesus. At least, we notice that the host had acquainted the mother of Jesus with the embarrassing situation that had arisen when the wine had run out too early in the festivities. Mary went to her son and told Him the terrible secret. She said, “They have no wine.” The answer she received was both hard and strange, at least it seems so to us. Jesus answered, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” She was given a hard answer, a very hard answer. That it was hard was due to the fact that her request was a strong temptation to Jesus, and that from His own mother. How He loved His mother! He would do anything humanly possible to please His lovely, holy mother. She had come and spoken to Him of the embarrassment that was about to confront their beloved and bewildered host. Quick action was therefore necessary in order that none of the guests might discover that the wine was giving out. This was the next temptation to Jesus — to act before His hour had come, apart from the direct command of His Father.

But Jesus lived in such a bond of obedience and dependence upon His Father that He could “do nothing of Himself.” In doing the will of the Father He had to wait for Father’s hour. Jesus was obviously pressured by His love for His mother and respect for the host to take some action for her sake, and before the Father’s time. He recognized the wily tempter at once even though he came in the garb of His own mother; and He cut him off at once with the harsh word, “Woman.” Jesus let His mother know that when it was a question of the Father’s will, or the Father’s timing, her position as His mother could not be allowed to even enter into consideration. Neither could Jesus be pressured by circumstances. “Mine hour is not yet come.” That is the same as saying, “I cannot do anything until I hear it from my Father, until I see my Father doing it.” Nothing could hold Jesus — not even His mother!

How Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus! When Lazarus became gravely ill the two sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, “Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” When Jesus received the urgent message He tarried two days longer in the place where He was. He then started the journey to Judea, to the town of Bethany. But on the way Lazarus died. The natural

mind wonders why Jesus waited while the sisters mourned in grief. When He arrived Martha's greeting words were the accusation, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died." I am sure she could not understand the Lord's tardy response in the hour of their desperate need. If Thou hadst been here! What immeasurable depths of anguish sound out of those words! But the spiritual mind of Jesus knew exactly what was going on. Jesus in spirit had seen Lazarus in the tomb, raised from the dead, and He knew that all the sorrowful events of those days would be swallowed up in the glory of God. Only the word He received from the Father directed His steps and ordered His movements. He could in no way be swayed, moved or influenced by the pain of those He loved or by their misunderstanding of His actions. You see, my beloved, nothing could hold Jesus — not even His friends!

Go with me now into that long ago when Jesus walked the dusty streets of Caesarea Philippi 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 think this up by yourself. This is not the result of your own reasoning and logic; this came to you from my Father." So remarkable was this revelation to Peter that the Lord said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona!" So here we have an instance of the Father working in Peter, imparting His thoughts and understanding to Peter.

Only minutes later Jesus began to introduce to His disciples the subject of His approaching suffering and death on the cross. The possibility of the death of their beloved Lord was a prospect so foreign to the thinking of the disciples that they were hardly able to comprehend His presentation of this unspeakable fate. Was He not the Messiah? Was He not the Son of God? Did He not come to establish a great Kingdom? Were not they, His disciples, to reign with Him in that Kingdom? With these questions in mind, they could barely endure the dark foreboding that grew in their minds as Christ talked about the future. Then Peter, who had just been pronounced blessed, took hold of Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee!" Ah, when Jesus mentioned the cross and dying, Peter became very agitated and 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 the 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 keen perception and deep revelation, "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! Peter is right, Lord! Amen!" But Jesus replies, "Get thee behind me — Satan!" And our Lord was not merely on a name-calling spree when He uttered these words, either. He never uttered words in vain, without a definite meaning. Jesus did not speak merely to Satan in Peter, neither did He say, "Peter, you are acting like the devil; your words sound like the words of Satan." He simply addressed Peter AS SATAN. Peter as Satan — on what basis? That he was demented, insane? That he was a medium, raising familiar spirits out of the spirit world? No — merely that he SPOKE AS A MAN! He was speaking as Peter, not the word of the heavenly Father. Jesus rejected the

words of Peter for He spoke only those things which He heard from His Father. The message is clear: Nothing could hold Jesus — not even His disciples!

Have you noticed how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Jesus' temptation? "And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Mat. 4:1; Mk. 1:12). What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the Son to be PROVEN, to be made STRONG, to OVERCOME in these realms before commencing His glorious sonship ministry to be followed by the agony and death of the cross.

Do you suppose the devil came to Jesus there as a weird-looking figure, with little evil-looking horns protruding from his temples, and a pointed tail? How often with our childish and distorted understanding, have we pictured Jesus confronted by that legendary personage in the red suit, with a pitchfork in his hands! This is nought but foolishness, for Satan is invisible spirit. Let us see how Jesus was tempted, for He was tempted in all points like as we are. Have you ever seen that devil in the red suit carrying a pitchfork? Have you been tempted by that devil? Come on, now! The record states that after fasting for forty days, Jesus hungered. When you're hungry, what kind of desire do you have? You want to eat! In that crucial moment the Tempter came to Him. He began to feel the physiological pangs of hunger, and then the thought occurred to Him. With fascinating, compelling power the idea swept through His mind and emotions. He said, "I know who I am; I know the power that is now mine; I can turn these stones into bread." And in His consciousness the voice cunningly suggested, "If you are the Son of God, go ahead and do it! Use your sonship to fill your belly. Use it to satisfy your own needs and desires! You can do anything you want!" But Jesus quickly discerned that subtle devil and knew how to nip that idea in the bud, before it had time to blossom. He got to it before it could conceive, before it could start making a baby of sin, the devil's own child. Jesus answered out of the depths of His spirit, "It is written — man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4:4). If a man can live by the eternal and incorruptible word of God, why should he need to create bread to satisfy a temporal need? By the spirit of His Father He saw a higher law, a higher life. And that ended the temptation! And with that victory it became everlastingly evident: Nothing could hold Jesus — not even Satan!

When His ministry began, Jesus' irreverence to religious traditions was startling to the scribes and Pharisees. His violation of the Sabbath norms was His most irritating and flagrant act. The Sabbath rest was instructed by the law of Moses, the ten commandments, and the Oral law. From the day of God's rest from creation it symbolized the respectful fear and worship of the Creator. Except for circumcision, it was the most distinctive feature of Hebrew faith which set the people of Israel apart from all other peoples. Transgressing Sabbath laws was no joking matter. It was so serious, in fact, that the death penalty was inflicted upon violators. If a person received a warning after one violation, and then deliberately broke a Sabbath ordinance for the second time he got the Hebrew electric chair — stoning.

On a certain Sabbath day Jesus in spirit saw the Father healing a man with a withered hand. Later that day He entered into the synagogue and taught. There in the synagogue He saw the man with the withered hand. The Father said, "Heal him!" The scribes and Pharisees were there watching Him that day for the express purpose of seeing whether He would heal on the Sabbath day as He did on the other days. They were looking for some grounds of accusation against Him. Jesus perceived their thoughts and plot, so He said to the man with the withered hand, "Come, stand here in the midst." The man got up and stood there. Jesus fastened His

eyes on the scribes and Pharisees and said, "I ask you — is it lawful to do good deeds on the Sabbath day? Is it permissible to save a life on the Sabbath day?" Then He glanced around at them all, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" The man stretched out his hand and it was restored like the other one. The Pharisees went out and immediately held a consultation with the Herodians against Him, how they might put Him to death.

You would think that Jesus had made His point. He could let it rest. No need to further infuriate His enemies against Him. But He went out of the synagogue and did no miracles for a time. Then on another Sabbath day He again attended Sabbath services at a synagogue. And there was a woman there who for eighteen years had an infirmity, she was bent completely forward and utterly unable to straighten herself or to look upward. When Jesus saw her He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are released from your infirmity!" Then He laid hands on her and instantly she was made straight and thanked and praised God all over the synagogue! "And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. The Lord then answered him and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Lk. 13:14-16).

Why is Jesus so audacious? Why does He continue this disrespectful behavior? Why does He play with death? Why does He strike out at the heart of the law and traditions, jeopardizing His own life? When people were sick for eighteen years why didn't He politely wait at least one more day to heal them? What's one day compared to eighteen years? Rather than waiting courteously, He deliberately offends all the religious leaders with these outrageous acts on the Sabbath. I will tell you why! Because He was doing only those things He saw the Father doing. He saw the Father healing on the Sabbath, so He healed on the Sabbath. He didn't see the Father healing for a season between Sabbaths, so He healed no one between the Sabbaths. What religion or religious leaders thought about it was not even up for consideration. That is the perfect obedience of sonship. That is the way of one who says with Jesus, "I come only to do those things I see my Father do." Jesus knew full well the penalties of the law, yet He mocked the scribes and Pharisees in spite of their warning, and continued to heal. Oh, the wonder of it! Nothing could hold Him — not even religion!

That, precious friend of mine, is why death could not hold Jesus — NOTHING ELSE COULD HOLD HIM! Nothing in the whole world could hold Him. Sin could not hold Him, for He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). His mother could not hold Him. His friends could not hold Him. His disciples could not hold Him. The Pharisees could not hold Him. The traditions of the elders could not hold Him. Religion could not hold Him. Satan could not hold Him. His own personal desires, His own will could not hold Him. The hatred of His enemies, the plaudits of His friends could not hold Him. So it was a natural thing that DEATH COULD NOT HOLD THE CHRIST, because nothing else could hold Him! Therein lies the secret to life and immortality. Paul said it this way, and it means the same thing: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:5-6,13).

Chapter 17

Our Daily Bread

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...Give us this day our daily bread” (Mat. 6:9).

What meaning do you attach to the word “daily”? For what is it that you ask, exactly, when you pray, “Give us this day our daily bread?” What is “daily bread”? Around the Greek word translated “daily” (EPIOUSION) much controversy has circled. The word is a coined word. It is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It is not found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is not found in Greek literature. The early Church Father, Origen, less than two hundred years after our Lord spoke, reported that he could not find the word either in the works of classical writers or in the common speech of the uneducated. It is not likely that in this prayer, intended by our Lord to be a model for His disciples, He would introduce an unknown word manufactured by Him for the occasion. Jesus never did that. It looks as though our Lord had indeed spoken in Aramaic, the common language of Galilee, and that when the apostles began to write their Gospels in Greek they coined this word to represent what Jesus said — sort of a transliteration, and yet not that. The phrase “daily bread” comes to us from the Latin; it was adopted by Tyndale and Luther, and so passed into the King James Version.

Scholars suggest various shades of meaning for the word, and each has his reasons. The four primary ones are: (1) daily bread (2) necessary bread (3) dependable bread (4) bread for the morrow. While different scholars give different theories or evidence for their particular interpretation of the term, the fact is, there is merit in all of them! As we meditate upon these significant words of our Lord it will, I believe, become clear that each of these meanings is in one way or another contained within the idea of “daily bread”. Whether it means “daily bread” or “necessary bread”, or “dependable bread” or “tomorrow’s bread”, the fundamental principle is the same — everything comes from Father’s gracious hand as needed and we receive it humbly and thankfully out of a heart of absolute trust; but prayer is not to be turned into a mere instrument for obtaining everything our carnal hearts may desire.

DAILY BREAD

The type is in the natural, physical bread for the body; the substance and reality are in the living bread in the spirit. Let us look at the type for a moment. I draw your mind to the people to whom our Lord first taught this prayer — the people of Galilee. A few of them were affluent. Some of them were so poor as to be almost destitute. But most of them were somewhere in between. They were not people of great means. In Bible days, in the land of Israel, workers were paid daily. It was illegal for an employer to owe his employees wages beyond sunset. So long as they had daily work they could manage, but usually there was nothing to spare. There were no surpluses, there was no Workers Compensation, and no Visa or Mastercard. If an unexpected guest arrived, there would be nothing in the cupboard. If a child was suddenly taken ill, there was no money to pay the doctor. They literally lived from hand to mouth, from day to day.

The day’s wage had to buy the day’s food. It is easy to see why people tended to be anxious about “tomorrow.” In our modern world where wages are paid weekly and sometimes bi-monthly or monthly we are most often anxious about next week or next month — not tomorrow! It becomes extraordinarily difficult for people to lift their thoughts to the higher things of the spirit while they are obsessed by these haunting worries, and have nothing laid in store

for the future, and nothing to fall back upon. It is this they crave — to have some security, to feel that, whatever tomorrow's need, they have provision for it safe in store.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” This petition shows itself to be a divine revelation of reality, a principle of the Kingdom of God. An apparent petition for temporal provision, it is, nevertheless, a spiritual petition. It presents the world as the godly man sees it. Our meat and drink and raiment come into view here and we see them from the heavenly side. The word of our Lord to the people was that their security was to be found in the FATHER. Jesus said to His disciples in the same Sermon on the Mount, “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Mat. 6:25-26).

Consider exactly what it is that the firstborn Son of God would have us learn from the birds: it is not their idleness or lack of forethought; it is their freedom from worry, anxiety and concern. How utterly unanxious these birds of heaven are! Did you never hike through the mountain trails, and feel yourself inspired by the carol of the forest warblers? What hymns of content and joyful praise sweep through the aisles of their forest cathedrals! Neither sowing nor reaping nor garnering — your heavenly Father feeds them. Think of it — our heavenly Father is a feeder of birds! And are not the sons of God of much more value than many sparrows? If, then, my heavenly Father feeds birds which are not His children, will He not much more feed me who am His offspring? Oh ye sons of the Most High — fear not, for it is the Father's good pleasure to eat and drink with you in the Kingdom of Heaven. In this great Day of the Lord He prepares a table before you and bids you “Come and dine.”

Jobs, money, possessions are not security — our heavenly Father who feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies is our Source, our real Security. No man can know the Father without this blessed knowledge. Therefore pray, “Our Father...give us this day our daily bread.” There is the formula for divine provision! In I Chronicles 29:14 we read that “all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.” When Jesus said, “Give us this day our daily bread,” it was an acknowledgment of the Source and a statement of His expectation to receive from that Source. In perfect harmony with the Father, He was in perfect harmony with the laws of supply and demand. It is an interior relationship that manifests itself in outward provision. It is one of the laws of the realm of sonship.

Hudson Taylor had opened up China to the gospel many years ago. He was to be the first white man to enter the interior of China. He wondered if God would provide his needs. He decided to find out. What did he do? He gave away everything he owned while he was in medical school preparing to be a missionary. God provided his needs for that day and more, so he gave away what he had left over and started from nothing. He determined to start every day with nothing — no money to buy food or anything at all and he prayed, “Father, give us this day our daily bread.” God provided. George Mueller, of the Bristol Orphanage, did the same thing, not only for himself but for hundreds and hundreds of children that he took in and provided for in that same way. We, too, do not need to be anxious because we can trust our Father that He will provide our daily bread. The problem is that there are people today who say they never pray for daily bread. Of course, they never pray for it because with their investments, with their bank accounts and with their portfolio of stocks and bonds, they have got their daily bread guaranteed for the next seventy-eight years! I am not condemning that — praise God for His provision. But if we were like many people in India and Africa that petition would take on a great deal more meaning.

You see, beloved, GOD IS OUR SOURCE! Oh, how the Lord's people need to learn this one sublime truth! I'm here to testify to its reality. All through the years of our walk in the Kingdom realm God has not permitted us to ask for money, or send out letters to solicit funds. And we have no gimmicks, no miracle envelopes, no book offer for an offering of ten dollars or more! We neither have to ask or beg for money, because our heavenly Father has revealed to us a higher law. Yes, God uses people, but we look not to the people, we look to God our Source. When I was in business, God was my Source. Many years ago in my business, if things weren't going well, I kneeled down in front of my desk and prayed — and my Father answered! He showed me what to do. He put me in contact with the people who needed my service, and were glad to pay for the quality of work we did. God blessed the business because we trusted in God our Source. We have never gone hungry. We have never been stranded anywhere, though in years past we traveled extensively, often with our whole family, at home and abroad. We went to the mission fields for several years with no committed support. We took no pledges. We joined no organization. And in twenty-six years of publishing KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES, having mailed out well in excess of a million papers and books, we have never solicited funds in any meeting or by mail — we have tried and proven the law of supply and demand by trusting our heavenly Father as our Source. Some people entertain the notion that only preachers “live by faith.” Not so! We all live by faith. The same law worked for me in business that works for me in ministry. God is our Source — whether we work at the corner convenience store, own a business, or are in full time ministry. If you are struggling to raise five kids, pay the rent, put food on the table, and keep the car running — our Father still knows the things you have need of before you ask, but He bids you ask! He still opens doors of provision, He still makes a way where there is no way, He still performs miracles for ALL who call upon Him. There is no difference. God is our Father and the law of His Kingdom is the law for all who live in His domain.

Norman Elliott records how Alan Redpath tells a wonderful story of his life. He had started a fund which he called “God's Fund.” It was money which people had given him to help others. During the days of World War II this fund was at the lowest point it had ever been. Alan Redpath was an air-raid warden, and one morning at dawn he was walking his area and thinking about “God's Fund.” He was carrying on a conversation with God about it. Somewhere in the conversation he was asked why he thought the fund was so low and he gave all kinds of reasons for it: the war was on, people had their minds on other things; so and so, who was a good contributor to the fund, had died, and so on. Then the word of God burst within his spirit with forceful clarity: “So you have come to rely upon people instead of Me!”

Immediately Alan Redpath knew it was right; he was convinced by the wrongness of it. Right there, on the street, he got down on his knees and asked God to forgive him, and promised God that from then on he would never take the eyes of his expectancy off Him. Within a very short time there was more money in the fund than it had had for years. Money came from all over the British Isles and from people Alan Redpath had never known before. “Give us this day our daily bread” is above all the realization that God is the Source of all aspects of life, including the Source of our incomes. When one looks at his salary, though the name on the check be that of the company he works for, he should know that the money came from his heavenly Father.

Many people shake their heads when one begins to talk about trusting God as our Source, and asking for the supply only for the day. “Aren't we supposed to plan for the future?” they ask. Within reason, I'm sure that we are, but WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE? By learning to truly know and trust our heavenly Father as the Source and Supply of all things! Our Father always has the means to supply our needs, natural or spiritual.

In the desert the rock becomes a fountain of living water, and the sparkling dew-drops daily bread. His prophet Elijah may be exiled from friend and foe, yet the Lord will provide for him. In that rocky gorge the very birds of heaven become the hands of God and in the widow's house the cruse of oil never fails and the meal barrel never runs out. You see, dear one, GOD HIMSELF IS TOMORROW!

To be anxious about tomorrow is to be anxious about our heavenly Father. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. 1:8). Tomorrow is not a day — tomorrow is a Person. Tomorrow is reality. Tomorrow is the supply in God of all we have not yet received or attained to. Tomorrow is God our warehouse, God our goal, God our substance. Tomorrow is all that is ours in the Kingdom of Heaven. Tomorrow is the unfailing and never-ending supply of our heavenly Father!

THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

When Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness toward Canaan, there came the time when it looked as if the people would die of starvation. Then we read the story of the manna. When the people asked what it was — that strange substance lying on the early-morning ground — Moses told them, "It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat...gather of it, every man of you, as much as he can eat; you shall take an Omer apiece, according to the number of persons whom each of you has in his tent." It was described as "a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoar-frost" (Ex. 16:14, RSV). The company that makes "Wonder Bread" has given its bread that name because it wants consumers to think this bread is better than ordinary bread. The manna that God sent to feed the Israelites in the wilderness was the real "wonder bread," because no one baked it. It fell out of the sky and kept God's people alive for forty years. Significant is the fact that during the period the children of Israel subsisted on manna they were to eat their daily allotment the same day, and eat of it fully, for if anyone would not eat all of it, or if he attempted to hoard his surplus, it decomposed with supernatural rapidity. Only enough for the day, gathered morning by morning, was the divine order. It was natural for some of them to want to put away a little for the coming days, but God arranged it in such a way that it could not be done — the manna spoiled and bred worms. The only exception was the day before the Sabbath — on that day they could gather twice as much, tomorrow's bread today, and it kept fresh through the Sabbath.

Praying that God will give us our daily bread may at first seem irrelevant to us. When was the last time you pleaded with the Lord, "Father, please provide me with a meal!" In most cases we should rather have prayed, "Lord, please prevent me from eating another meal — help me to discipline myself!" It does seem a little strange in our modern world, does it not, this asking for daily food? We could understand, no doubt, this prayer being made in Haiti or Somalia, but not in the industrialized nations of the West. But that only illustrates our lack of understanding of its marvelous truth. Undue emphasis on the physical cravings of the body and the meeting of physical and material needs will make an Esau — a man who sells a great future while he grasps for today's bowl of red bean soup.

But this prayer has for you and me a higher meaning than that which is earthly. For the sons of God it has a deeply spiritual meaning. It is more than food for the belly, for man shall not live by bread alone, saith the Lord. Man has been created for something greater than that, though this little poem does portray a lot of folk in this world:

Into this world to eat and sleep
And know no reason why he was born

Save only to consume the corn,
Devour the cattle, flock and fish,
And leave behind an empty dish.

That is about all the masses of the world today do, just satisfy their physical needs and live like animals. But no son of God is here today to live in that manner. We are called to something higher and grander than that, and the food the Lord Jesus points us to is spiritual food, for this prayer is the prayer of sonship. It cannot concern physical bread alone, for the prayer is given to sons, and our prayers are offered not to a celestial shopkeeper or a heavenly Santa Claus, but to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our heavenly Father, and our main need as sons is not for mortal food, but for the bread that comes down from heaven, from the Father above. "Labor not," says the Lord, "for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto eternal life" (Jn. 6:27). It is not easy to think that He who said, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth," would teach His sons to pray only or first or foremost for the meat that perishes! The spiritual meaning is beyond question. He who by daily bread sustains the body has also declared, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The food for sons of God is the "living bread" which if a man eats of it he shall never die; and the drink for sons of God is the "living water" which if a man drinks of it he shall never thirst.

There was a time when doctrine was the passion of my life. I was an avid student of theology and meticulously examined various doctrinal systems. Some of them I rejected, and others I embraced. I thought it was most important to search the scriptures and, from the letter of the Word, to determine what is the truth about a great number of things. Then I got into the gifts of the Spirit and for a season miracles were happening and wonderful healings and deliverances, and the gift of prophecy gushed forth like rushing streams from the mountain tops. Then God began to open the realm of sonship to my wondering spirit, and He has brought me to the place over the past many years where my one and only desire is to SEE HIM, KNOW HIM, and PARTAKE OF HIM who is the living reality. I am telling you that the living substance of Jesus Christ is exciting me more than anything else that I have ever found in the scriptures or in the realm of experience! The words of the hymn writer have become gloriously alive within my heart:

Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee,
O Living Word!

Man is not designed to live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God. To live by material bread is to abide in death, for all who eat thereof are dying. Whenever the petition is made, "Give us this day our daily bread," we should mean the incorruptible bread of life. Man eats to live, but to live rightly and eternally he must eat something more than bread that perishes. Man can eat the best "health food" available but he will continue to age and die. Moses and the children of Israel ate manna, but nevertheless they died; but our heavenly Father in His great love has prepared bread which will give you life more abundantly. Christ's life is the true manna — the bread of life. "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if

any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (Jn. 6:50-51).

The following words of Phillip Keller give precious insight into the meaning of “daily bread”. “Our Lord made it very clear that as with manna so with Him, we have to come regularly, daily, to derive nourishment afresh from God. To partake of His resurrection life is to feed on heavenly bread. There is a bit of mystery to all this. Yet it is not really surprising, for, even at our best, we can scarcely grasp the unique and wondrous ways of God. In His mercy and generosity, He has used temporal concepts to explain spiritual truth so that our understanding of what is involved will be clear. What is bread? It is the living kernels of grain, broken, crushed, bruised, and ground into fine flour. This flour is mixed with salt, water, and yeast. It is kneaded, shaped into loaves, then allowed to rise. After that, it is baked to a beautiful brown. In this new form as bread, the life of the grain provides life to those who eat it. The life of the wheat is thus transmitted to man through the process of bruising and death and subsequent assimilation.

“By a similar series of processes, the life of God in Christ has been made available to us. Our Saviour became God’s grain. It was He who was broken and bruised at Calvary. Out of that crushing, out of the grave, out of death itself, emerged the risen and resurrected One. He thus became God’s bread for us. Just as there is an enormous difference between bare kernels of grain and a loaf of bread, so there is a remarkable difference between Jesus of Nazareth and the risen Lord. The life of the wheat is limited to the kernel until it is crushed and milled. So the life of God in Christ was confined to His single earthly body until after His death and resurrection. Then He became available to all men everywhere by His Spirit. In this way, any man who hungers for bread from heaven, for life from God, for the vitality of Christ, may find Him available through His Spirit.

“The special responsibility of the Spirit is to take the things of Christ, the life of Christ, the attributes of Christ, the character of Christ, the mind of Christ, and transmit them to us. It is in this way that His life is made real in me and becomes part of my life. He becomes my life — the very life of sonship. With this then as a background, we can comprehend Christ as the bread from heaven. The prayer He taught us to pray becomes a most potent and powerful plea for the very life of God Himself. This is no mere, casual request for just ordinary food. It is a deep, desperate yearning to have the risen Christ made real in me each day. ‘Oh, Father, give me this day my daily bread!’ Such a petition, such a prayer, such a desire could and does originate only with God Himself. It is not the sort of thing to spring from any self-centered, self-satisfied heart.

“If I, an ordinary man, am nourished daily with the very life of Christ, what happens? Do I remain the same sort of person I was before I was given this bread from above? The answer is a very positive no. There will gradually but surely steal over my life some amazing changes. My character will become like that of Christ Himself. My conduct will begin to resemble His conduct. There will be formed in my mind the sort of thoughts that are in His mind. There will be born in me the same attitudes which He bears to others. There will be powerful and compelling motives produced within my being that have as their source the sort of love and understanding that He has in His heart. It has been said, ‘You are what you eat.’ If we feed our souls and spirits on God’s bread from heaven, it follows that is what we shall become. This is a powerful principle. It explains why the Master included this apparently earthly petition in His noble prayer for sons of God” — end quote.

So, again I ask, What does “daily bread” mean? Recall some of the many times Jesus spoke of bread and eating and drinking. He said, “I am the living bread that cometh down from heaven.” What is Jesus saying? If we ask God to give us bread, then the bread must come down from heaven. There is a great reason for this. There are two strong forces in nature that influence human life and determine what a person will be. These two forces are HEREDITY and ENVIRONMENT. Neither one alone is sufficient to mold a full and useful human life. Heredity is a word used to mean the way in which certain characteristics are passed from parents to children, generation after generation. Because of heredity, each baby is born with human characteristics that make him distinctly human. Not only is he distinctly human, but he is also very much like his parents or grandparents or other family members in special ways. Heredity is the internal power that determines what a person is. Environment, on the other hand, is a word used to stand for all the external conditions and influences that become a part of a person’s life and affect his development. Included in a person’s environment are the food he eats, the liquids he drinks, the air he breathes, the place he lives, the home he is brought up in, the diseases he may have, and the people, ideas and education he is exposed to. Thus it can be seen that environment is altogether as important a factor in what a person will be as is heredity. Perhaps even more so!

It needs to be very clear in our minds that the nature of man is received through heredity, but the sustenance and development of that nature depend entirely upon the environment. The first and primary function of the environment is to sustain life. The environment is that in which we live, move and have our being. Without it we would neither live, move, or have any being. Within every living organism is contained the principle and power of life; but the environment is the power to sustain and develop that life, ordering the conditions of life. Every living thing requires for its development an environment containing air, light, heat, water and food. When we simply remember how indispensable food is to growth and work, and when we further bear in mind that the food supply is contributed by the environment, we shall realize at once the importance, the meaning, and the truth that without environment there can be no life! You may have the best genes a person could ever have, but without the environment those genes will never have the opportunity to produce that wonderful person you were meant to be.

Matters not how much life you have in you, you must assimilate your environment to live. The environment is really an unappropriated part of ourselves. We and it must be one. We and it are one. Life depends upon that union — the organism united with its environment. An organism in itself is just a part; its environment is its complement. Alone, cut off from its environment, it is not. Alone, cut off from my environment, I am not. Without food, I am not. Without air, I am not. Without water, I am not. I continue as I receive. My environment may change me, but first it has to sustain me. Its secret transforming power is directly molding body and mind and is sustaining the very life itself.

This is a great truth in the physical world, established by our Creator. It is but a wonderful picture of the greater realities in the SPIRITUAL WORLD! This is a truth of so great importance in the spiritual world that we would be remiss not to pursue it. In the spiritual world he will be enlightened and wise who understands this one great truth: without environment there can be no life! I speak of course of the spiritual environment of the spiritual realm of the Kingdom of Heaven. What does this amount to in the spiritual world of God and His sons? Is it not simply the grand and glorious truth spoken by the firstborn of the New Creation when He said, “Without ME ye can do nothing!” (Jn. 15:5). There are some who imagine that by their own divinity, apart from Jesus Christ, they can do all things. But through the mighty work of regeneration we have been birthed into the Kingdom of God as spiritual organisms, spirit beings, begotten of God, born from above, the off-spring of our heavenly Father.

There is now within us a new principle and power of life — God's very own divine life, the life of heaven. But let every man consider this that I now propose: even in this, our divine nature, we require a second factor, a something in which to live and move and have our being — an ENVIRONMENT! The Kingdom of Heaven has an environment. The spiritual world has an environment. The whole universe is a type and shadow of this glorious truth. Every star has its gravity. Every planet has its atmosphere. Every living organism requires an environment, from the deepest sea to the highest heaven. Without the environment of the spiritual world we cannot live divinely as sons of God or move or have any spiritual being. Without the spiritual environment of the Kingdom of Heaven the life of sonship within us is like a body without air, the fish without water, the eagle without its nest.

The great Pattern Son walked in the full and enlightened consciousness of this inter-relationship between organism and environment. He did not live independent of that spiritual environment that surrounds and envelops a son of God. Jesus declared, "Believe me that I AM IN THE FATHER, and the Father IN ME" (Jn. 14:11). It was not only the Father IN THE SON, it was also the SON IN THE FATHER. The Father was both the center and circumference of Jesus' life. That blessed Christ also prayed for the younger sons who were to afterward follow in His steps, saying, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. That they all may be one; even as Thou, Father, art in me, and I IN THEE, that they also may be one IN US" (Jn. 17:11,21). Christ knew that as a son He was the organism and His Father was the environment. The Father was that IN WHICH THE SON LIVED AND MOVED AND HAD HIS BEING. And what is the environment of the sons of God? It is God in Christ. Not only must God be in Christ and Christ in us. We must be IN CHRIST. God in Christ is our environment in which we live and move and have our being! It is here that we know Christ as THE SPHERE OF OUR LIFE AND BEING. Just as our atmosphere supplies, to whomever is within it, whatever it contains, so Christ surrounds us in His own life and supplies all that is needed for our sustenance and development in the Kingdom of God.

As the natural man must have sustenance from his environment, so the spiritual man. The spiritual man must come to know how to live by his environment. After he has got life you must give him food. Now, what food shall you give him? Shall you feed him with knowledge, or with beauty, or with prosperity, or with blessings, or with religious exercises, or with commandments, or with gifts, or with power, or with doctrines, or with experiences? No; there is a rarer luxury than all these — so rare, in fact, that few have ever more than tasted it; so rich, that they who have tasted will never live on other fare again. It is this: "I am that living bread that is come down from heaven." Who can but marvel at the proclamation of the Son of God, "I am the bread of life...that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat this bread, he shall live forever" (Jn. 6:48,50). Ah, sweet mystery of the ages, that a man can eat a bread from another world, a bread that has the power to impart a life that knows no death! To every saint of God there must come a time when the truth that Christ is the life, Christ is the environment, Christ is the bread, Christ is the air we breathe, Christ is the only living food dawns as the morning on the meadows of his soul. The strength of the life of sonship is drawn at the table of the Lord where we feed upon Christ who is our life in the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven.

GIVE US THIS DAY...

Now let us consider some significant statements that Jesus made about Himself. He said, "I am the light of the world; He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). Light is just as vital a part of our environment as the food we eat. John,

in the first chapter of his Gospel, gives additional revelation on this great truth, when he speaks of the Word being with the Father in the beginning, and how all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Then he goes on to make this significant statement, "In Him was life; and THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN" (Jn. 1:4). From this verse we see that life and light are essentially the same thing. "The life was the light." So when He came a light into the kosmos, He was also the life that came into the creation, to give life to all creatures. John goes on to say, "That was the TRUE LIGHT, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (Jn. 1:9). All other lights are artificial, imitation. Only the Word of God was the TRUE LIGHT, and He came a light into the kosmos.

When God separated the light from the darkness in the beginning, He called the light DAY, and the darkness He called NIGHT. We are also told that He made two great lights, one to rule the Day and the other to rule the Night. Man with his limited carnal understanding has restricted this to our solar day and lunar night, and to the sun and the moon. But our almighty Father has something infinitely higher in mind than this! These are mere types and shadows of reality. There is a great spiritual meaning to all this. There is a REALM OF LIGHT and a REALM OF DARKNESS in creation which have nothing to do with our solar day and lunar night. They are realms in the spirit, and we can be inhabitants of either. The realm of light is ruled over by the Son of God, the Sun of Righteousness, who is THE LIGHT; and the realm of darkness is ruled over by satan, the prince of darkness. Paul, in writing to the saints at Thessalonica, stated, "Ye are all the children of the Light, and the children of the Day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thes. 5:5). There are many other passages where we read of the children of Light, the children of the Day; and the children of the night or of darkness. So we can be either children of the Day, or children of the night. We can either walk in Light, or walk in darkness; it all depends on whom we are following. Jesus spoke this beautiful truth: "I am the light of the world: He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the LIGHT OF LIFE" (Jn. 8:12).

As we consider this world in which we live, we see that all the physical light we have springs from the sun in our sky. Take away that orb and darkness would soon cover the earth. All vegetation would droop and die as it turned yellow, then brown and black and crumbled into the earth. Soon after that all animal and human life would have the same fate. The verdant creatures which grace the surface of the earth have been created to live in light. No one who has ever seen the sickly color of some plant that has struggled for life in semi-darkness can fail to miss the contrast between the green thing which grew in the sunshine, and the pale travesty which grew in the shade. In total darkness every man would become blind within three days, and death would follow shortly after. The life that we know comes from the sun. In the same way, Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness! He is the illumination of our Day, the life of our lives! Again, this speaks of the environment of the Kingdom realm of God. The sun's rays are the vital life in the environment of earth; the light of God in the face of Jesus Christ raised up within us is the vital life of the heavenly realm of the Kingdom of God where sons of God live and move and have their being.

The sweet singer of Israel penned these meaningful words: "The entrance of Thy words GIVETH LIGHT; it giveth UNDERSTANDING to the simple" (Ps. 119:130). The prophet Hosea, speaking of God, said, "Thy judgments are as LIGHT that goeth forth" (Hos. 6:5). "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a LIGHT unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Also in II Corinthians 4:6, Paul declares, "For God, who commanded the LIGHT to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the LIGHT of the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Can we not understand by this that TRUTH is LIGHT, UNDERSTANDING is LIGHT, KNOWLEDGE is LIGHT and LIFE is LIGHT. We often hear someone say, "I got some light on

that.” They are declaring the reception of understanding. In like manner, DARKNESS is ignorance and error. “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).

From the above scriptures we know there are TWO KINGDOMS: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, or the Kingdom of Light and the kingdom of darkness. Praise God, He “hath delivered us from the POWER OF DARKNESS, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13). In this world darkness and light, day and night co-exist. Here in El Paso, Texas it is a bright, sunlit day. On the other side of the world people slumber upon their beds in the darkness of night. Therefore I learn in the natural a principle that teaches me a spiritual truth: It is day and night at the same time! These lines are being read by many thousands of people around the world. Some of you walk in light and some of you walk in darkness. Some of you walk in spiritual light in different dimensions, while some of you walk in spiritual darkness in different dimensions. It’s a matter of your UNDERSTANDING. It’s not a matter of whether you speak in tongues, how you were baptized, or rules and regulations or externals of any kind. It is a thing of the spirit, a condition, a state of being, a spiritual mentality, a KNOWING OF THE LORD IN TRUTH AND UNDERSTANDING.

Darkness is but the absence of light, or the lack of understanding. Christ Himself IS THE LIGHT OF LIFE. Life comes from light, therefore, if we want to know the condition of life in a man, we must see the state of enlightenment within him. I don’t mean his knowledge of doctrinal facts, but the inward revelation of spiritual truth and reality. We often think that if a man becomes a little more zealous, his life has grown; or if he is a little more pious, his life has increased. Such concepts are totally erroneous. Life is not in the zeal of man; neither is it in the piety of man. There is only one realm and one source of life, and that is LIGHT. Life rests with light; life comes from light. To determine whether a person has grown in life, we must discern the condition of his INNER ENLIGHTENMENT. Furthermore, if we want to help others grow in life, we must help them to be enlightened, to experience the truth of God as reality. If they can receive enlightenment from us, they can obtain life and develop that life.

It is in this spiritual enlightenment that we step into GOD’S DAY. It is in this Day that Christ is and that Christ brings, and in which we now walk, that we may receive our “daily bread”. Can you not see it, my brother, my sister? The “Day” of the Lord is not a date on the calendar, not a period of twenty-four hours or a number of years. THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IS THE DAY! This is our Day. We are children of this Day. The strength of God Himself that comes by illumination of His spirit is what God gives us when we pray for daily bread. “Give us this day...” “This day” is this new Day of God in which we now live and walk. The bread for “this Day”! We ask for the continual, unailing strengthening in this Day of God. He gives us the Christ. How can that prayer be answered if Jesus Christ is only coming physically some day in the future? How can Jesus, the bread of heaven, all come down in one little human loaf sometime in the future? My deepest prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God will give understanding to all who read these lines that the bread of life is the distribution of the spirit of Christ, the word of Christ, the power of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, the mind of Christ and the nature of Christ within His body of sons. It is the spirit of Christ that sustains our spiritual man, feeds our inner man, and grows us up into the full stature of the Son of God.

He has come in the foretaste of His omnipotence, working all through this present age in the hearts of the remnant, gathering out of each generation a firstfruits, in preparation for the times of restitution of all things. Then He shall be released, breaking forth in visible manifestation of the fullness of His nature, power and being. This is OUR daily bread, the necessary bread for

this day, the bread of our spiritual existence, the bread that cometh down from heaven, the environment of our spiritual life. How we yearn for that fullness! How our souls pant after Him! How we groan within ourselves, waiting for the glory that shall be revealed! How we hunger and thirst after His righteousness and His Kingdom! He shall continue to come unto us until we have eaten the whole Lamb and the whole Loaf and stand in the absolute fullness of His strength and might. Yes, "Give us this day our daily bread!"

Jesus Christ is Lord, but He is not yet the Lord of lords, exhibiting fully that Lordship in His body, to restore creation, delivering all from the bondage that brings corruption. If you don't understand that there are some things waiting to be accomplished, then you need help in the scriptures. There are those who would try and claim and appropriate to themselves the fullness and perfection of God and their sonship right now. They are already perfect, mature sons, manifested sons, filled with the fullness of God, immortal and incorruptible, ruling and reigning with Christ — so they say. Would to God that it were true, that we might stand in that fullness and live and reign with them! Their boast is louder than their living, and their claims exceed their experience. The reports of their great power and authority over creation are highly exaggerated. But there is a humble, obedient people willing to wait upon reality while they continue to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

God has been gracious and faithful to give us our bread from day to day, from dealing to dealing, from realm to realm. He has called us to His feasts and has abundantly fed us in each. We were called to the spiritual feast of Passover in our salvation experience. There we began to eat of Christ the living bread and were quickened unto God. Then He called us to the spiritual feast of Pentecost in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. How wonderfully He fed us there! We feasted at His table and partook of His power and glory in divers gifts of the Holy Ghost. But there is a third dimension in God where we move beyond new birth and gifts into the very fullness of God. The sons of God are now called to the third spiritual feast, the feast of fullness, the feast of Tabernacles. Blessed are they who are called to this great feast, that which supersedes Pentecost, that which is the BALANCE OF THE MEAL of which Passover and Pentecost were merely the first courses! And the balance must therefore come, the remainder of the meal which will give strength to the laborers to go forth and accomplish great things for the Master.

Great were the glories seen by men like Noah, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and Solomon. Glorious were the manifestations of God's power that swept the Judean and Galilean hills when our Lord spake as never man spake and healed, cast out devils, and even raised the dead to life again. Sublime beyond explanation were the holy visitations at Pentecost and in the years that followed as multitudes, both of men and women, were brought to the feet of Jesus Christ, and by the hands of the apostles God wrought mighty miracles and special signs and wonders until the world was turned literally upside down with the glory of the heavenly visitation. It would have been wonderful to have dwelt there then and to have rejoiced with them for all the wonderful works of God. Marvelous beyond description were the works of God as He birthed His infant Church!

Blessed as were all those things and marvelous as were the results, yet more glorious still is the hope pulsating within the breast of all creation as they wait in earnest expectation for THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. After all the mighty works of God in all previous visitations the sad fact is that the world is still filled with pain, sorrow and death. Though some have been healed, all men continue to die, saint and sinner alike. For this reason "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, for the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. Because the creation

itself ALSO shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:19-22). Ah, in the glorious feast of Tabernacles, in the manifestation of the sons of God, sin and death shall be overcome for all men. What a hope! As J. B. Phillips so beautifully renders, “The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.” The sons of God shall so eat of the living bread that death will be swallowed up, spirit, soul and body. For this we pray, for this we who have received the call to sonship yearn, we will not settle for less — thank God for the measure of bread given to every previous generation and age, but now our hearts cry out: “Give us this day OUR DAILY BREAD!”

The supernal glories that lie like the towering Mount Everest before us are beyond compare. The grandest event of all time is now at the doors. For almost two thousand long years the Lord has been gathering out of all nations an elect people and refining them in the furnace of affliction, transforming them in mind and heart by the deep dealings of His Spirit, and preparing them in wisdom and knowledge to possess the reins of the government of the world. And while we rejoice and praise God for all the mighty visitations of the past, and those glorious visitations we have experienced in our own lifetime, yet I know by the word of the Lord that the next great move of God will be greater than all — the manifestation of the sons of God. Nothing is more certain than that. The Spirit witnesses all across the land and around the world that the long awaited revelation is at hand. The unveiling of the in-Christed is nigh. The cry of the groaning creation for release from the power of sin and the tyranny of death and the prayer of the travailing saint are joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the arising of God’s deliverers. The desire of all nations is at hand. Oh, yes! “Give us this day OUR DAILY BREAD.”

Give us this Day our daily bread,
Lead us to pastures where we may be fed;
Take us to heights never known by man,
Give us this Day our daily bread!

This has a deeply spiritual meaning for those called to sonship, for they have not been promised merely physical blessings. Material blessings are very secondary to the sons of God today. But if you, as a chosen one of God, have received temporal blessings, then thank God, remembering that they are extra. Beloved, may I say to you, God has not promised to us those physical blessings. He has promised us spiritual blessings. Material blessings were promised under the Old Testament and given to the nation Israel, for they are fleshly blessings and Israel was a fleshly people, born of the flesh, the seed of Abraham after the flesh. But spiritual blessings have been promised to the elect of God under the New Testament, who are born not of the flesh, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST” (Eph. 1:3).

If you want another distinction between Israel in the land of Canaan under the law, and the body of Christ seated in the heavenlies under the New Covenant then remember: Physical blessings in the Old Testament — spiritual blessings in the New Testament. And listen to me — when Saul of Tarsus met the Lord Jesus on the Damascus road he was not given a “Duncan Hines Recommends” book telling him of all the Gourmet Restaurants in the Roman Empire. Consider what Paul says: “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings...even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour,

working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day” (II Cor. 6:4-5; I Cor. 4:11-13). Ah, Paul knew what it was to be deprived of natural food. And he was a “King’s kid!”

As ministers of the Kingdom of God you must tell the Lord’s people what this petition means. To tell them that it means physical bread would be all wrong. The Psalmist tells us that when the fleshly Israel complained to God and wanted meat to eat, God gave them quails. And the Psalmist says, “He granted their request, but sent leanness to their souls.” And today God does not always hear our prayers for things because He does not want our souls to be lean. God is providing us a spiritual bread, for the firstborn Son says, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness” — they are the ones that shall be filled. Do you thirst after righteousness? Do you hunger after reality? Do you know what it is to have your thirst slaked? Do you know what it means to have your deepest hunger satisfied by the bread that comes down from heaven, that if a man eat of it he shall never hunger and shall never die? Oh, today, may our prayer be, “Give us this day our daily bread!”

Chapter 18

Our Daily Bread

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...Give us this day our daily bread” (Mat. 6:11).

There are strange circumstances surrounding this word “daily.” What is “daily bread”? The Greek word translated “daily” is a coined word. It is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It is not found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is not found in Greek literature, either in the works of classical writers or in the common speech of the uneducated. Scholars suggest various shades of meaning for the word. The four primary ones are: (1) daily bread (2) necessary bread (3) dependable bread (4) bread for the morrow. While different scholars give different theories or evidence for their particular interpretation of the term, the fact is, there is merit in them all! As we meditate upon these significant words of our Lord it will, I believe, become clear that each of these meanings is in one way or another contained within the idea of “daily bread”. Whether it means “daily bread” or “necessary bread”, or “dependable bread” or “tomorrow’s bread”, the fundamental principle is the same — everything comes from Father’s gracious hand as needed and we receive it humbly and thankfully out of a heart of absolute trust!

YESTERDAY’S MANNA

When Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness toward the Promised Land, there came the time when it looked as if the people would die of starvation. Then we read the story of the manna. When the people asked what it was — that strange substance lying on the early morning ground — Moses told them, “It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat...gather of it, every man of you, as much as he can eat; you shall take an Omer apiece, according to the number of persons whom each of you has in his tent.” It is described in the book of Exodus as “a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoar-frost.” Significant is the fact that during the period the children of Israel subsisted on manna they were to eat their daily allotment the same day, and eat of it fully, for if anyone would not eat all of it, or if he attempted to hoard his surplus, it decomposed with supernatural rapidity. Only enough for the day, gathered morning by morning, was the divine order. It was natural for some of them to want to put away a little for the coming days, but God arranged it in such a way that it could not be done — the manna spoiled and bred worms. The only exception was on the sixth day — on that day they could gather twice as much for both the sixth day and the Sabbath, tomorrow’s bread today, and it kept fresh through both days. Truly this is a beautiful picture of DAILY BREAD!

As in the natural, so in the spiritual. The supply of yesterday will not do for today, anymore than yesterday’s dinner will suffice us for today’s work. You cannot live on yesterday’s revelation, for it was strength only for that day. You cannot live on the memory of past spiritual experiences. You cannot live on the lingering aroma of blessed fellowship you had with the Lord in days gone by. You cannot live on the recollection of mercies and miracles received in

previous moves of God. For every day you need fresh grace and a new dimension of glory. The manna of old only held good for one day. It had to be gathered fresh every morning. The manna of one day grew corrupt and worthless before the next. And we wonder why the glory of yesterday's visitation has faded! We are disturbed because the move of God of yesterday has been polluted in the hands of men! Yesterday's visitation of the Spirit is a stench in our nostrils today. The glory has departed. The memory is sweet, but the body is dead, lifeless, empty, a cesspool of corruption. All the great moves of God of bygone generations are become the swaggering harlot. All the filthiness of the Babylonian church system is but the worm-ridden manna given by God for another time.

Well did brother Carl Schwing write: "Allow me to write freely and I would speak gently and lovingly...my brethren, if your soul still feeds upon the 'wilderness manna'...finding nourishment in the past message...you fall short of your calling and cannot see afar off. You are pressing backward rather than pressing on...and you are still following man rather than the Lamb. All that we hope for, hunger for, and moan for is found in sonship, and sonship comes forth from the Father...sonship is the very image of the Father...and who but He has the words of life? I do not write of tomorrow or someday...I write of today...for it is today that the Father walks among us...sonship is part of God's Now...we are being born by Him, from Him and for Him...this marvelous delivery is in the process. He is offering us 'eternal life'...alas, some shall be offended...others will turn and walk no more...but there are the 'faithful few' who will know that He alone speaks life-giving words."

Jesus came into the world in the time of the Roman Empire. He was crucified on a Roman cross, pierced with a Roman spear, and sealed in His sepulcher under a Roman seal. But praise God! He burst the bands of death, shattered the seal of mighty Rome, and arose the conquering Christ. And not only that — He ascended Victor over all the powers of darkness, having brought to naught the prince of this world, having brought in eternal redemption for a lost world and redeemed all back unto Himself. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high and poured out upon the first few citizens of His Kingdom the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Kingdom of God was birthed, and gathered from Jew and Gentile alike a vast multitude into its bosom. What a flood of light and glory and power fell upon the world in the ministry of the humble followers of the Lamb!

And what glorious days those were! How God blessed His people! Mighty signs and wonders were performed as God confirmed His Word with signs following. The Word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they had turned the world upside down! — so powerful was their message and spirit. In spite of persecution, in spite of untold thousands of saints impaled upon crosses, burnt at the stake, and fed to hungry lions to the thunderous applause of wild spectators, it grew and multiplied, for God dwelt mightily in the midst of His people. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord covered the earth as the waters cover the sea. Paganism fell. The mighty Roman Empire shut up its idol temples, sheathed its persecuting sword, and sat down as a disciple at the feet of Christ and His apostles.

But there was another spirit at work too. A spirit and system set in among the saints of the Lord and the manna of yesterday began to breed worms and stink. Refusing to follow on to know the Lord they began instituting rules and regulations, laying down laws, formulating creeds, observing days, ordaining sacraments and ordinances, elevating human government, becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and many others. Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as "bishops" and "lords" over God's heritage in

place of the leadership of the Spirit. Instead of conquering by the power of the Spirit and Truth, men began to substitute their ideas and their methods. Soon the glory and power, the presence and word of God in the morning time Church began to be eclipsed, and the power of carnal-minded men gradually took the place of the awesome presence of God. Consequently man's carnal understanding was put upon the scriptures and as the Spirit of Christ fled from their midst, men established a vast and elaborate system of substitutes (worms) to take their place. The festivals of the Church were created, along the lines of pagan celebrations. Costly and ornate edifices were constructed for worship. The services became ceremonialized and elaborate. Relics of saints and martyrs were cherished as sacred possessions. The Church, with its array of gaudily bedecked clergy and of imposing ceremonies, assumed much of the stateliness and visible splendor that belonged to the HEATHEN SYSTEM that it had supplanted. Christianity was now a pageant, a ritualism, a vain philosophy, a superstition, a social club, indeed, an antichrist, a pot full of manna infested with the worms of carnality and death, a putrefying stench in the nostrils of God!

The great moves of God in our own generation fared no better. Already (in such a short time!) they have become an abomination. They have been taken over by the flesh and it pains me to say it, but one and all have settled into stagnation and death. None has pressed on to GO ALL THE WAY WITH GOD. Oh, they still go through the motions of yesterday's visitation, but the so-called gifts of the Spirit they tout are a pitiful sham. People are "slain in the Spirit" through psychological inducement and mass hypnosis, and sometimes even pushed. Worship has become soulish and mechanical, people having "learned" to sing the song of the Lord after the song has ended. The prophesyings bear the distinctive sound of a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Numerous groups have been brought under the domination of false apostles, while others have fallen victim to a sectarian spirit — "We, and we alone, are the body of Christ; we are the sons of God; we are the manchild company; we are the kings and priests after the Order of Melchizedek; our movement is the select of the elect that will bring in the Kingdom and rule the nations with a rod of iron." There was a great move of the Spirit beginning in 1948 called "Latter Rain". Its days were like heaven on earth, its glory unspeakable, its power earth-shattering. Within a few years the rain ended, yet to this day there are people out there still "dancing in the rain," not having noticed that the clouds have dispersed, the sun is burning, and the rain is over. They go through the motions, but there is death and emptiness in the midst — the worms are obvious to all who can see by the Spirit.

I do not hesitate to tell you that one and all are pots of putrefying manna left over from yesterday's outpouring. You see, my beloved, every day you need a new gift of grace, a deeper dealing of God, a fresh word from the throne, a further revelation of the Spirit, a greater dimension of Life. The manna is only good for one day — for one step in your forward journey into God. You must get it fresh every day! This is the prayer for you and me, for all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship — "Give us this day our daily bread." GIVE! Yes, this is a gift. You cannot buy the bread of life. Its price has never been quoted in the markets. No money can purchase reality. God never sells. God is a King, He gives. Buy? No, you cannot buy. You may buy books and sermons and papers and tapes from preachers who haven't learned the ways of the Kingdom. You may even buy a "prophecy" or a "blessing" from the false prophets who peddle them in return for your offering. But you cannot buy the Word of Life!

Can you buy pardon? Can you buy peace? Can you buy righteousness? Can you buy sonship? Can you buy the mind of Christ? Can you buy the image of God? Can you buy the Kingdom? No, you cannot buy; but what you cannot buy God will give. Listen, "It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Listen again, "Everyone that thirsteth, let him come

and take of the water of life freely.” Listen yet again, “The gift of God is eternal life.” Giving! This is royal giving. There is in the Father’s house enough and to spare. He is only waiting to hear you say, “Evermore give us this bread.”

TOMORROW’S BREAD

One of the alternate renderings of the Greek word EPIOUSION is “bread for the morrow” or “tomorrow’s bread”. The inference is that we should ask for tomorrow’s bread today. This principle does not involve asking for a fortune, or for accumulated wealth. We are not asking God to let us corner the food market. And what is the bread of tomorrow? It is THE LIFE OF THE AGE TO COME. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that already we have “tasted of the powers of the age to come” (Heb. 6:4). Even in this present life we are to seek “the life of the ages,” as the Greek expresses it. The work and power and glory of the ages to come may not be evident in the lives of ordinary believers, but the sons of God are to ask for that life NOW, for that is the life that will carry us over the grave into the age and the ages to come. We can have a clear revelation and understanding of God’s purpose of the ages that will lift us out of the natural realm and above the time-worn traditions of the church systems, birthing within our hearts the larger vision of God’s great and glorious plan. Out of God’s wonderful tomorrow comes the manifestation of life in our today! Our daily bread, then, should exceed the portion of past generations. There is no excuse for us to be in a spiritual famine — for abundance of bread is ours for the taking. The feast is prepared, the table is spread, and the call has come from the Spirit, “Come and dine!”

Jesus was telling the disciples that what this present arrangement has for today is not sufficient for God’s chosen ones. The elect of God must have their food and their life and their activity from THE AGE TO COME. For two thousand years we have had the bread of this age, the gospel that has been preached in the church realm. Multitudes have been saved, changed, blessed, cleansed, baptized, endowed with gifts, healed, and used of God. Yet, the world is more wicked, violent and godless today than in any previous generation! Though men have received blessings and healings and miracles galore, they have continued to live carnally, they still get sick, they are unceasingly beset by problems and troubles, pain and heartaches, they keep on aging and finally go to the grave. This explains why, after two millenniums of our “daily bread,” all creation is still groaning and travailing in pain together with earnest expectation, waiting for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. Only the manifestation of God’s sons will finally deliver the creation from the bondage that brings corruption and death, delivering mankind into the glorious liberty that belongs to the sons of God (Rom. 8:19-22).

The gospel preached by the nominal church will never get the job done, it will never bring the Kingdom of God in power to deliver mankind from sin and death and restore all things to God. The church world is using worldly means and soulish methods to promote its programs today. It is conformed unto the world’s way of doing things. This is true not only of the historic denominations, but also the Pentecostals, Charismatics, and, alas! some groups who profess to be “deeper life,” “Kingdom,” or “sonship” people. Churches compete against one another, who can have the most in Sunday School, who can build the biggest building, who can win the most souls, which evangelist can draw the largest crowds, each one pointing to the success of their ministry, glorying in the size of their outreach or work, stressing how much could be accomplished with more money, and to hear them tell it just about the whole world is being brought to the feet of Jesus through their efforts. The church world today is totally conformed to the world’s way of doing things. Because of that it is really no better off than the world it is trying so desperately to save.

Because the average Christian today has been brought up with a center other than Christ he is totally unable to think except in terms of established orders, sects, denominations, credentials, creeds, assemblies, church buildings, doctrines, meetings, communions, baptisms, programs, campaigns, crusades, choirs, pastors, rituals, ceremonies, vestments, offerings, drives, conferences, board meetings, committees, elections, Sunday Schools, theological seminaries, fellowship halls, stained glass windows, platforms, special numbers and a thousand other items. Take all these things away from them and they would be spiritually destitute, totally incapable of “doing the work of the Lord.” But after they have spent a whole lifetime of this feverish church activity, how many people are there who have ever taken time to wait on God long enough to HEAR HIM SPEAK AND DIVULGE HIS WILL TO THEIR SEEKING HEARTS? I declare to you of a truth that any man or woman who will take the time to seek God and God alone, hungering and thirsting after God’s mind and God’s will — that man will find himself drifting away from all the aforementioned things and from then on the MIND OF CHRIST will be his program, his quest, his eternal joy. And lest any think we are being brash or heretical to even suggest a departure from those things listed above, I invite you to carefully examine that list to determine which one of them Jesus Christ had, used, or even needed in His wonderful sonship ministry! It is astonishing to realize that Jesus knew absolutely nothing of any of it, yet He more effectively ministered the life of God, the power of God, the glory of God and the Kingdom of God than any man who has graced this planet! And I do not hesitate to add — strip all of these away from a son of God and what he will have left is CHRIST. Only Christ! Think of it!

In order to minister “tomorrow’s bread” to the apprehended of God, we must go beyond this world, and this age, and the present arrangement, and draw living words from the age to come. We are even now tasting of the powers of the age to come. It is out of that age that we draw the firstfruits of the Spirit which we have received. Christ is indeed complete and perfect; yet we have known Christ in a limited measure. So far as the Lord Himself is concerned, He is not limited at all, but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, there is limitation. Christ is no less today than He will be in that glorious age of the ages when the Kingdom is delivered up to the Father and God is All-in-all, but our present measure of Him is less than All-in-all. But the measure we have is out of His fullness — the fullness reserved for a future time. I hate to say it friends, but none of us is FULL GOSPEL — yet!

From the time we first experienced Christ, we have always been progressing and advancing; we have continually made progress in our experience of Christ and received of Him more and more. This does not mean that Christ has become greater and greater. No, Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for the ages, He changes not! But as we grow in our appropriation of Him He becomes greater and greater TO US, IN US, AND THROUGH US. There is a realm, blessed realm! where Christ is known as the inexhaustible and immeasurable, where all fullness dwells.

Oh, what a grand and glorious realm lies before us in the fullness of God! The day of the full fruit of the Spirit! The day of Perfection! The time of full and complete Redemption — spirit, soul, and body! The full and complete experiencing of HIMSELF! The fullness of Strength and Power and Glory! The Feast of Feasts! The strange part of the whole thing is this, that the whole purpose and plan of God for this day and hour is completely obscured and lost amidst the shout and euphoria over the “firstfruits,” and most of the Pentecostals and Charismatics do not know what it is all about. They can see the healings, deliverances, miracles, prophecies, worship...and so forth; and they understand not that it is God in His great mercy inviting His people to enter on in to their full inheritance. They do not realize that all this is but the foretaste and earnest of their heritage, and that God bids them arise and come away with Him to the

Great Feast that lies before! How deeply we are exercised to pray, “Our Father...give us tomorrow’s bread TODAY!” Blessed are they that are called to this great Feast, that which supersedes Pentecost, that which is the BALANCE OF THE MEAL of which Passover and Pentecost were merely the first courses! And the balance must therefore come, the remainder of the meal that will enable the sons of God to deliver creation from the tyranny of corruption and death. But only those will enter in to lay hold upon the prize who are moved mightily by the Spirit of God to earnestly and sincerely pray, “Give us tomorrow’s bread TODAY!”

There are three levels at which this prayer may be understood and experienced. The completely natural-minded believer can get the lesson from the prayer Jesus taught that he is just to ask for those outward, physical blessings that he needs today. The vast majority of Christians live out their lives in this realm. Childishness in prayer is chiefly evidenced in an over desire or a desire only to beg things from God rather than desiring above all else the LORD HIMSELF. The same growth must take place in the life of every son and daughter of God that occurs in a normal relationship between a child and his parents. At first the child wants the parents’ gifts, and thinks of the parents primarily in terms of the things that they do and provide for his pleasure and comfort. He is not able yet to appreciate the parents’ personalities. A sure sign of a wholesome maturity is found in the child’s deepening understanding of the parents themselves — his increasing delight in their fellowship, thankfulness for their care, acceptance of their ideals, reliance on their counsel, and joy in their approval. The child grows from desiring things from his parents into love of his parents for their own sakes. He is then able to enter into a partnership with them in their business with all the respect and responsibility called for.

The man with a little more spiritual perception can get the lesson from the prayer Jesus taught that he is to ask God for His living bread, His living word. This man discovers the value of spiritual life above and beyond material blessing. He sets his affection on things above, not on things on the earth; he seeks God Himself, not the things of God.

Those who have been apprehended of God for His purposes in this hour now see an even greater truth. In this glorious transition from realm to realm we hear a Voice saying, “Come up hither! and I will show you the things that follow all this.” Here in the son realm we realize that we must have the LIFE OF THE COMING AGE if we are to lay hold upon the fullness of our sonship and the power of the Kingdom of God. We must receive more than has been given to the Church age. This age has not brought the fullness of God, nor has it ministered the redemption of the body, nor has it produced the manifested sons of God, nor has it delivered the creation from the bondage of corruption. To know the power and glory of full sonship with the redemption of the body and power to rule the nations and restore all things WE MUST DRAW ON THE AGE TO COME. Our prayer becomes, “Give us tomorrow’s bread TODAY!”

We have heard many so-called Gospels. The world is full of poor deluded souls who are trying to establish their own particular creed of imaginings and mistakes. We try to go to the world, we try to tell them the message, by using all the world’s own methods, to advertise, to appeal to their emotions, to entertain them with music, to put on a good show. It only proves our impotence, that we have not left the world very far behind if we can return and employ the world’s ways so easily. Today, everyone with a little bit of preacher’s “itch” is attempting to get themselves a little congregation, a little following, to build a little kingdom. These all imagine that somehow they are going to go out and storm the world and “take the world” for Christ. But a new day has dawned, a day when the pure and powerful Gospel of the Kingdom must go forth to the whole world. Religionists have tried in vain to lift the world out of its shame by their ambitious programs and preaching their own ideas and the doctrines of the antichrist. It simply

would not work. The world has grown steadily worse. Their lofty phrases, and text-book prayers, and apologetic platitudes, and time-honored traditions, and soulish manipulations have utterly failed. Now a new company is to go forth with a burning message of truth direct from the throne, and in the fullness of power reserved for this day.

The anointing of the sons of God shall be an anointing WITHOUT MEASURE, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the ineffectual absurdities that have been preached throughout the years. Religionists have side-stepped, and mollycoddled, and back-slapped too long. Their day is done. The sun is sinking in the western sky of this age of the "in part" realm. A new day is dawning for those who have been quickened from above. A new army is being prepared for this new day, an army of the sons of God perfected in His image, filled with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus, radiating the effulgence of His glory, demonstrating the omnipotence of His power and the invincibility of His life. And there shall be an exultant victory! For now the day is dawning when "ALL nations shall come and worship before Thee" (Rev. 15:4). "And...all nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES" (Zech. 14:16). It cannot be denied by any that throughout this age all the nations that have come to worship the Lord have worshipped Him in the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. But there is a day, glorious day! when all the nations shall know the Lord and feast with Him in the blessing and glory that flows from the FEAST OF TABERNACLES! This is the day of the double manna.

I believe I speak the truth when I say that many of us have reached the point of no return — there is nothing to go back to, not in the flesh, not in the world, not in the church systems; there is nothing out of which we have been drawn by the Spirit of God to which we would return; it is all so empty, so meaningless, lifeless, worthless. Now we must FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD IN HIS FULLNESS. It is vain to come out, unless we are committed to enter in. We are committed to a course which cannot be altered, for it is fixed in its destination — His throne! "To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

We do not desire the throne for what we can get out of it, for our own fame and fortune, but for the infinite potential it holds for blessing and restoring creation. Today the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, even nature itself is groaning. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops, you walk through the forest and you can hear the anguished shrieks of the animal kingdom. Creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

It is not more preachers we need. It is not more radio broadcasts or television programs. It is not more missions and missionaries. It is not more tracts or even Bibles. It is not more programs and crusades. It is not another revival. All we need is the cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saint to be joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the manifestation of the sons of God. There is an elect people who, even as I pen these words, are being made participators in this grandest of all dramas of history. Their prayer, praise God, is soon to be answered! The long-awaited revelation is at hand. The glorious Lord is soon to be revealed from heaven in flaming fire to be exhibited in great glory and power and admired IN HIS SAINTS (II Thes. 1:7-10).

Ah, my brother, my sister, do not sell creation short! Do not settle for less than God's best. Our prayer is, "Give us this day our daily bread!" This day requires tomorrow's bread TODAY!

All creation is standing on tiptoe, waiting and counting on you. If you love Israel; if you love the peoples and kindreds of the earth who know nothing of the Saviour; if you love the sad, the tormented, the sick and dying; if you love the multitudes held captive in the blindness and stupidity of religious systems; if you love the burdened brute creation; if you love the mountains, the trees, the rivers and the oceans so mindlessly being destroyed under the hand of greed — you will joyfully welcome the hope of the manifestation of God in His sons; for it is the hope that shall bring to the groaning creation emancipation from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God; to Israel her Messiah; to the heathen idolater, the knowledge of God; to the rebellious, correction; to the sick and dying, health and life incorruptible; to the bride, the presence of the Bridegroom; to mute nature, blessed release from the cruelty of man and the blight of the curse.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

One cannot pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” without being reminded of the Feasts of the Lord. What do you do at a feast? Why, of course, you eat! God has a great and wonderful plan for feeding His people, and ultimately all mankind, the bread of heaven through the progressive unfolding of His grace and glory in the Feasts He spreads before us and unto which He calls us, each in his own order.

God has been giving much revelation concerning the three great spiritual feasts, of which the three annual feasts of Israel of old were but types and shadows. God commanded, “THREE TIMES thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year” (Ex. 23:14). Of the three feasts the first was Passover. That foreshadowed Calvary. We are called to the spiritual feast of Passover in the experience of salvation. Jesus died and Himself became the sacrifice for our sins on the very day of the Passover feast: “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (I Cor. 5:7). Israel of old was peculiarly a Passover company. They were saved by blood, the same as we are today; but their experience went no further because the time had not yet come for the outpouring of the Spiritual Feast of Pentecost.

We are then called to the second feast of the Lord when we are called to the spiritual feast of Pentecost in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. So, following the death of Jesus on the Passover, fifty days later we find that “...when the day of Pentecost was fully come...suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4). In Israel of old the feast of Pentecost was “the feast of the harvest, the FIRSTFRUITS of thy labours” (Deut. 16:9-12; Ex. 23:16; 34:22). Pentecost was the “firstfruits” of the harvest, and under New Testament economy it is fulfilled spiritually and is “the FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT” (Rom. 8:23), the firstfruits of our inheritance. Christ’s coming in the feast of Pentecost saw Him descend on a little flock as the Comforter, which coming Paul tells us was but “an earnest” (or sample) of the Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5). “Earnest” means merely a pledge or first installment. The balance must follow. The fullness is guaranteed by the first installment. All we have received of the Spirit, with all His mighty gifts and graces, is but of a sample of glory yet to come! Foolish indeed is the man who supposes that what we have received during this Church age is all there is — the fullness! In other words, Christ came in the feast of Passover as the Lamb slain on Calvary; He came in the feast of Pentecost as the firstfruits of the Spirit; and now HE IS COMING AGAIN to pour out ALL His glorious and eternal fullness in great power and glory!

There is a mystery about the feast of Tabernacles. It is the only one of the three major feasts of Israel that as yet has not had a New Testament fulfillment. The fundamentalists know Christ in the feast of Passover. The Pentecostals and Charismatics know Christ in the feast of Pentecost. But whom is there among us that has demonstrated a glory or power beyond the Pentecostal experience? Therefore, the feast of Tabernacles has not been celebrated in a spiritual dimension by Christians the world over as has been the case with the other two festivals, those of Passover and Pentecost. Truly we can say — Passover has come, Pentecost has come, and Tabernacles must come, for each is a part of God's great plan for His people. We have had the feasts of Passover and Pentecost and both of these feasts have been fulfilled IN THIS CHURCH AGE IN THE CHURCH which is His body, and right here upon earth. For some strange reason men seek to postpone the last feast to some future age, or give it to the Jews, or relegate it to some beautiful "Isle of Somewhere," and consequently the real spiritual meaning and import of the feast of Tabernacles is completely obscured and lost. The grand truth is that like the others, the feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the body of Christ RIGHT HERE UPON EARTH. It will be fulfilled dispensationally, it will be fulfilled in us individually, and it will be fulfilled in us as the Corporate Man.

The grand truth of this has been wonderfully quickened by the Spirit of God to multiplied thousands of saints around the world in these last days. All over the world in this particular moment in history, the Spirit of God is speaking to the elect about an imminent manifestation of Christ. The trumpet has sounded — the appointed time has come. Christians in every nation have heard the voice of the prophets, foretelling of this most awesome intervention of God's power that is about to sweep the earth.

The prophetic word of the Lord gives promise of a time to come when the Lord will move mightily by His Spirit. At that time the Lord will restore that which was lost all through the ages past and the long night of man's selfhood and rebellion. There is an event soon to take place that shall overshadow and eclipse all former, lesser, manifestations of God's glory and power in the earth. The glories of this great event will inspire, initiate, and bring to fulfillment the times of the restitution of all things. The grandeur, the splendor, the glory and the great power of God to be manifest at the time of this great event is impossible for us to comprehend presently, for we are still living and moving, for the most part, under the economy of the "firstfruits" of God's Spirit. The grand and glorious event to which we refer is the coming of Christ in the feast of Tabernacles! Therefore we continue to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread!"

What sets the feast of Tabernacles apart from all others is the abundance enjoyed during the feast. It's the fall harvest. At the celebration of Tabernacles, not only had the barley and wheat been harvested, but also all other grains, the fruit of trees, the olives, the grapes, all that could possibly serve as food or drink. The harvest was complete. On the spiritual plane this points to the fact that God has been using His people everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel for that revelation of the Christ. There has come a beautiful unfolding of His purpose, the outflow of His life and the manifestation of Himself throughout this church age, right up to the present time. But there shall yet come the ultimate, the total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ — not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and filled with the Spirit, and healed and blessed and used — but the Kingdom of God coming with power and with glory, as an expression and a manifestation of God in His total capacity with no limitations, with all the power, with all the glory, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations shall be swept into the Kingdom of God, creation delivered, and the last enemy, even death, destroyed from off the face of the earth for evermore. What bright and glorious prospects loom before the vision of all who press on to the feast of Tabernacles!

Since the church's birth almost every generation has experienced something of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Most of these moves would have to be characterized as something less than worldwide. They swept communities, cities, states, provinces, even nations at times, but few, if any, were global. But now, beyond the strength and influence of the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, there has been released from heaven in the last several years an intense sense of expectancy. It is the expectancy that ALL HEAVEN is about to break loose in the midst of the Lord's elect on a worldwide basis. Do you identify with that expectancy? God is raising up voices in every hamlet and metropolis to say, "The earth is about to see the glory of God in a most remarkable way." I am convinced that a host of heavenly messengers has recently been released to every corner of the earth bearing the message: "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it" (Isa. 40:5, NIV). What I am proclaiming, announcing and declaring is that there is a third experience in God. There is a visitation, an appearing and coming of the Lord called Tabernacles that is going to come to pass in the body of Christ today, right here upon this earth, and the implications of this feast go far beyond anything you or I could possibly imagine.

God is speaking to His people today and saying to us as He said to Israel at Mount Sinai, "You have kept this feast of Pentecost long enough...you have enjoyed this realm to the fullest. It is time to move. Pack up your tents and begin to move." The church world today has no vision for what is about to happen. All it can think about is getting raptured away into the clouds. Our prime concern is to prepare the ground for the truth concerning the feast of Tabernacles, which surpasses the glory of Pentecost as the noon-day sun surpasses the brightness of early dawn. If the saints of God could only catch a glimmer of the glory of the feast of Tabernacles which even now looms before us, they could not possibly cling to the stagnant remains of yesterday's visitations. If Passover was wonderful — and it certainly was — how much more wonderful has been Pentecost! And if Pentecost is glorious, how much more shall we expect Tabernacles to exceed it in glory! And even now as the first faint rays of this glorious feast appear on the horizon, we have every reason to rejoice — knowing that the days of deliverance and restoration are here.

Though we find deep satisfaction in the sweet communion we have with Christ, and the secret converse we have together as He journeys with us through the wilderness, how oft our hearts long for a closer touch with our precious Lord! No words can express the rapture that is ours when we walk and talk with Him by the way; but we yearn for HIS FULLNESS, when all veils and limitations of earth shall forever pass away. There are times when He makes Himself so real that our small capacity can hardly stand the strain of such revelations. It is as though we were bringing a pint cup to receive the waters of Niagara; even the earthen vessel is almost carried away. But the day is coming when our capacity shall be so enlarged, that we can receive the full unveiling of our Lord and the glories that are His; and He will give us such revelations of the Father that we shall enter into His joy and glory, for all that is His is ours in Him. Then we shall see Him face to face, and shall behold all things clearly, with nothing between to obscure the vision. This mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible shall have put on incorruption. The Father's name shall be written in our forehead.

The manchild company, the sons of God, will be born, literally and dramatically birthed upon the stage of this world, in a blaze of earth-shaking supernatural power and glory. They will be the total, corporate incarnation of God upon earth. When the Lord comes in a mighty way at the feast of Tabernacles, all flesh shall see the salvation and glory of the Lord as never before. The manifestation of the sons of God will take place when the feast of Tabernacles is "fully come." That will be the greatest of all "spectaculars" the world has ever witnessed, when He erupts from within His many-membered body in the fullness of which Pentecost has been only

a foretaste. The inhabitants of the world will be terrified, yes, even paralyzed! Instantly they will know this is no natural phenomenon, no traditional religious service; while deep within the voice shall witness: TRULY, THIS IS THE SON OF GOD! The effulgence of His Person shall appear upon His chosen ones, the intensity of His brilliance, equating to that of seven suns, shining through the undulating “garment” composed of tens of thousands of glorified saints, a star-studded super-spectacular, seven times the power of Pentecost, the likes of which has never been witnessed by any man since the dawn of creation.

MEAT YE KNOW NOT OF

At this significant junction of the ages our prayer rises with increasing intensity, “Give us this day our daily bread.” This bread for the sons of God is the same that sustained and strengthened the firstborn Son when He walked this planet. It is this: “My meat (food) IS TO DO THE WILL of Him that sent me” (Jn. 4:34). To do God’s will! That is what a son lives for: but it is also what he lives on. MEAT. The word “meat” in this place means simply “food”. Meat is strength, support, nourishment, health, and life. The strength of the life of sonship is drawn from the Father’s will. Man has a strong will. But God’s will is everlasting strength and life — almighty strength. Such strength he who lives by the will of the Father receives. He grows by it, he assimilates it — it is his life.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). Nothing can satisfy the son’s appetite but this — he hungers to do God’s will. Nothing else will fill him. Everyone knows the world is hungry. But the hungry world is starving. Even those who have abundance of food are suffering from malnutrition, the quality of their food is so poor and depleted. The world has many meats and many drinks, but there is no nourishment in them. It has pleasures, and gaiety, and hobbies, and projects, and efforts of all kinds; but there is no food there for the immortal craving of the spirit. It has worldly society, and worldly books, and worldly knowledge, and worldly wisdom, and worldly government, and worldly lusts. But these things merely intoxicate.

The church world is hungry too. Starving, in fact. Oh, it has many meats and many drinks, but there is no nourishment for the spirit in them. Their meats are fleshly and their drinks are soulish. It has rituals, and stirring programs, and impressive ceremonies, and external ordinances, and worked-up praise and worship, and pomp, and show, and candles, and incense, and temples and cathedrals, and priests and preachers, and organization and abundance of activity. Its people get all involved “in the work,” and committed “to the work,” and “giving to the work.” They do and do but in all this something other than Christ has become the central factor. The center becomes the movement, or the message, or the organization, or the ministry, or the gifts, or the experience, or the method, or the personality or some other thing.

I declare to you that all these religious things and activities merely intoxicate and millions of Christians are drunk with them and in their distorted hilarity think they know the living Christ. But there is no substance in them! So our spirit turns its eye from them all with unutterable loathing. “MY meat is to do the Father’s will!” To do God’s will! No possibility of starving or suffering malnutrition on this fare. God’s will is eternal. God’s will is omnipotent. It is eternal and omnipotent food the sons of God live upon. In spring-time it is not sown, and in summer drought it cannot fail. In harvest it is not reaped, yet the storehouse is ever full. Oh, what possibilities of life and purpose and power and victory it opens up!

The truth of these words is simply this: the strength of life for a son of God is to do God's will. Now that is a great and surprising revelation to many. No man ever found that out. It has been before the world these two thousand years, yet few have even found it out today. One will tell you that life is in keeping the commandments, another that life is in being joined to a "New Testament Church," another that life is in knowing and using the Sacred (Hebrew) Names of God, another that life is in taking communion, another that life is in being baptized the right way, another that life is in winning souls, another that life is in speaking in tongues, another that life is in the laughter of the "Toronto Blessing," another that life is in the gifts of the Spirit, another that life is in submission to the elders. But life is none of these things. It is more than all. Life is not to have an experience, or do this, or that, or the other — just to do what God wills, whether that be working or waiting, or winning or losing, or suffering or rejoicing, or living or dying.

In last month's message I wrote about Christ as our environment, the food we take into ourselves that nourishes and quickens the inner man. There is a remarkable scientific fact about the correspondence between an organism and its environment that holds the key to life and immortality. There is now a scientific definition of eternal life. This scientific definition of eternal life is set forth in the book PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY, pp. 88 (out of print). The author says, "Perfect correspondence would be perfect life. Were there no changes in the environment but such as the organism had adapted changes to meet, and were it never to fail in the efficiency with which it met them, there would be eternal existence."

To put this definition in language we all can understand, it says that if you could find an absolutely perfect environment, and, if you could find a perfect organism which could respond and adapt 100% to that perfect environment, that organism would then live forever. The only conditions are that the environment be absolutely perfect and that the organism be able to perfectly and fully respond and adapt to that perfect environment. If the environment is not perfect, if it is not the highest, if it contains any element of change, or imperfection, or pollution, or weakness, there can be no guarantee that the life of the organism would be eternal. On the other hand, if there is any single thing within the organism which cannot, or does not respond and adapt to that perfect environment then there would arise a dis-harmony and the organism would die.

It is obvious that science knows of no such perfect environment, neither can it produce one, nor does it know of any such organism which could meet the necessary conditions of a 100% adaptation to such an environment. But I have no hesitation in saying that SUCH AN ENVIRONMENT EXISTS! Yes, there really is a perfect environment, and, furthermore, there has already been at least one living organism that has met all the conditions, has responded and adapted 100% to that perfect environment, and has already been raised up into the realm of incorruptible life spirit, soul and body! The perfect environment is the incorruptible spiritual realm of God's divine life. It is the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven. The holy realm of God's Spirit is the realm outside of all change, all imperfection, all corruption. If any organism, if any man or woman, can come into perfect harmony, perfect response, perfect adaptation to the holy and divine and incorruptible life of God, then that man would possess fully the Eternal Life. He and his environment would be perfectly unified in perfection!

There has been one. His name is Jesus! He is the One who said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (Jn. 6:38,30). "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). This bespeaks complete adaptation to the life of the Father. Not one jot or tittle of Christ's mind, will, emotion, desire or actions failed to respond fully to the Father. These words are the key to His life on earth, and His triumph over death and the grave.

At Nazareth in the carpenter shop, at Jordan in His baptism, in the wilderness tempted of the devil, in public with the multitudes, in living, in ministering, in dying, it was this that inspired and guided and gladdened Him; the glorious will of the Father was fully accomplished in and through Him.

Long before science came along with a scientific definition for eternal life, Jesus had already laid down this definition. With Him it was not theory, for He lived it, tested it, demonstrated and proved it! Let us place Christ's definition alongside the definition of science, and mark the points of contrast. Perfect and complete correspondence with a perfect environment is eternal life, according to science. "THIS is eternal life," said Jesus, "that they may KNOW THEE, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3). Life eternal is to know God. To know God is to "correspond" with God. To correspond with God is to correspond with a perfect environment. And the person who attains to this, in the nature of things must live forever. The whole purpose of God in redemption is to bring man into that perfect correspondence with Him. To bring men to this perfect correspondence involves a process — from glory to glory. Already, in our spirit, this perfect correspondence has been accomplished by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In spirit we are now ONE WITH GOD. The reconciliation is an accomplished fact. Now it is soul and body that must be dealt with, brought into submission, to that perfect correspondence with the Father. Jesus is the pattern. Overcoming is the process. Eternal life in spirit, soul and body is the result.

Life is in correspondence with the spiritual environment of the spiritual world of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. Death results from correspondence with the physical, temporal and corruptible world. There is an impassable gulf between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, for the spiritual mind is concerned only with the things of God and the realm of the Spirit, which things lead to life and immortality. But the carnal mind is concerned only with the physical world and the realm of the flesh, which things lead only to death and corruption because there is no life in them. For this very reason the scripture says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). What other result could there possibly be, for there is no life in the physical world. The whole environment is impregnated with death and to correspond with that environment means swift and certain death. But the spirit is eternal, immortal and incorruptible; therefore, TO LIVE AFTER THE SPIRIT IS LIFE. Thus Paul says, "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life" (Rom. 8:6). Science today is discussing what death is. "To be carnally minded is death," is God's definition. That is the correspondence of death.

Therefore, when Paul says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die," the reason for this death is most obvious. There simply is no life in the flesh or in any of its manifestations, neither is there life in anything it can do, or design. If you are living after a realm that has no life in it you will surely die. To get life out of the fleshly realm is like getting blood out of a turnip. You cannot get what isn't there! You are trying to find life where there is only death. Therefore, if a man sees God with the eyes of his spirit, he will live. But if he looks upon the man-made images of God, the externals of religion, he will die. If he drinks the water of life with his spirit, he will live forever; if he drinks water from a well, or drinks wine and eats wafers, he will die. There is no external ordinance, ritual or ceremony that can give man life; it is only in walking after the spirit that life can be found. If a man hears the voice of God with his spirit, he will live; if he only hears the voices of earth, even of creed and doctrine, he will die. If his spirit touches God, he will live; if his flesh touches the things of earth, both he and they will die.

Little wonder, then, that the beloved apostle John penned these significant words: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the

Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF GOD ABIDETH FOR EVER” (I Jn. 2:15-17). It is impossible to walk after the flesh and mind the things of the flesh and at the same time possess eternal life. For those who walk after the flesh depend upon and correspond with an environment that is not eternal. Their correspondence is established with that which passes away. We find then that man is equipped with two sets of correspondences. One set possesses the qualities of everlastingness, the other is temporal. Unless these are by some means harmonized, the temporal and fleshly will continually impair and hinder the eternal and spiritual. The final preparation, therefore, for inheriting the fullness of eternal life, the adoption, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23), must consist in bringing body and soul under the dominion of the spirit. And this can only be effected by a death to self and all the desirings and cravings of the carnal mind. “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (Jn. 12:25). Death persists in man because certain relations in his being are not adjusted to the higher relations of the eternal perfect environment of God’s life and nature.

Death is the necessary result of imperfection, the necessary end of it. Science has shown that a perfect organism in a perfect environment would necessarily live forever. To abolish death, therefore, all that would be necessary would be to abolish imperfection. Thank God! He is changing us. Each and every change and transformation, each and every victory and triumph brings our being more and more into correspondence with the realm of His divine life. Like Him! blessed hope, this. More like Him today than yesterday. More like Him tomorrow. More weaned away from earth’s polluting environment of self-centeredness and fleshiness. Better able to breathe the atmosphere of the pure and perfect realm of the Kingdom of God. Death is being swallowed up. Jesus is leading us on! Victory is within our grasp!

Chapter 19

Forgive Us Our Sins

“Our Father which art in heaven...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Mat. 7:9,12). “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us” (Lk. 11:4). “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Mat. 7:14).

Our theme in this message is, “Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin (trespass) against us.” I doubt that anyone has ever plumbed the depths of the wonders of these words. We talk about forgiveness and many think they have an understanding of it, but our very lives, and the preaching of the preachers and the teaching of the churches prove that most of us know little about it. We hear people speaking of forgiving others, but they never seem to forget what they are supposed to have forgiven. It is still harbored within their minds and in spite of everything that remembrance colors all their thoughts and dealings with that one they supposedly have forgiven. In other words, the sin is still alive in their minds.

That is not the case with God’s forgiveness of us, which is true forgiveness. God has declared, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I REMEMBER NO MORE” (Heb. 8:12). This word “remember” means to be a fixture in the mind. God will not recollect your sins, He will not remind you of them or use them against you, and He will not punish you for them. In Romans 11:27 God speaks of a covenant He would have with His people when He would TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS. God would never hold these over the heads of His people or of mankind. There would be no punishment and God would never bring them up at any time or under any conditions. Such is almost incomprehensible to most so-called Christians.

Various words are used in different renderings of the Lord’s Prayer, translated as sins, debts and trespasses. The word in Matthew’s Gospel is OPHEILEMATA, which means “debts”. Two verses later, these debts are referred to as “trespasses”. The word is PARAPTOMATA, meaning “a side-slip” or “mistake”. In Luke the word is “sins” from the Greek HAMARTIA, which in its root means “missing the mark”. By any word — sins, debts, side-slips, mistakes, trespasses, missing the mark — our failure is written large in black letters. Before considering the prayer of sons, “Our Father...forgive us our sins,” I would draw your attention to the manner in which God has dealt with the sins of the world.

THE SIN OFFERING

The whole book of Leviticus is about atonement. Atonement is the instrument of forgiveness. Leviticus is a book of blood and sacrifice. It is important to note, however, that although the book of Leviticus deals largely with sacrifice, there is only one of those sacrifices that is a sin sacrifice. It is called the “sin-offering” in Leviticus chapter four. In most cases, under the law, when you brought a sacrifice it was not because you had sinned, but on the contrary, because you had the deep desire to worship, you wanted to give thanksgiving to the Lord, to celebrate His goodness and greatness, His dealings and faithfulness. Often there were special holidays or feast days and there were special sacrifices for those feast days to celebrate one’s relationship with his God.

But there was also the sin-offering that we find in Leviticus chapter four. The question follows: Does the sin-offering atone for just any kind of sin? Actually, it atoned only for one type of sin. What type of sin is that? Sin that is done unintentionally. Under the law the sin offering provided only for acts of unconscious transgressions, mistakes, or unavoidable errors. It applied only to sins done through ignorance, passion, due to the weakness of the flesh, in opposition to those done presumptuously, deliberately, or calculatedly. Only if you did a sin unintentionally, by accident, through ignorance, is it atoned for by the sin-offering. Most people do not realize this. And most preachers do not even know this!

But let us read the word of the Lord. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them: if the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin-offering. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head, and kill the bullock before the Lord. And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and are guilty; then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation. When a ruler hath sinned through ignorance, and is guilty; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, and be guilty; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev. 4:1-4,13-14,22-23,27-28,35). According to these regulations the animals used for the sin-offering varied with the status of the offender. The high priest or community as a whole offered a bull; a ruler offered a male goat; while a lay person brought a female goat or ewe.

The reality is, if you commit a sin intentionally, under the law sacrifice does not work. How do we know this? The scripture says it openly. When the Lord gave the law of the sin-offering to Moses in Leviticus chapter four He continues on and identifies four classes of people who commit sins — the priest, the king, the common person and the nation. The annual Day of Atonement was the greatest celebration of the sin-offering in Israel. On that day Israel’s high priest offered animal sacrifices and made atonement for himself, for the other Levites, and for all the people of all the tribes of the nation. The one thing they all have in common is that their sacrifices are for sins done through ignorance. Someone objects, “But surely the great sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was for ALL of Israel’s sin — not just the mistakes or sins of ignorance!” The Word of God is against your objection. The writer to the Hebrews tells us: “Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle (Holy Place), accomplishing the service of God. But into the second (Holy of Holies) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people” (Heb. 9:6-7). The word “errors” translates the Greek word AGNOEMA which means “something done in ignorance, a shortcoming, an error or mistake.” The translation by Kenneth Wuest reads, “But into the second, once a year, alone, the high priest entered, not without blood which he offers in behalf of himself and in behalf of the sins of ignorance of the people.” The Amplified Bible says, “But into the second division of the tabernacle none but the high priest goes, and he only once a year, and never without taking a sacrifice of blood with him, which he offers for himself and for the errors and sins of ignorance and thoughtlessness which the people have committed.” Other versions concur.

But if you sin intentionally, there is no sacrifice — it simply is not enough. The sin-offering never covered any kind of deliberate sin. For those kinds of sins there were other means of

atonement — fines, restitutions, penances and penalties. Generally it was “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” After you had paid such a price, no sacrifice was necessary; the sin was atoned for, forgiven. Crimes against other people were dealt with by appropriate punishments that did not involve sacrifice. The sin offering was only one means of atonement under Old Testament economy. Most Christians have never heard this truth, but it is extremely important, beloved, for it is the very foundation of the offering of Jesus as our sin-offering and reveals in a unique and wonderful way the broad, all-inclusive work of Christ Jesus as the sin-offering on behalf of the whole world of humanity!

The sin-offering speaks of the death of Christ in terms of forgiveness. This is made very plain in Leviticus chapter four, that great chapter setting forth the law of the sin-offering. In each case, whether the king, the priest, the common person or the nation, it is said concerning the sin-offering, “And the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev. 4:20,26,31,35). The sacrificial animal was brought before the door of the tabernacle, where Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the beast, thus identifying the animal as theirs and their life with that of the animal. Always with the sin-offering the person that brought the sacrifice had to lay his hand upon the head of the victim and feel the pulsating life and know the innocence of that animal when it was compelled to lay down its life for the sake of fallen man. After the identification of the priests with the sacrificial animal, Moses plunged a knife into its throat. There was no sound, no scream, no howling, only a long-drawn-out sigh as the life-blood drained away from the helpless victim, as, too, with our Lord Jesus Christ, “...He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7). Some of the blood was put upon the horns of the altar, and the remainder dashed at the base of the altar, thus, the life of the animal and those identified with it was released unto God. The fat and the inward organs were burned upon the altar, and thus became a sweet savour unto God; but the flesh, the skin and the dung were taken outside the camp and wholly burned. The New Testament commentary reads: “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore JESUS ALSO, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:11-12). Ah, yes, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself IS OUR SIN-OFFERING, bringing the forgiveness of all our sins committed through the weakness of the flesh.

This brings us to a most important point. There is a beautiful statement in II Corinthians 5:21 wherein Paul states, “For He hath made Him to be SIN for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” The popular, but careless, understanding of this passage is that the Christ was somehow “made sin” or actually “became sin” or “sinful,” the sins of the whole world being imputed or imparted to Him as He hung and died upon the cross. For long centuries Christians have accepted this crude notion that makes Christ A SINNER IN OUR PLACE. I must speak a word against that. Nothing could be father from the truth! If Christ was indeed “made sin” for us, then pray tell me HOW SIN CAN ATONE FOR SIN? How could He die FOR US if WHAT WE DO and WHAT WE ARE were imputed or imparted unto Him? The very idea is a contradiction — an unmitigated absurdity. It simply cannot be done. SIN ATONES FOR NOTHING. There is no way under heaven that you can do away with sin by offering up sin! The primary requirement for the sin-offering was that it be “without spot” and “without blemish” in every respect.

The words “to be” are not in the original. Literally it is, “He has made Him sin for us...” But what is meant by this? What is the exact idea that the Holy Spirit intended to convey? It cannot be that He was literally sin in the abstract, or sin as such. Nor can it mean that He was a sinner, for it is said in the same statement that “He knew no sin,” and it is everywhere said that

He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Nor can it mean in any proper sense of the word that He was guilty, or even accounted as guilty, for then He deserved to die, and His death could have no more merit than that of any other guilty being; and if He were properly guilty, it would make no difference in this respect whether it was by His own fault or by imputation: a guilty being deserves to be punished; and where there is desert of punishment there can be no merit in sufferings. All theories that try to make our pure, holy, spotless Redeemer to BE SIN, or sinful, or guilty, border on blasphemy and are abhorrent to all who know and love the truth. It is the cornerstone of the whole economy of redemption that the sin-offering MUST BE PURE and therefore acceptable to God and efficacious for man. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT" (I Pet. 1:18-19). Not, my friend, a lamb MADE SIN, BUT A LAMB without blemish. "How much more 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?" (Heb. 9:14). Ah, He did not offer Himself AS SIN, but WITHOUT SPOT!

But if the declaration that He was made "sin" does not mean that He became the embodiment of imputed sin or the personification of sin itself, or sinful, or guilty, then what can it mean? The answer is simple — once the Old Testament terminology relating to the sin-offering is understood. There are many passages in the Old Testament where the word "sin" is used in the sense of the "sin-offering", or a sacrifice for sin. Hosea 4:8 says, "They eat up the sin of my people," a reference to the apostate priests who ate the sin offering of the people, an act prohibited by law, for the flesh of the sin-offering was to be wholly burned by fire without the camp. These priests did not eat SIN — they ate the SIN OFFERING. Often in the Hebrew language a noun may be omitted and the adjective used as the noun. For example, in the tabernacle there was the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The word "place", however, does not appear in the Hebrew; it is simply the Holy and the Most Holy, and "place" is understood. So the priest did not go from the Outer Court into the Holy Place, he passed from the Outer Court into "The Holy".

The same principle is used with the terms "sin" and "sin-offering". In numerous places in the Old Testament the single Hebrew word GHATTAHTH is used for either SIN or SIN-OFFERING. In such cases the word for "offering" is not in the original at all, although it appears in the English versions. A careful study will show conclusively that in the Hebrew language the single word "sin" was frequently used for "sin-offering" and the context alone determines whether sin as a trespass is meant, or an offering for sin. With the foregoing facts in mind it should be obvious to every reverent heart that Paul is not by any means trying to tell us that the pure, spotless, holy, unblemished and undefiled Lamb of God was MADE IMPURE, UNHOLY, DEFILED AND BLEMISHED — SIN for us! The moment He became sin He would have been disqualified for being our sin-offering! Ah, the wonderful truth is that He who knew no sin thereby became the perfect, spotless, unblemished SIN-OFFERING for us, that we might be MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM — the altogether Holy One! I must insist most emphatically that the Christ was never "made sin". He was a sin-offering. What a difference! What a wonder! How much more logical! And how much more beautiful and blessed!

We will never comprehend the deep mystery of how Jesus became the sin-offering for the whole world of mankind until we understand the nature of man's sin. The preachers proclaim that the whole world is in open rebellion, deliberate hostility and presumptuous disobedience against God. That is the biggest lie that ever was told in human language. And if it were true, then none of man's sins were atoned for by the sacrifice of Jesus. We would all have to pay

the full penalty of our transgressions, for there was no sin-offering for intentional transgressions. The sin-offering brought a free and full forgiveness only for sins of ignorance done because of the weakness of the flesh.

Sin is from the Greek word HAMARTIA meaning “to miss the mark”, as though you were running a race and came in second. You missed the mark, you fell short of your goal so that you do not share in the prize. That’s the original term. As for missing the mark, a baseball manager once resigned with the comment, “I have not done what I set out to do,” thus speaking for every man. We have all missed the mark in life because of sin. It’s a nature. You can’t get rid of it. The whole human race is infected. Sin is often symbolized in scripture by leprosy — because leprosy is an incurable condition. It begins small and insignificant and it spreads and grows bigger and bigger until it completely rots the flesh of the whole body. That’s what sin is. Leprosy is no major problem in our modern society, but the disease of our generation that serves the same example would be AIDS.

If the doctor were to tell you that you are HIV positive you would understand. That’s what I’m talking about — sin is a killer, a killer substance in your life. The wages of sin is death. Just as people today recklessly yield to the passions of the flesh and for a few minutes of pleasure expose themselves to the AIDS virus, so Adam willfully yielded to his flesh and transgressed the law of God, infecting not only himself but all his progeny with the sin virus. “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression” (Rom. 5:12,14). You see, my beloved, Adam is the one who sinned — the rest of humanity is the victim. We have not sinned after the similitude of Adam, for he sinned deliberately and received the penalty of death; nevertheless death has passed from Adam to each of us and all have sinned.

It is like the mother that contracts AIDS and then passes it on to her baby. The baby can’t help it, the baby did nothing wrong, the baby is the victim — the mother is responsible. There is a world of difference between premeditation and spontaneous action — this difference is acknowledged by our laws and taken into consideration in our courts. Because of Adam’s reckless exposure to the virus of sin and death we were born sinners. Do you wonder why people are on drugs, why women are in prostitution, why men are out here robbing and murdering, why people are carnal, selfish, and spiritually blind? Do you wonder why even you sometimes have the thoughts and desires that run through your mind and stir your emotions, and you act in ways that disturb you? That’s the nature of old Adam! That’s the sickness of sin! “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my (spiritual) mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom. 5:15-23).

All mankind is victim of the disease passed on to them from Adam. They have not personally or maliciously “chosen” to rebel against God or disobey His commandments. That child that is born in the slums; the child of a harlot and a whoremonger; a child without a name, who grows up with the brand of shame upon his brow from the beginning; who grows up amidst vice, and never knows virtue until it is steeped in vice — is such a child in personal, deliberate and intentional disobedience and hostility toward God? That child that grows up amidst falsehood, and never knows what truth is until it is steeped in lies; that never knows what honesty is until it is steeped in crime — has such a child personally, deliberately and intentionally chosen to be

the enemy of God? That child born in a communist land and in a godless home; who is told by its government and taught by its teachers that there is no God in heaven, and never knows even a verse of scripture until it is steeped in unbelief and infidelity — is that child purposely, deliberately and maliciously hostile toward God? That child born in a religious home, never knowing the transforming grace of God until it is steeped in false religion, superstitions, folklore, traditions, powerless rituals, empty ceremonies and static creeds — is that child intentionally denying the truth of God? Are not one and all victims of ignorance, darkness, blindness, confusion and helplessness? “This I say therefore, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17-18). “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance” (I Pet. 1:13-14).

Is the sin of the human family the kind of sin that can be forgiven and covered through the sacrifice of Jesus, the world’s sin-offering? It has to be, because Jesus IS OUR SIN-OFFERING! If Jesus is our sin-offering, our sins are counted in God’s sight as unintentional sins, sins done through ignorance. They are not meant to defy God, they are the sickness and weakness of the flesh, unconscious transgressions against God as a result of spiritual blindness. No man since Adam has chosen by his own free will to be what he is or to do what he does. He is a slave. “We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am a creature of flesh (carnal), having been SOLD INTO SLAVERY UNDER THE CONTROL OF SIN” (Rom. 7:14, Amplified). The unregenerate man is a slave to sin. He is a slave of Satan. He is a slave of his own carnal mind and deceitfully wicked heart. He is a slave of his own vile passions.

How can a man who is a slave and a captive of the devil be perpetrating deliberate rebellion against God? Impossible! Adam sold us out. Adam gave us no choice in bringing his progeny under the workings of iniquity. When Adam entered into sin, he did not consult with any one of us as to our desire concerning anything he did. None of us had any power or any choice in the condition in which we entered this world. WE WERE NOT SINNERS BY CHOICE, as we have erroneously been told. We are “born in sin, and shapened in iniquity,” with the carnal nature in us from the moment we leave the womb. Being “dead in trespasses and sins,” dead to God, dead to truth, dead to purity, dead to reality, the Adamic race was no longer capable of making a choice or decision for salvation. How truly the apostle articulated our true state: “And you...were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and WERE BY NATURE THE CHILDREN OF WRATH, even as others” (Eph. 2:2-3). And again, “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 great apostle Paul said this about himself: “Who was before a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, BECAUSE I DID IT IGNORANTLY IN UNBELIEF” (I Tim. 1:13).

Even the murderers of the Lord Jesus did not commit their heinous sin maliciously, deliberately, or knowingly. The scriptures boldly acknowledge the fact. “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers” (Acts 3:13-17).

Notice the term “through ignorance” — the very same expression used in Leviticus chapter four of the class of sins forgiven through the sin-offering! And again, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would NOT HAVE CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY” (I Cor. 2:7-8). Then of the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ it is written, “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way...” (Heb. 5:1-2).

The testimony of God standeth sure — unregenerate men are the victims of Adam’s transgression. Just as the mother who passes AIDS to her child, Adam is responsible. The children are victims. They sin through ignorance, they fall short by nature, they cannot help themselves. And that is just the glory of the sin-offering. It was ordained specifically and exclusively for unintentional sins! And Jesus became the sin-offering for the whole world! Therefore, the whole race of men is forgiven, their sin covered. Jesus Himself confirmed the unspeakable wonder of this at the very moment He became the world’s sin-offering. He was surrounded by sinful and wicked men who were involved in His death, as the scripture says, “For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:27-28).

And right in the midst of all these planned events, when Jesus was on the cross, there arose above all the cries of the multitude those wonderful words of Jesus, “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!” Some of the Jews were ridiculing. The soldiers were gambling over His garments. The priests and Pharisees were gloating in their triumph over the Nazarene. The disciples, family and friends of Jesus were all mourning in despair and fleeing in desperation. There is no doubt that Jesus was suffering excruciating pain. But up and out of all that turmoil, hatred, and despair, those wonderful and compelling words ascended, “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM!” Why? Why forgive them? Because He loved them? That is not what He said. Because it was the Father’s will? He didn’t say that. Because of His great compassionate heart and holy nature? Not at all. He called upon the Father to forgive them “for THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!” “Father, forgive them because they don’t know their right hand from their left; they sin in ignorance; they don’t mean it against you; their sin is unintentional!”

That’s what Jesus said. That is the Voice from the cross. That is the assessment by Jesus of Nazareth of the wickedness of men of all generations, for we all nailed Him to the tree. How many ministers say that there is no forgiveness until you recite the sinner’s prayer? Nearly all of them. But God is asked, by His Son, Jesus, to forgive His persecutors. They were people who had not recited the sinner’s prayer. There is no repentance at all. Can God forgive without repentance? I’ve heard people say, “There’s no chance of a beautiful person who’s born and raised in a country, that’s never heard about God or Jesus or the Bible, to go to heaven because they’ve never met Jesus as their Saviour. They’ve never repented of their sins.” Ah, but there’s another reason for God to forgive people. I find it quite easy to forgive someone who shows repentance. I find it easy also to forgive them if I really know that they didn’t know that they were doing something wrong. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It is possible for God to forgive those who really don’t know what they have done. And that’s the WHOLE WORLD! That is why Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, “Neither do I condemn thee.” It wasn’t that she hadn’t sinned. And there is no record of her repentance. Jesus knew what was in man. He understood the condition of man more perfectly than any that ever lived. He perceived the true nature of all things. And He was the most merciful and

gracious and forgiving of all men. Certainly He was! And He became the sin-offering for the entire race, blessed be His wonderful name. Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

I recently read a beautiful and redemptive story about Abraham Lincoln. Abe Lincoln passed a slave market in South Carolina one day. As he passed he saw a beautiful young black girl being brought to the block to be sold. She wore a vicious, angry look. She was resisting her captors. He couldn't stand the sight of it, the humiliation that she was being subjected to, the shame that was being heaped upon her. When the first bid came, he raised his hand and found himself bidding to buy this slave girl. In the end, Abe won the young girl. With defiance she looked at him and said, "Okay, what are you gonna do with me?" And he answered her, "I'm going to free you. Go where you want to go. Be what you want to be. Live where you want to live. Do what you want to do. Be free. Go. I don't need you. I bought only one thing — your freedom." For the first time, she smiled and said, "If I'm free, I'm gonna go with you." That is what Jesus has done for the world. And when the truth of it finally penetrates the consciousness of men, quickened by the Holy Spirit, the response is, "Since I'm free, I'm gonna go with you!"

It has been said that if the average Christian knew what his Bible is talking about, he would burn it as a dangerous and heretical writing. There is much more truth to this statement than most of us like to admit. Religion is founded on error. While professing to believe and teach the Word of God, yet it can do nothing but contradict it. Most of its efforts are therefore an attempt to make the Word conform to its own ignorant imaginings. While it loudly proclaims the Bible to be true and professes to believe it, yet it must continually change and explain its truths in such a way as to make them uphold its own reasonings. The church systems cannot face the full revelation of fact. They cannot take the Bible as it actually is. That would destroy their own man-made doctrines. In order to continue to exist they must teach that "this" means "that." Hence their converts are made into unbelievers through their system of "interpreting" the scriptures according to their own delusions, instead of believing them as the Holy Spirit of Truth means them.

The whole system is very sly and sinister and deceptive. Under the guise of holding to and contending for the faith, it destroys faith completely, in that it completely destroys one's trust in the infinite love and omnipotent power of the almighty Father and supplants that trust with a total dependence upon what some ignorant man says "about" God and His great plan. It confuses men so completely that the ministers in the churches are made mere parrots, to repeat over and over again what someone else taught them to say. That is what their schools are for. God's ministers are those who have come to the place where they dare to believe God, though it makes all men liars. And anyone who will serve the Lord faithfully by declaring His truth is bound to be unpopular with all the ministers in apostasy, because he must then continually expose their shame.

Now here is the wonderful truth about the sin-offering — Christ on Calvary bore every sin of every sinner. He was made a sin-offering for us, He who knew no sin. And since He became our sin-offering, therefore when He died, our sin died. Calvary atoned. And then and there all mankind was freely forgiven, their sin fully atoned for. If that is not true, the Bible is a lie and Calvary is a farce. Oh, the victory of Calvary means so much more than any of us ever realized in the past. It was such a pathetically ineffectual work, according to the way it was once taught us. It was weak and so limited in scope, so incomplete! Christ came to save the world (Jn. 12:47); God sent His Son "that THE WORLD through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). But it was all in vain. He wasn't able to do what He came for. He couldn't finish the work. Satan and the flesh and the will of man were too strong, too powerful, too unyielding. So His redemptive

work is left unfinished, according to the way we have always been taught, which made God a poor puny victim of circumstances beyond His control and Christ a mere pawn of the flesh and the devil, a prey to their every whim and fancy.

But He did not die in vain! He was not a failure! Hallelujah! Calvary was not a defeat, but an exultant victory. And there He, the spotless sinless Lamb of God actually gave His life for the life “OF THE WORLD.” Let us never again forget that fact. Yes, friend, He actually gave His life for the life “of the world”: not for one half of it, not for just a few Christians who are “not of this world” (Jn. 15:19; 17:14). He actually paid the full penalty for the sins of the world — A-L-L OF IT. And because that penalty is paid in full, because all are forgiven their trespasses by the love of the heavenly Father, “the hour is coming in the which A-L-L that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth” (Jn. 5:28).

Jesus gave His life for the life of the world. That ends the matter for all time and eternity. Thank God, the good old Book is true! Thank God, John 4:42 is actually true after all! “This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour OF THE WORLD.” Thank God, Romans 3:23 is really true! “For A-L-L have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE.” Thank God, Romans 5:18 is actually the fully inspired Word of God, “Wherefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon ALL MEN to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One THE FREE GIFT CAME UPON A-L-L MEN UNTO JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE!” Thank God, I John 2:2 is not an infamous fairy tale! “And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also FOR THE SINS OF THE W-H-O-L-E W-O-R-L-D.” Thank God, I Timothy 4:10 is actually true, “God, who is the Saviour of A-L-L MEN, SPECIALLY OF THOSE THAT BELIEVE!”

All men have life because of Calvary and an empty tomb. Jesus actually “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). Those sins are gone. The record is clear. And a second accounting can never, never be demanded. He paid it all. The world is forgiven, their sin is covered, a free gift of mercy and love and grace. Blessed indeed is the gracious news of life for a sin-sick world!

I was deeply impressed by a testimony John McAllister shared recently. He said, “When I was fourteen years old I had already gone through the deaths of my mother, four grandparents, and an aunt and uncle. One by one they all went by way of the grave, and my sister and I were left to face life almost totally alone. I cried out to the Lord in my distress and He revealed Himself to me as Saviour, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and Present Lord. One evening about a year after my dad’s mother died, I had a most unusual dream — one that stayed with me all these years and helped to mold my understanding of God’s great mercy, love, grace, pardon and forgiveness extended to all mankind.

“In the dream I saw my grandmother. Startled, I spoke to her in deep distress. ‘O Mom,’ I said, for I always called her Mom although she was my grandmother. ‘O Mom, if only I had known a year ago what I know now I could have told you about the Lord, the Lord Jesus, and His great love and the free salvation He gives to all who believe on Him, but alas — now you are dead. You were a drunk and an alcoholic and you died while drunk. Some say you killed yourself — committed suicide — and so now, Mom, you are in hell burning in the flames and you’ll never get out or have another chance to know Jesus.’ I was weeping in great sorrow.

“Then my grandmother spoke, interrupting me in my tears. ‘Not so, my son, not so,’ she said. ‘The Lord has had mercy on me. For He devises means whereby His banished be not expelled from Him.’ Awakening from the dream and being puzzled as to what this could mean, I

searched everywhere in the Bible to find such a passage. Nowhere could I find it. I had never heard those words before. For a year I did not know or see such a verse until seemingly by accident one day I read II Samuel 14:14. 'For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person, yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him.' The entire passage from II Samuel 14:1-21 shows that no matter how far one may stray from the Lord and undergo an internal banishment from that sense of acceptance, nevertheless, our merciful Lord God Himself has devised a means whereby His banished ones would not be expelled forever from Him. 'For out of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things, to whom be glory unto the ages, Amen' (Rom. 11:36). My grandmother taught me that God had mercy on her, He has mercy on me, and He will have mercy upon ALL. 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all' (Rom. 11:32)." — end quote.

NO CONDEMNATION

There is only one accuser, only one — Satan. God is not bringing up your sins, no matter who you are: you, me, Judas or Hitler. If Jesus paid the penalty of your sins He doesn't deal with your sins anymore, they are gone, paid for, the account is closed, you are forgiven! What does that mean? It means that because of Jesus all men are free. And I have to accept that. I must view all men in that light. I must bear the "good news" (gospel) to them. If I then turn around and bring up somebody else's sins because I don't like them, then I'm the sinner.

After a person is forgiven you cannot lay any charge against him. Nearly all Christians know John 3:16, but very few know, let alone live as if they believe, John 3:17: "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved." It's shocking! It's shameful! It's surprising how many of us think that God would condemn us. Why? Where do we pick up these messages? God does not condemn people. If that was so, He could have done that quite easily through Jesus when He sent Him to earth. But He didn't. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world. We find it difficult to understand such a loving reaction from a Holy God. We are often quick to find fault and shortcomings when we find someone or something falling short of our expectations. Sometimes we do this because we are thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought. But many times, more often than not, we are responding through our own defense mechanism — to our own insecurities. And because we don't feel better about ourselves, we begin to criticize and complain and gossip and condemn other people. It makes us feel better about ourselves by tearing down someone else, comparing ourselves with other's faults, failures and sins. God will never condemn any soul. I believe that with all of my heart. God will not condemn anyone. He seeks to save everyone. He plans better and greater things for every man, woman and child in the world. Does that mean that nobody is punished? Not at all. Every man still reaps what he sows — in this world and in the world to come. But God does not condemn. He does not condemn us who are His children. But beyond that, He doesn't condemn the world!

"Blessed is the man whose sin is covered (atoned for), to whom the Lord imputes no sin" (Rom. 4:8). Ah — that's me, I'm a blessed man, I still have sin, but the Lord doesn't impute it to me, He doesn't hold it against me, He doesn't charge it to my account, He doesn't throw it up in my face, He doesn't prosecute me for it, it's not even on my record. Blessed, happy is the man that comes to this truth, to this awareness! Who is the man whose sin is covered — atoned for? The man for whom the sin-offering has been made. And that is every man who has ever lived or does now live! Christ died for the ungodly. All of them!

According to God's arrangement in providing Christ as the sin-offering on behalf of the whole world of mankind, ALL must be delivered from the sin and death that passed on them from Adam, else the sin-offering does not avail for all. Paul makes a wonderful point when he says, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD (Ruler, Controller) both of the dead and the living" (Rom. 14:9). The point is that the object of Christ's death and resurrection was not merely to be Lord of the living, to bless and rule and restore the living people and nations, but to give Him authority over, or full control of, the dead as well as the living, insuring that the rights and privileges secured for them by His sin-offering would avail for them as much as for living men.

To claim that He was the sin-offering for the whole world and yet to claim that the whole world is counted as guilty and deserving of eternal hell, is absurd; for it would imply that either God accepted the sin-offering and then unjustly refused to forgive and pardon those for whom the sacrifice was made, or else that the Lord, after redeeming all, was either unable or unwilling to make effective the results secured by the sin-offering. The grand design of God's great love wherewith He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son," repels and contradicts such a thought, and gives us assurance that the intent of God's loving purpose will bring to all men everywhere the blessing of release from sin and death and the opportunity to return to the rights and liberties of sons of God, enjoyed before sin and the curse.

The sin-offering for all simply means that through Jesus Christ ALL MEN ARE FORGIVEN. Not shall be — are. God provided His own sin-offering for the whole world to proclaim the glorious message, "I love you! I forgive you! Your sin is atoned for! I will save and restore you unto Myself!" It can mean nothing else but that God really and truly "was in Christ, reconciling THE WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:19). Let us read this from the Concordant Literal Translation. "Yet all is of God, who conciliates us unto Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world unto Himself, not reckoning their offenses unto them." You will notice that the Concordant Literal Translation has changed the wording from reconciliation to conciliation. This needs some explanation. There are two Greek words, both of which the King James Version has translated reconciliation: KATALLASO and APOKATALLASO. They are related but slightly different.

If two people are enemies and are separated by some dispute, they need to be reconciled one to another. But if just one of those people takes it upon himself to drop the case and forgive the other, raising the white flag of truce, a conciliation has just occurred. A conciliation is a one-sided peace, done outside the will or knowledge of the second party. It is done by the counsel of his own will in the secret chambers of his governmental palace. He who has conciliated his brother then sends his ambassador with the white flag of truce to sue for peace, to beg the other to conciliate in return. If he does so, then it is two-sided — it is a re-conciliation. Other scriptures show irrefutably that God will bring the issue to a successful conclusion — all men will be reconciled to God. The conciliation will become a reconciliation. Hallelujah!

In II Corinthians chapter five we find that God has conciliated the world to Himself. He laid aside His righteous and lawful case which He had against the world and conciliated the world. Now He has sent us into the world as His ambassadors to them to beg them to be conciliated to God, to respond to His conciliation. All who take heed and make peace with God are reconciled to Him. This is confirmed by Romans 5:10, in which the context is that while we were still sinners and fighting against God, Christ died for us. In other words, the conciliation took place before the reconciliation, because God took it upon Himself to act first. "For if, when we were enemies, we were conciliated by the death of His Son, much more, being conciliated,

we shall be saved by His life.” Paul uses these terms carefully. This can easily be seen in the passages where he uses the term APOKATALLASO, or reconciliation. The first is in Ephesians 2:16, “And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

“Not imputing their trespasses unto them” means they are forgiven! God holds nothing against them! It means not charging to their account, not writing down in the ledger, making no record. Today, it’s up to man to be conciliated to God. Today, it’s left for man to change his attitude toward God. The hell-fire and damnation preachers, the eternal torment teachers are not helping one bit. God has made the first move by sacrificing Jesus on the cross. Our message is no longer one of hell-fire and damnation — that is neither God’s attitude nor His intention toward mankind. Today, our message is “the word of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:19). The New Testament gospel is “the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15). God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. And neither does God send His sons into the world to condemn the world. When you hear preachers ranting and raving, telling sinners how bad they are and how the wrath of God is stored up for them you can be certain of one thing — those preachers ARE NOT SONS!

Some people say that when Jesus was on the cross, because God could not look upon sin, He turned away His face from His Son, and Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” That has bothered me for years, because if God could forsake such a perfect One, who am I? How can I ever trust the promise He made, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” But I’ve got proof that God never forsook Jesus, and right here it is: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” Another scripture says that we were reconciled by the death of His Son. God was on that cross, not only with Jesus, but in Jesus. God Himself was there “laying down” on our behalf in the person of Jesus Christ. God Himself was seeing to it that no longer upon our account, in our ledger, would our trespasses be written.

Someone has said that the individual heart is very much like a police headquarters; there people’s deeds are arranged as in a file drawer. One has only to ask, “What do you have on that person? What have you on this one?” The person can open the file and give out information on anyone. Sometimes with real grace we leave the drawer closed and do not talk about the cases; yet, when the occasion arises, the key is still there so that the cases can be brought to light. And that is unfortunate; it does harm. As long as we have a police register in our hearts, it is impossible for us to bless humanity or our brother. Even if we appear to have a great ministry, it still won’t do. The clear outpouring of the grace, love and power of God becomes possible only after the file drawer has been destroyed. We must be as firm as a rock in this matter: I will not be a police headquarters; the cases shall no longer be entered in me! I am not called to be a police station; I am called to be an ambassador of the God who has conciliated the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. The forgiveness of God must flow through me unto all men. I must never speak a word of condemnation to any or about any. I must reconcile all men to God and to one another in Him. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

On one occasion Jesus was talking alone with His disciples about prayer. Peter asks a question. It is never difficult to think of Peter asking a question or making a few remarks. He asks, “Master, how many times must I forgive a man? Seven times?” Apparently Peter thinks he is growing in grace. He can actually think now in terms of forgiving a man seven times in succession! But the Lord in effect says, “Peter, you haven’t caught the idea. You don’t get it. Forgiveness is not a question of mathematics; not a matter of keeping tab on somebody; it is not that you have forgiven someone six times, so you will go for one more. You must forgive

not seven times but seventy times seven — in one day!” And Peter’s eyes bulge open with an incredulous stare — “four hundred and ninety times — one man — in one day — Wow!” Methinks that Jesus is thinking that Peter will lose count, or get tired of counting, and finally get it, concluding that the spirit of forgiveness is the only way, the only thing that counts.

God has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-20). Reconciling who? Just white Anglo-Saxons? Just Baptists? Just Pentecostals? Just Kingdom people? Just the kind of people you like? Just people that smell like you, look like you, think like you, act like you? What was God doing in Christ? He was busy. He was reconciling THE W-O-R-L-D — to a denomination, to a movement, to a doctrine, to a message, to a way of life — NO! God was in Christ reconciling the world unto HIMSELF! What was God doing in Christ? God so loved the world that He forgave. And where is God now? He is still in Christ, Head and body. He is in the many-membered Christ. And what is He still doing? He’s still reconciling THE WORLD. And what will He be doing in the coming age? He will still be reconciling THE WORLD. What will He be doing in the ages beyond that? He will still be reconciling THE WORLD. When will He stop reconciling THE WORLD? When THE WORLD is reconciled!

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:27-28). Christ in you is the hope of glory. The hope is that EVERY MAN will be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. That’s not your hope — that’s God’s hope. That’s glory’s hope. Your hope isn’t big enough yet. You just hope you can make it. You just hope your spouse can make it. You just hope your family can make it. You just hope your group can make it. God’s hope is bigger than that! “Christ in you” is plural in the Greek — it’s not Christ in me. Only the you, YOU ALL, or “Y’all,” as they say down south, is big enough to express HIM. We’re the fullness of Him that filleth all-in-all.

How large is your vision? How big is the God that lives in His temple? And how big is the world that He wants to touch through you? How large is your hope? Many years ago I got past just hope for me, just hope for my wife, just hope for my family, just hope for my friends, just hope for the Church, just hope for this life, just hope for this age, just hope for the millennium. My hope is bigger than just for you dear ones who read these lines, and your seed, and your seed’s seed. My hope goes beyond men who are just now breathing upon this planet, my hope reaches into that which is within the veil — how big is your hope? He is the God of the living, and He is the God of the dead. And His hope is that He will have a whole family of sons and daughters just like the first one. You say, “Oh, my hope embraces all men; I believe in the ultimate salvation of every man.” My hope goes beyond that. My hope is bigger than that. My hope is not merely the salvation of every man — my hope, God’s hope, glory’s hope is that every man shall be presented PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS. Not just saved, not merely forgiven, not only conciliated, but made perfect in Christ Jesus, conformed into the image of the Son. Then, and only then, will God truly be ALL-IN-ALL, everything to everyone.

“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Now that’s not a blanket of grace to excuse sin. It’s the redemptive power of love to forgive and transform men from sin and death into the righteousness of God. The very character of God stands pledged to it; every promise that He has made implies it; and the typical sacrifice of the sin-offering points with unerring accuracy to the great and sufficient sacrifice — “the Lamb of God, which TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD” (Jn. 1:29).

Since all men in Adam were guilty and condemned; and since all men through Christ are forgiven and redeemed, the hour is coming when every man will be made alive in Christ. Adam was the son of God, the scripture says (Lk. 3:38). In redemption all men will be the sons of God. The manifested sons of God to be birthed out of this age are just the “firstfruits” of God’s creatures — all will be God’s sons in that blessed hour when God becomes all-in-all. Any other view would be both unreasonable and unjust. The sin-offering does not propose to count sinners as saints, and usher them into everlasting bliss without any further work. It simply releases the sinner from the first condemnation thus guaranteeing the dealing of God in due time to restore him to life and holiness and glory in the image of God. What a glorious hope!

Chapter 20

Forgive Us Our Sins

(continued)

“Our Father which art in heaven...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Mat. 7:9,12). “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us” (Lk. 11:4). “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Father will also forgive you” (Mat. 7:14).

May God grant that again today His Spirit will search our hearts and purify our lives as we meditate on the very familiar Lord’s Prayer. In this message we continue the theme, “Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin (trespass) against us.” Last month we looked at the manner in which God has dealt with the sins of the whole world through Jesus Christ our sin-offering. The question follows: What is the difference between the forgiveness we ask for in the Lord’s Prayer and the forgiveness that is provided for the whole world of humanity through the sin-offering of Jesus, which forgiveness we personally realized when we first came to Christ for salvation? The answer is just this: One is judicial; the other is paternal. When Jesus died upon the cross He was the sin-offering for all men. The Judge of the universe accepted His sacrifice on behalf of all and from a judicial standpoint that act of pardon covered all our sins, past, present, and future, as Paul says, “By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Rom. 5:18). Although the whole world is already fully and freely forgiven all their trespasses, this becomes experiential in our lives only when we respond to it, accept it, and live in the light of it.

It is like the Emancipation Proclamation signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln. As soon as President Lincoln signed the document every slave in America was free. All of them. They were one and all fully released from the dreadful tyranny of slavery. Their freedom was a legal and judicial fact. They were no longer slaves. But news traveled slowly in those days. There were black men and women chopping cotton on plantations in Georgia and Mississippi who had no knowledge of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. In their minds they were still slaves. So they continued to chop cotton and lived in the slave quarters. They thought like slaves. They felt like slaves. They acted like slaves. They lived like slaves. They suffered as slaves. Once the news of their freedom reached them, what if they couldn’t believe it? What if it seemed too good to be true? What if they refused it? They remained slaves although legally they were free. They remained in bondage until they accepted freedom and adapted to it.

That is how it is with the whole world of mankind. All are forgiven. Their sins are atoned for. They are free. They are conciliated. God was in Christ conciliating THE WORLD unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And God has committed unto us the word of the conciliation, we are His official representatives sent forth by His Kingdom authority to inform all mankind of their release and the power of God available to make it effective in their lives. God has a program for their rehabilitation. But we are heralds of an already accomplished reality. Our message is not just about what God can do — it is about what God has done. God has forgiven the Adam man of all his trespasses!

Through acceptance of this judicial act we are transformed from slaves of satan, sin, and death to sons of the living God. Now, consciously being His children we can pray, “Our Father.” From henceforth His dealings with us are not with slaves, but within the family circle. Our sins now are not merely the gross sins of the flesh of old Adam — they are sins on another level, on a higher plane, under different circumstances and other conditions. They are sins against spiritual life, against the will of the Father for His sons, against His plans and purposes in our lives, against the ways of His Kingdom, and against the family of God. Sin now becomes a hindrance to our progress back into the image of God. When we were first forgiven of all our sins at the time of our salvation, we were forgiven of those things that separated us from God. But now, as God’s dear children, we are forgiven of those things that prevent our progress into the nature and character of our heavenly Father. Forgiveness now means cleansing from all impediments, removal of all hindrances and on-going conformation into the image and likeness of God. These two orders of forgiveness must be kept clearly in mind. Judicial forgiveness accompanies our salvation, whereas paternal forgiveness is within the family relationship and maintains the Father-son relationship. Only sons can pray, “Our Father...forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us.” It is the Fatherly forgiveness for which we ask in the Lord’s Prayer.

Sin means “missing the mark” and our Father freely forgives us when we miss the mark. But none can deny that we profit from our mistakes by learning the value of the ways of righteousness. A brother shared a beautiful example of this in an incident from his youth. He said, “When I was 14, my dad made me responsible to open and close the windows on the greenhouse where he grew celery plants. At noon one sweltering day, Dad asked me how it had gone — opening the windows that morning. I flushed. My stomach turned to knots. I had forgotten! I will never forget my Dad’s reaction. He put his face on the table in a gesture of sadness mixed with horror. ‘Oh no!’ he exclaimed. Dad and I hopped in the car and sped to the farm. All the way I kept saying, ‘Dad, I’m sorry. I’m sorry.’ We arrived, finally. Dad swung open the doors, and the heat began to billow out. The thermometer read 160 degrees, and every plant was burned to a crisp. I had ruined his entire crop. Dad looked me straight in the eye and said, ‘Son, you made a mistake. But I love you, and you’re forgiven’ He never mentioned the incident again. And I never forgot to open the windows again!”

Stacy Wood has shared a powerful insight into the sins of sons. He says, “I would be a fool to say I’ve never sinned. The Bible says that should I profess not to have sinned I would be a liar (1 Jn. 1:10). For me to say I’ve never sinned would be utter foolishness. I have sinned since I was saved. I have sinned since I received the Holy Spirit. I have sinned since I first prophesied and healed the sick. I have sinned since I received the call to sonship. But I can assure you of one thing — I do not practice sin. ‘Whosoever is born of God,’ the scripture says, ‘doth not commit (Greek: practice) sin.’ To sin is to miss the mark. That is the exact meaning of the Greek word HAMARTIA which is translated as sin. When I do sin or miss the mark I am not rejected by God. I do not lose my salvation. I do not lose my gift, calling or ministry.

“When you miss the mark, do you realize what is happening? YOU ARE TRYING TO HIT THE MARK! The idea of HAMARTIA, to miss the mark, speaks of a bull’s eye. I pull an arrow back on the string of the bow, I aim at the bull’s eye and let that arrow go. But I failed to correctly judge the wind or the distance or by some other human error the arrow goes to one side or the other and I miss the bull’s eye. I sinned! I missed the mark. But — inherent in my missing is the fact that I was trying! I didn’t want to sin. I wasn’t abandoned to sin. I had not given up and just lain down to wallow in sin. There was some principle of weakness within, something in my nature and will didn’t work right, I didn’t have full control over it, and I missed the mark.

“So, what shall I do? Take out another arrow. Find out which way the wind is blowing this time, lift my sights a little higher, steady my hand and seek to judge that distance — aim and let the arrow fly. If I miss again I’m not practicing sinning — I’m practicing hitting the bull’s eye! I just keep on falling short. But I will keep practicing until I hit the center every time. Until then ‘there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus’ (Rom. 8:1). I don’t have to live under condemnation because I miss the mark. Falling short is part of the process while I practice perfection. I do not practice sin, I practice perfection. I do not practice missing the bull’s eye, I practice hitting the bull’s eye. Mistakes are always made during practice sessions. Ask any prize fighter or professional ball player. You practice to make perfect — but you miss the mark in the process. We fall short. That is why it is that in Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation.

“What happened is that sin passed upon all men by one man’s transgression — Adam. Adam’s nature has been fully dealt with by the cross, but we still are having dealt within us the weakness of our own flesh whereby we miss the mark. Adam has no power over me — I can now train myself in Christ Jesus to raise my sights and learn to hit the bull’s eye. Before Jesus I couldn’t do anything but miss the bull’s eye! Now, with Christ as the trainer in my inner life I can develop the godly skill to hit the bull’s eye every time. The potential of the divine life is now within my inner son and I am learning to live out of the mind of Christ. The full ability to be perfect is now within me. We are learning how to manifest what we truly are. When a little child is learning to walk he is learning to fulfill an aspect of his full human ability. He will fall many times in the process. Is there any condemnation to the child for falling short? Do we spank the child for falling? Do we say, ‘Bad boy, bad, bad, boy. If you keep falling down you’re never going to walk! Shame on you!’ Not at all. He will keep practicing — not practicing falling, but practicing getting up after he falls.

“Falling is not failure. Falling is an opportunity to get up and do it over and succeed. Failure is part of success. It’s built into the process. It’s the law of the scheme of nature. It reveals God’s wondrous ways. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! Some who read these lines have a problem with stumbling, with falling, with failure to walk out the will of God in your life. Don’t lie there and allow the adversary to accuse you. Don’t lie there and beat yourself and say, ‘I’m a failure. I’m no good to God. I can’t make it into the Kingdom.’ GET UP AND GO AGAIN! Remember — YOU’RE NOT PRACTICING FAILING, YOU’RE PRACTICING SUCCEEDING!” — end quote.

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Now we come to a part of this petition which most men like to bypass. Their feelings are somewhat like those of the man who dodges into an alley when he sees a creditor coming down the street. Yet the petition plainly says, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” How should we view our sins when we ask for their forgiveness? To get at the full implication of sin, we need to consider it in various lights. In scripture we find it designated by a variety of names, each of which suggests some peculiar quality of sin. Sometimes it is “missing the mark,” as we have already shown. Sometimes it is a thing of “omission,” at other times a matter of “commission.” Sometimes it is an “offense.” Sometimes it is a “side-slip” or “mistake.” Sometimes it is “selfishness” or “self-will,” demanding our own way. And sometimes it is just “fleshly folly.” But when we confess we are helped by viewing them as debts.

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Though we are trying to hit the bull’s eye, and God does not condemn us for the failing — yet there is a valid reason why we are trying to hit the bull’s eye. There is a great purpose in why we are now pressing onward to perfection.

We cannot be content with the status quo. It speaks of myself and God in the same word. I am His child who, in sinning by living beneath my rights and privileges as a son of God, am not only defrauding myself, but I am most grievously defrauding and wronging Him who has redeemed me for His high purpose. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:20). My sin not only affects myself — it affects God and His Kingdom. And today you and I are in debt to God — we owe Him something, and have not paid that obligation; we have not discharged our responsibility.

God has lavished us with blessings and benefits and instruments with which to show forth His glory in the earth; and when we sin these are abused, squandered or destroyed. In all our walk in the Kingdom of God we have been receiving at His hand — and what have we rendered to Him again? The law of the Kingdom is just this: For all we receive, HE EXPECTS A RETURN. The word "debt" denotes that every act we do ought to be a dividend redounding to the glory of God out of the investment He has made in us. Man was created in the image of God to be the manifestation of the invisible God to the visible creation. He was the image of the invisible God made visible and given dominion over all things to reveal God and express His Kingdom on earth. We have been made partakers of His divine nature to fill all the universe with His holiness. We were given dominion over all realms, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, to rule for God and establish His Kingdom over all. The visible creation was to see and know and contact God in us.

So many Christians today are satisfied with merely an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Their eyes are blinded to eternal values, 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 filled with the Spirit and on their way to heaven. But salvation, while it is indeed the most astounding miracle of the ages, is 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 that is prepared for those who "follow on to know the Lord." And not one of us has come all the way up to our full privileges in Christ. There is great glory and heavenly wealth awaiting those who become fully matured and equipped for God's ultimate purpose. Salvation is nothing more than the beginning of a never-ending, heavenly, God-kind of life. Then the recipient may become a heavenly billionaire, or remain a heavenly pauper. He may become a full-grown son in the God-family, or he may remain a baby spirit delighting only in an immature, childish eternal existence. Salvation is a free gift through unmerited mercy and favor: a new divine life begun by means of a new birth. But heavenly attainments of spiritual wealth and glory and usefulness are given to those who have salvation, and then go on to grow up into the "measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST" (Eph. 4:11-16). Salvation is a gift; but the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is a prize (Phil. 3:7-16).

Today, unregenerated man is shooting rockets to the moon and distant planets, and boasts that he is going to use the planets as a launching pad to soar to the universes beyond. But man is simply getting in too big a hurry! He is striving to take over and rule what he has not fitted himself to manage. Man has not yet proved his ability to rule this planet, much less the worlds beyond. Man with his history of greed, lust, strife, treachery, wars, bloodshed, deceit and perversion has now stockpiled enough bombs to not only blow this earth to smithereens, but twenty more just like it! Shall God commit into the hands of corrupt, depraved human nature the rulership of the whole universe? God forbid! Man is reaching out to rule that which he has not qualified himself to rule — and before it has been made lawfully his! But what mankind does not know is that if, through Christ, he first qualifies for the trust, it has been

God's intention all along to place not only the moon and Mars, but the WHOLE VAST, LIMITLESS UNIVERSE under his jurisdiction!

Now notice this passage in Psalm 8:3-6. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man (how great he must be!), that Thou art mindful of him...Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." And again in Hebrews 2:7-8, "Thou madest him (man) for a little while lower than the angels; Thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over all the works of Thy hands: Thou has put A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left N-O-T-H-I-N-G that is NOT put under him!" You won't quite grasp that at first. It's too overwhelming! To be crowned means to be given kingly RULE. To be crowned with glory and honor is to be given such rule as Christ Jesus has NOW, and that is described in Hebrews chapter one as being the administrating, Ruling Executive over the ENTIRE UNIVERSE! Christ is now ruling over all things, for He overcame all things. And qualifying sons of God are his brothers, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, to inherit with Him, in due time, all that HE has now inherited! That is greater by far than a mansion over the hilltop or a cabin in the corner of glory land!

Let us continue the passage in Hebrews chapter two. "But now we see not yet all things put under man." Ah — the universe is, then, NOT YET under man. But what do we at this present time see? "But we see Jesus...CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR." And the next verse shows that Jesus is the Captain, the Leader, the One who goes before leading the way, bringing many sons to the very same glory that God the Father has crowned Him with! And men, if they will come to God and surrender unconditionally to Him and His Lordship, accepting His dealings, being transformed into His likeness, shall one day soon, at the unveiling of God's sons, stand with Christ Jesus IN HIS VERY OWN GLORY AND HONOR! So that is the supreme heritage of man — if he is willing! Man, and man only, of all the life forms God has created, has been given the incomprehensible privilege of actually being born into the God family, the Elohim, the universal ruling family of God. This family relationship is a GOD-PLANE relationship. What a matchless, supreme, awe-inspiring, breath-taking potential!

Sin, however, inwardized us. The response of Adam who walked with God, communicating with Him in the cool of the day, was: "I don't want to glorify God, I want to glorify myself." He became unthankful for God's deposit in his life and trusting his low carnal wisdom more than the high wisdom of his Creator, he became a fool and exchanged the sovereignty of the universe for a kingdom of sticks and stones and creeping things. Thus, he robbed God by misappropriation of the glories given into his hands and, like the prodigal son, squandered all his inheritance. His embezzlement of God's appropriation, diverted for his own pleasure and profit in the lowlands of the flesh, sent the whole race of mankind into bankruptcy.

Can you not see what vast and glorious riches are now given to us in redemption! Here man is restored to the inheritance forfeited by Adam. Jesus Christ came to bring to man again the richness and transcendence of God's eternal purpose. Never has the earth been shaken with such a ministry as that of the first begotten Son of God. Never did mortal eyes behold such power. Never had ears heard such words of wisdom. Never had the oppressed found such judgment or sinners such mercy and grace. Never was nature moved by such authority. And then He died and arose amidst the rending of rocks, the darkening of skies, and the appearance of angels. He rose from the grave and walked again the lowly realms of earth in the sight of His disciples and before many witnesses who watched in awe as the glory of God enfolded His being and lifted Him to heaven in their sight. Then came the transforming glory of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit with the sound as of a mighty rushing wind fell upon the waiting

company as they sat in holy expectation. Tongues of fire sat upon them all. It was not for show or excitement that the fire was manifested, but to transform men of weakness to men of power and change sons of men into sons of God.

Wonderful and glorious as those mighty acts of God were, I know by the spirit of wisdom and revelation that those great events were but a sample of the firstfruits of a greater day yet to come, and the infancy of an eternal maturity that will fill and govern all things. That beginning was the little stone that was cut out of the mountain that was to smite the image of this world system, growing larger and greater with the increase of many sons brought to glory to fill the earth with the knowledge of God and with the judgment and power of the Lord until all men bow before Him and all nations come to worship before His majesty. Then shall no man rob another, nor covet his neighbor's wife, nor shed the blood of his brothers, nor shall the oppressed cry for vengeance upon the oppressor, for all the earth shall be filled with the justice, equity, judgment, knowledge, wisdom and truth of the Lord under the rule of God's many-membered Christ.

With this blessed knowledge the apostle Paul prayed for the saints, "That...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, ye might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion..." (Eph. 1:18-21).

Ah, God has invested so much in us — and He DOES EXPECT A RETURN!

What return have I made? Do I have a clear, definite understanding of what I owe my heavenly Father? Have I done all I could, so that His will is done in me? Have I truly followed after, that I might apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus? Have I mortified the deeds of the body that I might live out His life? Have I faithfully ministered to others of the riches so bountifully bestowed? When we sin there is something in our act for which we become liable to God. That is your DEBT. "Debt" is something we OWE. In relation to God it is something we owe to Him and have failed to pay. It stands for the increase He expects in us and from us. There are certain things we owe our heavenly Father. We owe Him reverence. Have we given it to Him? We owe Him obedience. Have we given it to Him? We owe Him service. Have we given it to Him? We owe Him our heart's best love. We owe Him the first place in our thoughts, desires and affections. We owe Him complete self-surrender. We owe Him the honor that accrues to a father from a faithful, responsible and accomplished son. Have we given it to Him?

DEBT! What a terrible word that is to every true and honest man! And the debt we owe God is one that cannot be expressed in the figures and currency of earth. It is a debt that money can never pay. I have heard sometimes of men who, when they have found themselves in financial difficulties, have called their creditors together and have said to them, "If you will but give me time, I will pay you all in full." And from time to time we read in our newspapers of honorable men discharging with interest debts they had incurred years before. Can we do something like that with this debt we owe to God? Can we work it off in the days and years that are to come? I cannot hold out to you any hope of doing that.

For all our debts, what does God demand of us? Are His demands anything like those of the human law of debt, of the law of ancient times that claimed the person of the debtor, and handed him over to his creditor, to be cut in pieces if he chose; to be sold with his family and

effects, if he chose; to be chained to a life of slavery and drudgery, if such were the will of his creditor? Are we at least to suffer some penalty, to feel for a while something of the bitterness of that poverty brought on by the immensity of our debt to God? NO! All that is asked is, that we acknowledge the debt, and accept its remission. “Our Father...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors!” To forgive sin is to blot it out. “I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions” (Isa. 43:25). The Hebrew word for “to blot out” alludes to a creditor, who, when his debtor has paid him, blots out the debt, and gives him a receipt marked “PAID IN FULL.” But when our Father forgives the sins of His sons, He blots out the debt without our paying it and crosses it out of the debt-book. What grace! What matchless grace! That is the way of a father with his sons. That is the power and glory of the word the Lord Jesus has given us in this wonderful prayer of sonship, “Father, forgive us our debts.” We must ask in all humility. The prayer is answered at once. The debt is canceled, freely and fully. Truly, there is now “no condemnation” in Christ Jesus!

FORGIVENESS — TO SEND AWAY

What is forgiveness? The Greek word means “to send back,” or “to send away.” It is used in the sense of sending away as a matter of transfer, sending something from one to another. Related terms are “remission,” “deliverance,” and “liberty.” These words all speak of the glorious work wrought by “the Lamb of God, which TAKETH AWAY the sin of the world.” The pure Greek meaning of the word forgiveness is that sin is RELEASED, sin is DISMISSED — sin get out of this life, sin get out of this home, sin get out of this church, sin get out of this city, sin get out of this nation, sin get out of this world! The blood of Jesus is better than the blood of bulls and goats, it doesn’t just cover your sins, He removes your sin as far as the east is from the west! “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isa. 43:25).

Because this was not taught to us in our churches when we first came to the Lord, we’ve been wandering around half maimed as Christians, not knowing who we are and thinking that God still remembers our sins. Men will not let you forget. Preachers, especially, will not let you forget. This is the good news — when God forgives you He forgets it. Don’t follow the example of ignorant men who won’t let you forget, don’t let the adversary pull that number on you, for satan is the accuser of the brethren, and he accuses through men and he accuses you through you. You say, “But I sinned!” Yes, you did. You say, “But I failed God!” Yes, you did. You say, “But this is the one-hundredth time that I have flunked the same test!” Yes, it is. To which your heavenly Father responds, “Your sin is forgiven, remitted, released, sent away. It’s not in my ledger. I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Sometimes there is a certain remorse for our sins brought by Holy Ghost conviction. That is the Holy Spirit prompting us to deal with the issue. Here is how you can tell the difference between Holy Ghost conviction and the devil’s accusation. If the Holy Spirit is dealing with you about sin in your life, there is hope — He is drawing you to God, to righteousness, peace and joy. If the devil is brow-beating you with condemnation, there is no hope — you are drawn into a vortex of despair, hopelessness, shame and depression. That’s how you can tell the difference.

The word forgive, as I have pointed out, means TO SEND FORTH, or to send away. There was a type of this action in the Old Testament at the time of the yearly atonement. The high priest laid his hands upon the head of the scape goat and confessed all the sins of Israel, putting them upon the goat. The goat was then led away into the wilderness by a man and left

there, never to return to Israel. Through that action the people were to understand that their sins had been sent away.

There is an interesting and significant passage of scripture in Matthew 18:18, the words of Jesus. “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” The context of this passage has to do with how to deal with a brother that has transgressed against you. We’ve heard about binding and loosing ever since we came into the move of the Spirit of God. Jesus said to Peter, “I’m going to give you authority, and I’m going to let you bind and loose.” And He called this binding and loosing the “keys” to the Kingdom. But let us notice the backdrop of this word about binding and loosing. It has to do with how to deal with a brother who trespasses against you. Jesus says, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mat. 18:15).

What kind of relationship is Jesus dealing with here? Is it vertical or horizontal? It’s horizontal — it’s people to people, man to man, brother to brother. It’s not vertical — between man and God. He’s dealing with people in their relationships one to another. He says, “If you have a falling out with somebody, even if it’s their fault, go fix it.” Then He says, “If he will not hear you, take one or two others, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he won’t hear them, tell it to the church — the assembly of believers. After that, if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen and a publican.” Now hear this! The very next words are: “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mat. 18:18-20).

Jesus is obviously talking about forgiveness, for there follows immediately these words: “Then came Peter to Him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” First Jesus is talking about a falling out with a brother, and how to deal with it. Then He talks about binding and loosing — you can bind or loose the situation according to how you deal with it. Then He continues on with that great word about forgiving a brother who sins against you four hundred and ninety times in one day! You see, my beloved, binding and loosing has to do with lateral relationships.

Binding and loosing has to do with unity and harmony between brethren. The key word in Matthew 18:19 is “agree”. “If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything...it shall be done .” The Greek word is SUMPHONEO. Any time you have SUM it means “in fellowship or in harmony with” and PHONEO means “a sound or a voice.” From this word comes our English word SYMPHONY. Have you ever been to a symphony? Have you ever heard the musicians when they are tuning up? It sounds terrible! But, once they get all tuned up, what beautiful harmony! There is no more irritating sound than dissonance. Much of what is called “music” today would be best characterized as “harmonic dissonance.” Dissonance is a clashing. Jesus wants His brethren to be a symphony. “If any two of you shall harmonize — sumphoneo.” Christ wants His body to harmonize, He wants us to come into symphonic agreement. In this context He is talking about binding and loosing.

Binding and loosing has to do with forgiveness. Jesus gave us the Lord’s prayer. He concluded it with this glorious Doxology: “For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever. Amen.” Then immediately He said something else. He didn’t talk about the Father; He didn’t talk about heaven; He didn’t talk about what all the baby Christians want to talk about —

blessings and healings and deliverances and miracles. He didn't even talk about the kingdom or sonship. He immediately began to talk about forgiveness. Why did Jesus come to planet Earth? That is not hard to figure out: He came to show us the Father. And the Father has a heart of mercy, a heart of reconciliation, a heart of love. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son." God knew that we couldn't find Him or get to Him, so He came to us. When you first met God, how did you meet Him — on what basis, in what mode? You needed to be forgiven. You needed to be freed. You needed to be delivered. You needed to be loosed.

If you look at all the scriptures on binding and loosing you will find that they all refer to something altogether different than the interpretation placed on them by the preachers. You talk about binding and loosing and immediately people think about demons, principalities and powers, sickness and disease, or they think about money. Every time I have been in a meeting where something has been bound or loosed, it has dealt with either demons or money. And you can do that! We can take authority and "bind" and "loose" in those areas — there is a truth there. Demons will listen to you and you can move finances around in the realm of the spirit so that it will manifest in your pocket book. But the primary, essential meaning of binding and loosing, the meaning the firstborn Son of God put upon it, in every context, is talking about forgiving. Let this truth be indelibly inscribed upon your mind and in your heart — binding and loosing has to do with forgiveness — either binding people to their sins, or loosing and liberating them from their sins!

The Greek word for forgiveness (APHESIS) rendered "remission," "forgiveness," or "deliverance" comes from the preposition APO which means "up and away from" meaning to be delivered up and away from and out of the prison house. It means to be released or let out of prison. It means to "let one go free." So if I bind my brother by unforgiveness I retain his sins; if I loose him by forgiveness I remit his sins. Not only do God's ministers have that authority, but every individual believer has that authority. That is why when you see a brother overtaken in a fault "Ye which are spiritual should restore such an one in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1).

There are those who think of forgiveness as no more than an escape from punishment. It is the remission of a penalty. But forgiveness goes far deeper than that. The story is told about a lawyer who pleaded the cause of a client of his who was accused of murder. Through his impassioned appeal the jury brought in a verdict of "Not Guilty." The accused man upon whom the shadow of the electric chair had been falling was allowed to go free. In his gratitude he hurried to his attorney, in order to thank him. But the man that had saved his life drew away in disgust, saying, "Off with you; you are guilty as hell." This man went free, but he was not forgiven. Reminds us of O. J. Simpson, does it not? Although he was acquitted of the crime of murdering his wife, Nicole, millions of people still believe he is guilty and they have not forgiven him. They charge it to his account. They harbor feelings of resentment, rage, disgust, animosity, and hatred toward him. The emotion of loathing arises in their hearts with every thought of him. They would like nothing better than to see him pay the uttermost farthing. It troubles them that he has "gotten away" with murder. He is free but unforgiven — even by many Christians! And even by some who call themselves sons of God!

Forgiveness, then, is something more than a way of escape from the consequences of our sins. It is an attitude toward the sinning one — a "sending away" of his guilt, and a "sending forth" of mercy, love, reconciliation, acceptance and fellowship! If by the Holy Spirit of God's Love you have forgiven O. J. Simpson, you could play a game of golf with him without once thinking an unkind thought about him or bringing the subject of his trial up. Forgiveness means to cease to feel resentment against; to give up a claim on account of; to grant remission of an

offense, debt, fine or penalty. To forgive means that we release the other person, that we accept the loss that has come to us from their offense, and let them go free. In forgiving we actually bury our own wrath at their sin and resolve this through love, refusing to make them feel our wrath and extending to them acceptance, love and fellowship. To forgive is to affirm the worth of others, to recognize that they are far more important than the offense, and to transcend the issue in accepting and confirming them. It means we must rise above our feelings about the hurt we have sustained. In love we reach beyond the offense to the person; in grace we free the other. And that is what God has done for the whole world!

Such attitude and action can only result in acceptance, true, total, unqualified acceptance. Such acceptance springs from understanding of the deepest kind. How beautiful is forgiveness; how redemptive its nature; how glorious its magnanimity! No one can exercise it without becoming at once of a larger mold. All that is little and mean shrinks away from the forgiving spirit. But if forgiveness be beautiful because of its magnanimity, how much more beautiful because of its Godlikeness! This beauty is seen in Jesus on the cross. When He was hanging there, an object of pain, rejection and brutality, He voiced forgiveness: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Forgiveness was a way of life for Him. It permeated His entire spiritual and mental outlook. It colored all His attitude and emotion; He was forgiveness.

Ah, the glory of forgiveness! The wonder of having one's sins "sent away"! Oh, sweet deliverance! Think of all the prodigals who have come, so weary and so footsore, so sick, so disgraced, so stained, from the far land and the swine, for whom there has still been the best robe and the rejoicing welcome. Think of all those polluted souls who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Think of poor cheating Jacob, who became Israel, a Prince with God. Think of David, the murderer and adulterer, to whom God yet restored the clean heart and the free spirit. Think of cursing and swearing Peter, think of savage, persecuting Paul, who yet became chief among the apostles. Think of the penitent thief upon the cross; the rough jailer; the thievish runaway. Think of the ignoble, swindling publicans; think of the harlots, the common infamy, out of whom He cast the seven devils of sensuality, and who were not pushed back when they wept upon His feet. These entered into the Kingdom of Heaven before priests and Pharisees, because it is the helpless, who know their helplessness, to whom Christ came.

...AS WE FORGIVE

After a person is forgiven, you cannot lay any charge against him. You cannot bring any accusation. "If God be for us, who can be against us," the apostle asks. If God has chosen and has affirmed His presence within a vessel, who am I to judge? I gain no power by putting another person down.

In asking for forgiveness, our sins are likened to unpaid debts; the act of forgiveness is likened to the canceling of those debts. And in presenting this plea, we are told that God's remission of sins is conditional upon our willingness to remit others freely the uncanceled debts they owe us — the trespasses or offenses they have committed against us. Through the sin-offering of Jesus God has already forgiven the whole world all their trespasses against Him. Therefore, all are assured of the opportunities of blessing and life in God's great plan of the ages. But now we come to another principle — the Father's forgiveness of His sons within His Kingdom, and our relationship to men who trespass against us. And we are taught to pray, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

It would be hard to find a more pregnant sign of the greatness of a son of God than this little phrase, "as we forgive them that trespass against us." In the sin offering we see God as the standard of man's action; but here we are taught to regard man as the standard of God's action. Jesus does not bid us pray, "May we forgive our debtors as Thou, Father, hast forgiven us." Rather, "Forgive us...as we forgive!" Here our Father's forgiveness is conditioned on our forgiveness. An impulsive religious man is tempted to exclaim, "I, for one, will not pray this prayer. I do not want to be forgiven by God as I forgive people who wrong me. I want to be forgiven in a larger, grander, fuller, more glorious way. I conceive of a love of God beyond and infinitely and forever above all human love with which I might presume to compare it. God is bigger than man. And I conceive of a forgiveness of God so spontaneous, full and free, so perfect and divine, that the attempt to compare it with my poor limited human forgiveness borders on blasphemy. If I am asked to pray for forgiveness from God because I have already forgiven the one who has transgressed against me, then I flatly decline. I do not care to accept, much less to plead for, a blessing from the hands of a God whose blessing is withheld until a sinning man like me sets the example of magnanimity. I conceive of a God whose first name is Love, a God whom Jesus bids us approach with the words of tender affection on our lips, 'Our Father,' a God who gives and loves to give. I conceive of a God who is mindful of me when I forget Him, who cares for me when I miserably fail Him, who, as often as I wander away from Him, draws me back to Himself. And I refuse to offer a prayer that is dishonoring to Him. My God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will not wait to bless me until I have risen to heroic heights. His mercy is over all of His works."

It must be admitted that there is logic and force in the objection. Is God's goodness no greater than ours? Is the human heart the measure of divine beneficence? Does God's impulse of mercy wait the stirring of our own? Must we be good before He will be? If it is wrong for us to wait to be gracious until someone else is gracious, why is it right for God? While God is God, can He be content to keep back the gifts of His grace until I am gracious? Will He really wait for me to forgive before He will show Himself forgiving? It is hard to believe that this is the meaning of the prayer. It is clear we need to have this prayer revealed to us. And, to go back to our religious objector who contends, "I want a forgiveness from God that is unconditioned by my own," the proper answer is, "You cannot have it. In the nature of the case you cannot have it. And your demand for it proves that you do not understand the path of sonship, nor do you know how forgiveness works!"

We would be wrong to assume, because Jesus said that God would not forgive us unless we forgave others, that God is temperamental, insisting on His own way merely for the sake of getting His own way. Such a conception of God would be unworthy of the God revealed by the personality of the gentle, tender Jesus. You see, precious friend of mine, we are not dealing here with unregenerated men or with religious men or with babes in Christ. The Sermon of the Mount is the principles of the Kingdom of God; it is the very essence of sonship. God is dealing with us as with sons. God does not require sinners to forgive in order to be forgiven. God does not demand of spiritual babes that they forgive as a condition for forgiveness — but He does require it of SONS. He is teaching sons His own nature, that they must forgive, and how to forgive. It is a great and glorious lesson in the school of sonship. It is training in the ways of the Father, in the principles of His Kingdom. Just as a boxer must be trained to a degree far surpassing those who merely attend the fight, so sons of God, His government of Kings and Priests destined to rule and bless all things and creatures, must be taught and trained in the ways of His heart and purpose.

It is not that our Father forgives us because we forgive others. And it is not that our Father sits in His heaven with a scowl on His face saying, "If you don't forgive, well, then, I'll show

you. I won't forgive you, either!" What we see here is a great spiritual principle, an unalterable divine law inherent in the Kingdom of God. It is the nature of God, the way of His manifestation. Our forgiveness of others is not the condition of God's willingness to forgive us; it is the condition of our ability to receive the forgiveness of our Father. It is simply a matter of how things work in God's economy. It is like the water in the faucet. If you don't turn on the faucet, the well or reservoir will not supply more water. It is not that the reservoir says to the faucet, "If you don't run water into the lavatory I refuse to run water into you." No, that is not it at all. The faucet is the channel by which water is supplied to the lavatory. The reservoir, on the other hand, is the source from which the water is supplied to the faucet. There is an order here; the order involves a flowing. If the faucet causes the water to flow to the lavatory, the reservoir automatically provides an unfailing supply of water to the faucet. IT'S ALL IN THE FLOW!

In the same way God and we are connected. As sons of God we are His supply of mercy, love, forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption to mankind. We are the faucet, God is the reservoir. Forgiveness flows not only to us, but through us. We are God's channel. When we dam up the channel, refusing to forgive and bless men, we stop the stream. The flow ceases. So the forgiveness and mercy of God are unable to flow into our lives due to an obstruction, because of a hindrance. Our unmerciful attitude becomes a barrier between us and the outflowing of God's goodness. If our hearts are filled with unforgiveness for another, how can the forgiveness of God come in? Forgiveness and unforgiveness cannot exist together any more than a number can be a plus quantity and a minus quantity at the same time. Therefore do we pray, "Forgive us...as we also forgive!" When we forgive the hindrance is removed and there is again a free flow of mercy and blessing both to us and through us. That is the law of the Kingdom. It's all in the flow!

Norman Elliott illustrated the truth this way. Suppose someone went to an athletic coach and said that he wanted to be a runner; and suppose this young person insisted upon carrying a heavy stone round with him. The first thing the coach would do would be to tell him to let go of the rock. Perhaps the imaginary conversation would be something like this: "Fine. I can make you a runner, but first of all you've got to let go of that rock." "I can't do it. I've carried it round with me for so long that I'm used to it. It is part of me." "No, I'm sorry, you've got to let go of that rock if you want to be a runner." "You're being temperamental! You just want to do it your way. I want to be a runner but I want to keep my rock." "No, it can't be done that way. Either drop it or I won't teach you." "There you go again. You keep saying I won't. You're temperamental!" "I only say 'I won't,' as another way of saying that I am not able to make a runner of you while you insist on keeping a heavy stone. To be a runner you have to get rid of every weight that is unnecessary. It isn't that I don't want to help you. You make it impossible for me to help you."

As God is Love, as love is the law of the Kingdom, we make it impossible for that love and goodness to invade us when we are unmerciful and unforgiving. We have closed the doors to the outflow of God. We must permit God to flow into us before He can flow out from us. What He is and what He does must become experiential in order for it to be dispensed through us. And now, though it may seem we have traveled a long way around to reach the point, we see the absolute propriety and justice of this prayer: "Forgive us...as we forgive." As sons of our heavenly Father we cannot be forgiven on any other terms. Peace, harmony, hope, joy, mercy, goodness, tenderness, love — these represent the heart that forgives. Resentment, antagonism, bitterness, disharmony, hatred, selfishness — these represent the heart that refuses to forgive. This is the heart which God cannot forgive among His sons, and in His Kingdom, not because of any indisposition on His part, but because the heart cannot receive

forgiveness. We pray to be forgiven as we have already forgiven, not because our forgiving spirit entitles us to the forgiveness of God or wins Him to a grace like our own, but because now we have come into a condition of heart in which forgiveness can effect an entrance and have its perfect work.

Must God wait to be gracious until we are gracious? Is our grace, mercy and love the measure of His own? No; but until we have the spirit which forgives we have not the spirit which can be forgiven. If it were possible for us to receive love from God and give out hate to men; if we could be joyous towards Him and sullen to our neighbors; if we could accept from Him tenderness, compassion and love while we continued to walk in arrogance, hostility and disdain of our fellow men, it would be because we lived in a world whose order was immoral and corrupting. Nothing of the kind is possible in God's great Kingdom. We are only darkening counsel by words without knowledge. And so we pray, as Jesus taught us, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us."

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18). This is where Jesus went into His home town, His home synagogue, and announced His Jubilee ministry of deliverance. Note particularly the word deliverance and the term set at liberty. "Deliverance" or "set at liberty" is translated more often as "forgiveness" or "remission." The Greek word has the metaphor or word picture in it of opening up a prison door and the captive walks out free — released. It relates especially to the year of Jubilee when all the slaves are set free and all debts canceled.

So what God does is let us out of prison. When we don't forgive people we not only keep them in prison, we also lock ourselves up with them. This should help us understand some of the teachings of Jesus. He talked about people being thrown into prison and turned over to the tormentors until they paid their bill. Do you really know what He meant by the Spirit? You will be "bound up" until you forgive. Jesus said you will go to jail and you won't get out until you have paid the last farthing. Why? Because the mission of the sons of God is to set creation free. There is a great and universal law in creation and society — only a free man can set a man free! You've got to know you're forgiven before you have power to forgive. When you know you're forgiven you can go forth in the right spirit and everywhere you go you can serve and you can bless. And when you make mistakes and miss the mark you will be forgiven in return! God is not concerned about how much Bible we know or how much revelation we have. I would rather meet someone who can't read or write whose spirit is right — whose life is flooded with love, mercy, goodness and the power of God. I've learned some of the greatest things I have learned in God from men and women who never graduated from high school — and some of them missed it by a long shot. But they had walked with God and were filled with the wisdom and knowledge of the ways of the Lord. Paul was a brilliant man, he was a scholar indeed, and a lawyer versed in the law, but he said he was taught this message by revelation of the Spirit.

God has conciliated the world unto Himself and has committed unto us the word and the ministry of that conciliation (II Cor. 5:18-20). The old-order method of evangelism was to get a bullhorn, go out on the corner, and tell people how sorry they are and that they are going to hell, and how much they need to come to your church. They took one look at you and me and saw how obnoxious and sorry we were, and they said, "If that's religion, I don't want any, thank you." You see, precious friend of mine, the world is hungry for joy, for peace, for hope, for life,

for reality. They will go out and get drunk for a month looking for some kind of solace, some kind of meaning to life.

THE MINISTRY OF FORGIVING SINS

Jesus offended the religious sensibilities of the men of His day by claiming for Himself divine prerogatives. Thus, when a paralyzed man, carried by four friends, was lowered through the roof before Him, He astonished everyone by saying to the man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mk. 2:5). The scribes thought to themselves, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" The reaction of Jesus is interesting and significant. He did not say, "You are wrong. Men can forgive sins as well as God." Nor, "I am not really forgiving this man's sins, but only assuring him that God does so." He assumed that the scribes were right in thinking of forgiveness as a divine prerogative, and went on from there. He pointed out that it is easy to say, "Thy sins are forgiven." But it is also easy to say to a paralytic, "Take up thy bed, and walk." Then He went on: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," he said to the sick of the palsy, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all.

The message is clear. It is just as easy to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," as to say, "Take up thy bed and walk." One is no harder than the other. In either case it must be the authority of the Spirit within. If man has power to heal, he also has power to forgive sins. I have seen lame men leap for joy when some man has spoken to them the wonderful words, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole — arise and walk!" I have seen it with my own eyes. Therefore, I ask you, as Jesus asked, "Is it any harder to say Thy sins be forgiven thee!" This is written that you might know that the sons of men have power on earth to forgive sins!

Many years ago, when I was a youth evangelist still in my teens, the Lord powerfully spoke this word into my heart. It was in the days of the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit of God. I was preaching in a meeting in Saint Augustine, Florida. After the ministry one night several people had come to the front for prayer. There was a particular lady who had come seeking salvation. I had spoken and prayed with her, but she continued on praying and darkness and dejection were written like a mask over her countenance. She was struggling with her sins and acceptance of God's forgiveness. The joy of sins forgiven had not swept into her soul. Suddenly the Spirit sprang up within the minister of the church. He shot across the platform like a bullet from a gun. He laid his hands upon the woman and thundered the command, "In the name of Jesus Christ — thy sins be forgiven thee!" There was immediate release — her hands shot up, her expression changed, joy flooded her countenance, assurance bloomed like a flower of spring in the garden of her heart, and praise and worship flowed through her lips to the Lord. Salvation in that moment became blessed reality. In that same instance the Spirit witnessed prophetically within my heart: **THERE IS A MINISTRY OF FORGIVING SINS!**

A. C. Dixon wrote: "And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them..." The disciples had the right to pronounce the remission of sins. On what condition? 'And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' If under the breathing of the Holy Spirit, they speak God's words of power, they pronounce the remission of sins in the name of God and by the authority of God.

“D. L. Moody had many friends among the high officials in the United States. Governors came out to hear him preach. When he was holding a meeting in one of the American cities, the Governor of the State sent for him and said, ‘Moody, I have decided to respond to the petition of a great many people to pardon a celebrated criminal, whose name you have doubtless seen in the papers. I would like you to go down to the States Prison and convey it. You are offering pardon to all sinners; I would like you to take my pardon and deliver it to this man.’ Mr. Moody said, ‘I took the legal document from the Governor’s hand. I went to the States Prison and showed it to the Warden. He called into the chapel all the prisoners; and standing before them all I said, ‘I have a pardon for one of you. I do not know you by face, but here is the name.’ Oh, what breathless interest! How they leaned forward! They scarcely breathed at all, those five or six hundred men, wondering, ‘Is it for me?’ Mr. Moody read the legal document, and when the name of the man was mentioned, there was something like a shriek came out of the crowd. It was almost more than he could bear. He was in for life, away from his wife and children; and when the pardon was read, it just overwhelmed him.

“The Governor, who had the legal right to pardon, gave the document to Mr. Moody. Then Mr. Moody went and announced the pardon to the man, in the name and with the authority of the State and of the nation. The Governor had remitted, and Mr. Moody remitted by announcing the Governor’s remission. It came into personal touch with the man through the medium of Mr. Moody. And that is what I do in the name of God” — end quote.

We are a Kingdom of Priests after the Order of Melchizedek unto our God and Father. We are the Ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. And we are called to mediate God’s forgiveness to God’s world. We must do more than preach forgiveness, more than merely declare that God’s forgiveness can be had on terms. We must become the agents of that forgiveness. In God’s name and in His power and by the Spirit of Christ, we must forgive the sins of men. Broaden your view! We are to become the active agents of God’s forgiveness to creation. Hallelujah! What a Calling! What a Day!

Chapter 21

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...lead us not into temptation” (Mat. 7:9,13).

Most of us have repeated the Lord’s prayer many hundreds or thousands of times in our lives; how little has the best and wisest of us realized the fullness of its divine significance! I trust that in this series of Studies, some of us may have at least caught a glimpse of the truth that not one petition of it is needless or fantastic; neither is it a prayer to merely be repeated by baby Christians at church on Sunday. Far from being a prayer to be recited, the Lord’s Prayer enables us to explore the depths of God and His great purpose of the ages. It is the model or pattern prayer for sons. It reveals God as He is in our relationship to Him in sonship. It is not a prayer at all, but a teaching about prayer. It reveals the way a son should pray, not a form of prayer. As we enter into its depths and give ourselves up to its mighty power, there come to us insights and understanding far beyond our expectation — and possibilities and potentials transcending our wildest imaginations!

As we approach this next to the last petition, I would point out that we might call the Bible the “Book of Temptations.” On its first pages stands the temptation of the first man and woman, and on its last the prophetic descriptions of the great temptation which is “coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10). Between this beginning and this end there stretches the history of the people of God and with it the individual histories of men of God, and these histories, too, are a continuous chain of temptations that begin with Abraham and do not end until that gladsome day when Christ delivers up the Kingdom to the Father and God becomes All-in-all.

At first it is somewhat difficult for us to understand why Jesus should put these words, “Lead us not into temptation,” into the mouths of His younger brethren when we address our heavenly Father. It is inferred that leading men into temptation is something God ordinarily does, but that we should resist His activity by praying Him not to lead us into temptation. There is here a seeming paradox — a real contradiction in thought. We would think that if temptation is good for us, then it is wrong to ask to be spared from it; and if it is not good for us, then God should not be in the business of bringing men into it. If it is essential to our spiritual development that we should be placed in situations that subject us to temptation, why should we pray not to be led into them? There are times when the ways of God refuse to be confined within the bounds of man’s logic. They make statements that appear to be mutually contradictory but are nonetheless true. The Lord says, “You need to be led into temptation,” and He also says, “You need to pray, Lead us not into temptation.” Both of these statements are true!

TEMPTATION — TESTING

The plain truth is that this word “temptation” in our English Bible is often somewhat misleading. A better rendering would be “testing”. Ed Spencer has pointed out that the Old Testament word for temptation is the Hebrew term NASAH. The literal meaning of this word is somewhat strange at first glance, for it means “to examine by smell,” or “to put to the proof.”

There are many things that are examined and identified by smelling. There are areas of scientific research where the olfactory nerves assist in determining the ingredients of compounds. We all know what it is to sniff the air, testing to see what we shall have for supper! Sensitive woodsmen know from the odors which are wafted by the wind that certain animals are near, and even the insensitive and inexperienced can sniff the presence of a skunk! These ideas of examining by smell to prove who or what created the odor also carry over into figures of speech. There are times when antagonistic individuals get on the trail of a political enemy, like a pack of bloodhounds sniffing the scent. Their procedure intentionally works at the business of smelling out the secrets in the life of the person whom they consider to be on trial. If, when the ordeal is over, the man under examination weathers the storm successfully, we have a saying that “he came up, smelling like a rose!” In other words no real stench was uncovered in his life. Only his honor was exposed. But the process involved is that of “testing” or “putting to the proof.”

This corresponds with what we know about all of life. Testing is a necessity of living. We test wood, steel, and stone in order to find out what they are capable of supporting. We test our ability to read, to run, and to think, but no one therefore calls them evil. We find out something about ourselves, even if that something is not always complimentary. Everything in life is tested in some manner. In this way “temptation” may have a good sense as well as a bad; for example, God is said to have tempted, that is, proved Abraham in the matter of offering up Isaac. So Jesus is said to have tempted, that is, proved Philip in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. “Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto Him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat? And He said this to prove Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do.” To prove Philip, test him, see what he would answer and what was in his mind — but the word is our word “tempt”.

Our heavenly Father in His wise love is sometimes pleased to subject us to unusual temptation or probing. This was the case with Job in the hands of the adversary, with Paul impaled by his thorn in the flesh, even the messenger of satan to buffet him. Very conspicuously was it the case with our Lord Himself; we are expressly told that Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. And so it is with all of God’s sons. Our heavenly Father with the view of testing us, revealing us to ourselves, developing, fortifying, perfecting our characters, encouraging others by the example of our own steadfastness, may see fit to bring us into temptation, subjecting us to a test of unusual severity, taking us from the ordinary ordeal of life into the extraordinary.

There is an interesting story by Mark Twain titled THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED HADLEYBURG. You may remember its plot. Hadleyburg was a village that took special pains to protect its citizens, beginning in infancy, from the hazards of temptation. It was known far and wide as a town of unquestioned honesty, and its citizens were known for incorruptible virtue. But one citizen of that village was guilty of doing a stranger some slight, and in revenge the stranger devised a plan by which the chief citizens of the town were all unmasked. While outwardly they were all circumspect, inwardly they were no different than other people. And all it took to prove the point was the stranger’s ploy. The contention of Mark Twain is caught in one line of that story: “The weakest of all things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire.”

Someone has said that temptation is the raw material of heaven. Just as in many an ancient battle, the besieged army was not able to scale the walls of a beleaguered city till they had filled the moat with the dead bodies of their foes, so we can ascend into the triumphant heights of God only on the stepping-stones of conquered temptations and passed tests. The Greek

word for temptation is PEIRASMOS, and PEIRASMOS is derived from the word PEIRA which means “experience”. In order for a soldier to be experienced, he has to fight, there has to be some battle in which he is engaged. And in order for us to be experienced, for our ability and endurance to be tested, we also must be engaged in a battle, and that “battle” is “temptation”. Our Elder Brother suffered, being tempted, and His perfection was a matter of attainment, of conquest, of victory over all the opposing forces of the flesh, the world, and the devil. Now the difficulty lies just here — if temptation is one of the conditions of spiritual progress and conquest, does it not follow that it is God’s will for us to experience it, to drink deeply of it, and that He brings us into temptation for our good, and not our harm?

Few will teach you this principle, but I declare it to you today, good without the knowledge of evil can scarcely be called good at all. Who could possibly speak of the day if night had never been known? There was no first light if there was no darkness. What could we know of life if there were no death? What would we know of health if there were no sickness? What would we know of wealth if poverty had not spread its specter upon the earth? No man can be trusted until he has been EXPOSED TO THE OPPOSITES, until he has been tempted. No man can be declared strong until he has been tested for weakness. No man can be proven honest until he has been presented with the opportunity to cheat or steal. No man can be declared virtuous until faced with opportunities with women other than his wife. No man can be an overcomer until he has faced the dreadful foe. Those who are worthy to slay their Goliaths must first have slain their lion and their bear. No man can be an overcoming son of God until he has encountered the serpent in the wilderness and come forth victorious in the power of the spirit! Everything has its right and wrong, its good and bad, its proper use and its misuse, its truth and error, and the one must overcome and swallow up bitter, smooth rough, soft hard. Life swallows up death, said Paul in II Corinthians 5:4; and it gets its strength from having an opposite which it has swallowed up. You cannot say a certain “Yes” in a decision, until you have first canvassed the alternatives and said an equally certain “No” to each of them.

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an OPPOSING FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak, fragile and powerless. God’s NEW CREATION must be strong and powerful, and anything or anyone that desires to be strong, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend endless days, weeks, months and years in vigorous training doing strenuous exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. A man who wants to be a great wrestler, doesn’t just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. If he didn’t do this he would be weak and powerless in the ring. A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. Those opposing forces are indispensable to develop strength and technique. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large and luxurious, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed.

Every parent understands that the very worst thing that could happen to any child would be to escape all the pain of discipline, all the irksomeness of education, all the difficulty of work and experience, and be allowed in all things to please itself without any restraint. Such treatment would infallibly produce an ignorant, selfish, rebellious, irresponsible and wicked son or daughter. Just as feeding a child on cakes and sweets alone would ensure the ruin of its health. Now and again some father who has himself known hard sledding decides to make

easy for his children the way of life. They shall not be required, as he was, to get up early in the morning. They shall not be obliged at an early age, as he was, to earn a living. They shall not be deprived, as he was, of things that young people want. They shall be placed in conditions that are wholly favorable and that make no difficult demands. And now and then some human father who has made easy for his children the way of life finds himself wondering why they have made so little of themselves! He has given them every opportunity, and it fails him to understand why they are lacking in most of the qualities he hoped to find in them. But has he given them every possible opportunity? Not at all! He has denied them the supreme opportunity such as a rough road affords for the development of strength and character.

There are evils lurking in the carnal mind and fleshly nature of us all for which there is no deliverance except through the crucible of suffering and the pain of discipline; even as the dross that is found mixed with pure gold in the ore can only be separated and eradicated through the fiery furnace. The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become. Saints, IF WE WOULD BE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH we must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Our Father wants us to be strong. The Father of spirits did not look forward to a distant day, at the time of His begetting, expecting that a multitude of ninnies and dummies would stand before Him. How many of those who read these lines want their children to grow up one hundred percent innocent and privileged, never having experienced the slightest temptation or adversity in any form? This is precisely why God placed the serpent in Eden with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — that man through the experience of the opposites might in the experience be led to OVERCOME all things and to stand before the Son of man in the strength of character, perception of mind, and quality of life of God Himself. It is all part of our Father's wise and magnificent plan!

As someone has written, "Man shrinks from tests for they call for the best that is within one. Yet tests prove to be for our good. A school teacher does not give her pupils a test so that she may have the satisfaction of failing them but rather so that she may be delighted by their display of knowledge. Automobile manufacturers do not put test cars through rugged workouts to wreck them but rather to improve their product and find how to strengthen their points of weakness. Even so it is when the Lord allows temptation to come to our spiritual lives. It is not intended to wreck us, though at times that may appear to be the result, but it is intended for our good. They are to make us strong. They are to do for us what the sculptor does for the rude block of marble. They are to do for us what the lathe does for the rough and coarse cylinder of steel. Thus it was that Job said, 'When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold' (Job 23:10)."

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:12-13).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12).

"When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character, men of integrity with no weak spots" (James 1:2-4, Phillips).

The apostle James tells us that God does not tempt anyone, yet the scriptures speak more than once of men who were tempted of God. The apparent contradiction vanishes when we remember that the word is commonly used with two meanings and covers two distinct spheres of thought. When we speak of temptation we most often think of an enticement to commit sin. We are tempted when we are attracted to that which is wrong, or is beneath our privileges, contrary to God’s will, or inconsistent with His character, and sometimes the scriptures use the term in that sense. This is precisely the case when James tells us that God does not tempt any man. “For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted (with evil) when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:13-14). The subject here is being tempted with evil, or seduced to commit evil, and GOD DOES NOT SO TEMPT ANY MAN. God does not solicit people to do wrong. But the underlying meaning of the word is more specific than that and the Greek word in the New Testament indicates the idea of trial, testing, or proof — that which tests or examines or proves the moral or spiritual quality, character, condition or standing of a person. In this sense it is perfectly true that OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DOES LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION!

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

There is a remarkable analogy between the last half of the Lord’s prayer and the ideas, expressions, and terminology in the record of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. This can be seen from the following table of texts:

THE SECOND PART OF THE LORD’S PRAYER		THE STORY OF TEMPTATION
“give us this day our daily <i>BREAD</i>	BREAD	...command that these stones be made BREAD(Matthew 4:3).
“and LEAD us not into TEMPTATION, but deliver us from EVIL.	LEAD—LED TEMPTATION— TEMPTED EVIL—DEVIL	Then was Jesus LED up of the spirit into the wilderness to be TEMPTED of the DEVIL (Matthew 4:1).
“For thine is the KINGDOM	KINGDOM— KINGDOMS	And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the KINGDOMS of the world in a moment of time(Luke 4:5)
“and the POWER and the GLORY for ever.	POWER GLORY	And the devil said unto him, All this POWER will I give thee, and the GLORY of them (Luke 4:6).

Sharing our humanity, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, Jesus had the same sinful nature we have. Now do not mistake what I say! I do not say that Jesus had the same fallen condition of Adam — I say that He had the same sinful nature Adam has and had from the beginning. The question is just this — when did Adam get his sinful nature — before he sinned, or only after he sinned? A sinful nature is simply a nature that sins or that is liable to

sin. If Adam would not have been created with a nature capable of sinning, how, I ask, could he ever have been tempted? How could he have sinned? The correct answer to these questions reveals to our spiritual understanding the amazing fact that the sinful nature had to precede the first sin, not follow it. You see, my beloved, an untemptable nature cannot be tempted, and an untemptable nature cannot sin! Can we not see the simple truth that it was not the act of sinning that gave Adam the sinful nature — rather, it was the sinful nature that caused him to sin!

It was therefore necessary for Christ Jesus to come in exactly the same state as the first Adam was in before he sinned, plunging the race into death. He could not have been tempted otherwise, but He was subject to all the temptations man is subject to. “He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” “He suffered, being tempted.” The suffering was not suffering surrounding the cross. In order to be a perfect sacrifice He had to be perfected before He went to the cross. It was through the years that He lived as a man, that He suffered through temptation. You and I haven’t suffered much this way, because when the temptation gets too severe, we fold! He couldn’t yield, He couldn’t sin, for if He had He could never have been our perfect sin-offering required to redeem the race. So He resisted and overcame all temptation, and this must have been excruciatingly difficult for Him to do many times, for He had all the desires and inclinations of the human, sinful nature to battle with.

I would draw your reverent attention to these significant words of inspiration: “Let this same attitude and purpose and mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus — Who, although being...one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained; but stripped Himself of all privileges and rightful dignity so as to assume the guise of a servant, in that He became like men and was born a human being. And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself still further and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! Therefore God has highly exalted Him...” (Phil. 2:5-9, Amplified).

The great truth we want to grasp here is that Christ dwelt from eternity in the form, the essence, the nature and the being of God. In that divine nature He was eternal, untemptable and incorruptible. But when He laid aside that glory, emptying Himself of it, taking upon Him the form and nature of man, He, the ETERNAL ONE, subjected Himself to the dread power of death, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. When the Christ laid aside His eternal heavenly glory, the UNTEMPTABLE ONE took upon Himself all the frailties and weaknesses of human nature so that the One who cannot be tempted was found in a nature that could be tempted and indeed He was in all points tempted like as we are. We quoted the words of the apostle James earlier wherein he says, “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.”

Was Jesus truly tempted in all points like as we are, or did He have some mystical advantage over us, some inherent quality of divinity, some unique spiritual power that enabled Him to be oblivious to the cravings and demands of the flesh? Anything, to be a temptation for us, must excite something within us that responds to the temptation. That for which we have no desire or inclination, can never tempt us. It has no seducing power over us. I used to think, as many do, that Jesus was so high and holy that He could not be affected by the base things that allure us. I was quite certain that no lewd woman ever caught His eye, that no impure thought ever entered His mind, that no unholy emotion ever stirred within His gut. Ah, He was indeed high and holy, for that is the path He chose — but He could be touched by all the infirmities, weaknesses, and feelings that touch us. While some may still find it hard to believe, because

of our superstitious religious view of Christ, He knows exactly how the person feels who is tempted to lie, cheat, curse, steal, murder, or commit adultery. There had to be the susceptibility in His flesh, the inclination to answer the temptation, but, blessed be God! HE OVERCAME IT ALL! He was tempted in every point as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN. That is the blessed truth that clusters about the person of Jesus. That is the mystery with deep and inexhaustible meaning. Therein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, so He had the indwelling of the Father and by that overcame all temptation and in the one instance of His intense desire to go His own way, He resisted even unto blood. He was the first to do this and HE ENTERED INTO IMMORTALITY AND INCORRUPTION.

There is something diabolical about temptation, something satanically bewitching and bewildering. It stirs up our senses and excites our emotions and passions. For the time being the forbidden thing seems more important than anything else in the world. It weakens our powers of judgment, both moral and spiritual. People who are otherwise very intelligent and self-controlled will in a brief season of temptation commit wholly unthinkable follies — which they often live to regret a whole lifetime afterwards. It paralyzes our will. Our many good resolutions melt like wax in the hour of temptation. All this temptation frequently does simply by being permitted to press in upon us. It is like chloroform. If it gets too close to us, it will deprive us of the very possibility of offering resistance. Temptation comes fast enough without seeking it. It visits the maiden in her innocent dreams, and the saint in his rapture of devotion. It knocks at the door of the prophet, priest, and king. It creeps behind Christ on the very mount of transfiguration. It besets us behind and before, and lays its dreadful hand upon us.

But, praise God, God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13). May God in His great mercy give us a true insight into the glory of what is offered us in this truth — that our great High Priest, whom we have in the heavenlies, is One who is able to sympathize with us in each and every circumstance, because He knows, from personal experience, exactly what we feel and face. Yes, that God might give us courage to draw nigh unto Him, He has placed upon the throne of heaven One out of our midst, of whom we can be certain that, because He Himself lived on earth as a man, He understands us perfectly, is prepared to have patience with our weakness, and give us just the help we need to overcome and enter into His glory.

May God give us eyes to see and hearts to understand the depth of the mystery of which I now write. Had the Logos, the Word of God, remained in that bright glory world above, in that spiritual dimension detached from this realm of flesh and corruptibility, He might have been ever so desirous to help us and lift us up to godhood: but, if He had never tasted death, how could He allay our fears as we tread the verge of Jordan? If He had never been tempted, how could He succor them that are tempted? If He had never wept, how could He dry our tears? If He had never suffered, hungered, wearied on the hill of difficulty, or threaded His way through the quagmires of weakness and grief, how could He have been a merciful and faithful High Priest, having compassion on the ignorant and wayward? But, thank God, our High Priest is a perfect one! He is perfectly adapted to His task, and is able to lead each and every member of God's elect out of this valley of the shadow of death over into the victory and glory of perfection and incorruptibility! Is not perfection and incorruptibility what we hunger for and plead for when we pray that sonship prayer, "Lead us not into temptation!" It is a reaching out to a realm beyond the trials, testings and provings, where the victory is complete and we stand in the stability of the mind of Christ and the majesty of the image of God. Only a son, in the knowledge of his divine destiny, can truly pray such a prayer. A spiritual babe may make the

request in an effort to be spared the distress of temptation, but the son looks beyond the testing to the triumph of maturity and fullness in God.

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, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary that the Son be PROVEN, made STRONG, to OVERCOME in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious ministry and the agony and death of the cross.

Do you suppose the devil came to Jesus there as a weird-looking figure, with little, evil-looking horns protruding from his temples, and a pointed tail? How often with our childish understanding and distorted perception have we pictured Jesus confronted by that legendary figure in the red suit, with a pitchfork in his hands! This is naught but foolishness for satan is spirit, even that spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). How many times have you been tempted by the devil? Can you count the times? How often has he spoken to you, enticing, suggesting, compelling? Have you ever seen him? Have you heard his audible voice? Then what makes you think that he came to Jesus in that way. Satan has come to all of us, we have sensed his presence, we have heard his voice, we have felt his power. But it was all in our mind, in our emotions. And does not our Lord, the Spirit of Truth, speak to us in the same way? Do men see an apparition of Jesus every time the voice of God comes to them? Do they hear audible words? Not at all! The still small voice, the inner urging, the inward knowing, the spiritual consciousness — all from a dimension beyond the natural senses. Because it all happens in our mind, heart, emotions and spirit does not mean that it is imagination or hallucination! In the depths of my spirit I am absolutely certain that there was not some hideous spirit-being materializing before the eyes of Jesus in that Judean wilderness.

Remember — Jesus was not only the Son of God, He was the Son of man. And being both He was capable not only of hearing from God, but hearing those things that be of man. So when we speak of that ancient serpent which is the devil and satan, we are not talking about 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 desire conceives and breeds sin, while sin matures and gives birth to death” (James 1:14-15, Moffat). Everyone has desires of one kind or another, and that really can be quite natural. When we see the word “lust” as it is stated in the King James Bible, Christians most often think exclusively in a negative, sensual, or sexual context. The word simply means desire, and a person’s desires are not always evil. The Greek word EPITHUMIA is translated primarily as “lust” in the King James Bible, but the same word is also translated “desire” in Luke 22:15 where our Lord Himself told His disciples how much He longed (desired, lusted) to eat the Passover with them. A related Greek word, EPITHUMEO, is often rendered “desire” and is used in several places in a positive context, as in desiring to know the things of God (Mat. 13:17). Even in the things of the spirit one must keenly discern between his own desire and the desire of the Spirit.

The record states that after fasting for forty days, Jesus hungered. When you’re hungry, what kind of desire do you have? You want to eat! In that crucial moment the Tempter came to Him. He began to feel the physiological pangs of hunger, and then the thought occurred to Him. Jesus dropped down from the high and holy thought of God, into the reasoning of the human mind. He descended in consciousness from the Son of God to the Son of man. An idea came to Him. He said, “I know who I am; I can turn these stones into bread.” And in His natural mind

the voice cunningly suggested, "If you are who you think you are, if you are indeed the Son of God, go ahead and do it! There would be nothing wrong in using your sonship power to fill your belly! It can not only bless others, you can also use it to satisfy your own needs and desires!" But Jesus quickly discerned that wily devil and knew how to nip that idea in the bud before it had time to blossom. He saw that if today He used the power to make bread, tomorrow He would use it to amass wealth, and finally the vision of God would be lost in the catering to His own flesh. He got to this seed of lust before it could conceive, before it could start making a baby of sin. Jesus answered out of the depths of His spirit, "It is written — man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4:4). He ascended to that place in spiritual consciousness where He knew that even if He had no bread He need not die — He could LIVE BY THE WORD OF GOD! And that ended the temptation.

The battle lay not with some mythical personage outside of Himself. The conflict was within. The voice was an inner voice. The suggestion was in His mind, its power in His emotions and will. God speaks to us in our mind and spirit. Satan also speaks in our mind and emotions. There is no monster without. There are three things in this vast world, and only three — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. 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.

The second temptation of Jesus was that He throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple — naturally, on the Sabbath when a great crowd would be present to be astonished by the feat. No harm would come to Him for God had promised to send His angels to care for Him. And the multitude, amazed, would follow Him! What better way to prove His sonship and launch His ministry. This second temptation too has a seductive grandeur about it. For what it means is that the Tempter is challenging the Son of God to indulge in the worldly methods of publicity, propaganda, and sensationalism. Sadly, many of the popular healing preachers and televangelists of our generation have been deceived by this temptation and have succumbed to its wiles. Jesus quite consciously passed up the great chances and the great moments for making propaganda in His life. When He had the chance to speak to great crowds, when He might have taken advantage of the wildest ovations of enthusiastic hearers, He made His way through the midst of them and went away to be alone with God or to minister to a sick person or a burdened conscience. This was precisely the time when He turned to the individual, who was completely lacking in influence and could not make Him king except in his heart and life.

Again, 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 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 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, 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! 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, and was therefore earthly, sensual, 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 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. “If Thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Accordingly the clear and lofty answer wells out from the holy soul of the Son of God: “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 on our spiritual pilgrimage into sonship to God. Once and for all, without hesitation or reservation, He renounces the whole world and its allurements small and great and He gives us that glorious reply to help us 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!” 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, the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, political action, parades, demonstrations, marches, registering voters, 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! 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 child would become a slave and the Father a tyrant.

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 government or military might 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 be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,” is what Jesus taught. Once a man is 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 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. And another “revival” is not on the agenda. We have had our last revival. There will not be another. There will be movements called revivals, but they will be soulish, although to the carnal mind they will appear spiritual.

I am not praying for another revival. 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 the opposite of a revivalist. Instead of advocating and praying for a move of God that is limited in scope and 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. He is in control of all that happens, good and evil, and works all things after the counsel of His own will. 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! 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. The sons of God today are about their Father’s business, growing in stature unto maturity, preparing for the manifestation of God that surpasses all revivals and movements of history. This is not the time to be trying to save the old, passing order. This is the hour to arise and step into the new order for God’s New Day.

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! Hallelujah! The Deliverer is coming, 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 victory lies before us!

As we consider the call of God in sonship for this 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. 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 riches of this world and their “glory” He would be forgotten today. He would have become a great king in history, recorded 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 suffered and in suffering learned obedience, 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 the 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 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. It is Self doing what the Spirit alone 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. All that is not of the Spirit is merely the good of man — soulish. It has no place or reward in the Kingdom of God.

How many of our religious exercises have been soulish! I can tell you of a truth that most of the “power” in the modern “revival meeting” is nothing at all but soul power. Have you not noticed yourself that in many church services, revival meetings and crusades a kind of atmosphere is first created psychologically to make the people feel warm and excited? A chorus is repeated again and again to “warm up” the audience. The people are feverishly urged to “get in the spirit” of the meeting. Some stirring stories are told. Special music is sung. The people are instructed to stand up, sit down, say “Amen!” and “Praise the Lord!” When the atmosphere is thoroughly heated up then the “gifts” will operate after which the preacher will stand up and preach. If he does his job skillfully he can anticipate a large “altar call.” These are methods and tactics, but they are not the power of the Holy Spirit!

Many preachers today think they have power (including some in this message of sonship and the Kingdom of God); but they are merely employing psychological soul power to influence people and manipulate congregations. Many have become self-made experts in manipulating people and crowds. The Bible Schools of Babylon’s religious systems offer a course for ministerial students called homiletics. Homiletics is the art of writing and preaching sermons. The sad truth is that the vast majority of religious activities is just that — an art. You can go to school and LEARN HOW TO DO IT! How to prepare sermons. How to speak persuasively. How to use gestures. How to tell jokes. How to preach. How to stir people’s emotions. How to win friends and influence people. This all seems so desirable, so good! But I say to you that you can learn these very same psychological techniques, apply them in the business world, and sell vacuum cleaners! The fact is, most all salesmen employ these same proven procedures of presentation, sentimentalism and pressure to sell insurance, automobiles, real estate, and thousands of other items daily! They don’t need any Holy Spirit to do it, either! All that is necessary is some good human personality mixed with some proven techniques and one can persuade people to buy almost anything! These are means and methods, but they are not the power nor work of the Holy Spirit. They are no more spiritual when used religiously than they are when employed commercially. In the Kingdom of God they are flesh! To “minister” in that way is to fall down and worship the god of this world!

The carnal methods and programs of the church systems appear so appealing to the carnal mind. The old Greek legends speak of the syrens — creatures half women, half fish — who

lived upon the rocks and could sing the most ravishing songs. So entrancing was the music that who ever heard it was irresistibly drawn to the singers. But it was woe to them; for the rocks whereon the syrens lived were strewn with the bones of dead men who had listened to their song and yielded to its fascination. That syren's song is still being sung, and every son of God on his voyage to the golden shores of the Kingdom hears it. The gaudy, swaggering, harlot religious systems which masquerade today as "the church" are the syrens of today. Who has not heard their song? Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we hear its luring, tempting strains. God grant, brethren, we may not yield — for yielding still means destruction and death — the beautiful hope of sonship dashed upon the shoals of tradition and flesh!

There is no life in rituals, ceremonies, programs, traditions, ordinances, methods, techniques, or formulas. How much better it would be if the Lord's servants would expend their energies, like Mary of old, at His feet, learning to know Him and to know His ways. How much better it would be were the time spent on our knees, humbled and low before God, that He might place within a deep distrust of the flesh. How I pray that God would truly reveal to all those apprehended of God that the one great hindrance to the life of sonship is the power of the flesh and the efforts of the self-life. Open our eyes, we pray Thee, to this snare of the adversary. May we all see how secret and how subtle is the temptation to have confidence in the flesh, how easily we are led to try and perfect in the flesh what has been begun in the Spirit. May we learn to trust Thee to work in us by Thy Holy Spirit, both to will and to do only those things which THOU ART DOING!

Today, after receiving the Father's call to sonship, after partaking of the deep and vital dealings of the Spirit of God, I have had to totally repudiate all such soulish wisdom of the carnal mind, all such fleshly tactics of Babylon's kingdom to bow low before the disciplines of the Father of sons, to travail mightily that God would bend me, break me, bind my soul power, bridle my Self, and block all that would proceed from my carnal mind. If I have learned anything of the ways of the Father I have learned this one thing: He who would be a son of God must be able to discern between what is done by his soul power and what is done by the Spirit of God; further, he must confess and utterly forsake all that pertains to his own soul power, nailing it to the cross of Christ, that ultimately his own faith, as well as that of his hearers, may be found to stand solely in the power of God and not in the wisdom of the flesh. This is the only route, my dear brother and sister, into the glorious reality of sonship to God. Only when this temptation is passed will the angels of God come and minister to you; only then will you leave your wilderness in the power of the Spirit to deliver creation. All the good works of the soulish realm can never, in a billion years, deliver the creation from its bondage to the tyranny of corruption. Only the mighty working of THE FATHER WITHIN can accomplish this. It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. May the Spirit of Truth impress these words deeply upon the minds, and write them indelibly within the hearts of all who read these lines. Amen.

"Lead us not into temptation" is not a cry to escape temptation and testing. It is the longing within every son to PASS THE TEST, to pass EVERY TEST, to pass the LAST GREAT TEST, to obtain the victory at last over every vestige of the world, the flesh and the devil. We are walking out and fulfilling our period of trials and chastisement, and are being prepared by those trials. The hope and promise of full salvation is our goal, for Father has chosen us to receive that promise. This prayer articulates the desire in the breast of every son to come at last to the full stature of Jesus Christ, to be a full overcomer, to have completely and only the mind of Christ, to stand in the power of the resurrection as the image and likeness of God. It asks to be led BEYOND TEMPTATION. It anticipates the formation of the eternal, unchangeable, untemptable nature of God as our very own reality. Almighty Father! Lead us not into

temptation, lead us beyond the temptable realm, deliver us from all evil, let every lesson be fully learned, that we may stand on mount Zion with the Father's name written in our foreheads. This is the goal and the consummation of the life of sonship. This is the power and the glory of the Kingdom of God. Amen and amen.

Chapter 22

Deliver Us From Evil

“

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Mat. 6:9,13).

Armed with the knowledge that God has ordained the pathway of temptation, testing and proving for each of His sons, the question follows: Why are we taught to pray, “Lead us not into temptation”? It seems to ask the impossible. We are sure that Jesus never bids us to offer petitions that, from their very nature, can never be fulfilled. There can be no mistake in thinking that our Father leads us into positions where our faith, hope, obedience and love may all be put to the test. But the question remains, and with full force. Ought we to pray to be kept from such circumstances and conditions? Ought we to want to avoid the great occasion that may greatly try us? Ought we not, as James desired us, to rejoice when we are called upon to pass through such experiences, and for the reason he gives, that such occasions of trial breed in us the qualities of divine steadfastness and spiritual maturity? Ought we to pray for escape from such processes that transform us in nature and character?

Yet such a prayer seems to be asking that we might escape temptation. Not the greatest saint that ever lived could be exempt from it! Nor for the Lord Jesus Himself in His earthly life was this possible! And we should not suppose that His only temptations were those He faced in solitude following the forty days in the Judean wilderness. There were others that beset Him throughout His life and ministry, and some at least — perhaps the temptation to abandon His work in the face of hostility and seeming failure — He bore in common with His disciples. “Ye are they,” He said to them near the end, “which have continued with me in my temptations.” How, then, can we ask to be spared that which is, in fact, inevitable? What do we really mean when we say, “Lead us not into temptation”?

THE EVIL WITHOUT AND WITHIN

As we see the end of the age approaching and as the rule of man with all its turmoil and distress rushes toward its conclusion, the earth is filled with violence, as in the days of Noah, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, as the apostle prophesied. Evil abounds on every hand and we often include in it not merely the wrong-doing but the whole realm of suffering, pain, misfortune, calamity, disease and death. These are one and all evils to us, and we shrink from them because they blight our joy, poison our happiness, crush our dreams, dash our hopes, thwart our plans and injure our physical and mental well-being.

Yet evil runs deeper than any of these. As Jesus was in the world, so are we in the world, and it is an evil world facing us on every side. Therefore we need a power beyond our natural selves to help us through the temptation that it may not overpower us. DELIVER US FROM EVIL! We know what was in the mind of the Son of God. To Him evil meant one thing. Not the evil of sorrows, calamities, sickness, accidents, crime, drugs, hatred, persecution, war and tragic events which the world calls evil. The problem is not Russia, Fidel Castro, Saddam Hussein, the humanists, gangs, abortionists and politicians. The evil which we are to fear is the corruption of our own hearts.

Some months ago Terry and Tykie Crisp beautifully expressed this truth in one of their excellent writings. They wrote: “While imprisoned for his radical, and accused seditious beliefs, the persecuted Germanic leader of the Great Reformation, Martin Luther, penned these powerful words to a dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church: ‘You may think that I am now powerless, for the Emperor can easily silence the cry of a poor monk like me. But, you should know that I would yet fulfill the duty which the love of Christ has placed on me. I have not the slightest fear of Hades, much less the pope and his cardinals’. Most assuredly, his daring actions attested to this fact! By this time, he was totally beyond the fear of being deceived by them; and he was utterly fearless in his proclamation of the truth! He was no longer afraid of what man could do to him, either in spirit or by deed!

“Yet, when the Lord revealed the deceptiveness of his own heart to him, he could not help but cry out in desperation of spirit, ‘I dread my own heart more than the pope and all his cardinals. For within me is the greater pope, even Self! What an eye-opening revelation! While it is true that there are ‘popes’ of many descriptions...not only in Catholicism, but also in the ranks of Protestantism, as well...denominational ‘popes’, fundamentalist ‘popes’, pentecostal ‘popes’, charismatic ‘popes’, etc., etc., all moving under the same spirit, and all trying to lord over the lives of others, to ‘feed’ their sense of power, or for the sake of personal gain...our chief concern should not be on these. There is one who dwells in our midst, who poses the greatest threat of delusion to us, and that is the old ‘pontiff’ himself, Adam! It is he who seeks to rule sovereignly in the temple, who desires to transform it into his own little ‘Vatican’! It is he who demands unquestionable submission to his dictates, who claims to be the sole infallible authority in our earth, who masquerades as the ‘vicar’ (substitute) of Christ! And you can believe that as often as we will allow him, he will exercise his ‘papal powers’ over our lives, commenting on and controlling every aspect of human existence!” — end quote.

Never a day passes but that something puts our spiritual strength and character to the test. The presence of evil in our world, the incitement to indulge the flesh, abounds on every hand. From God’s standpoint these are TESTS — but these allurements to sin appeal to weakness and evil in our own hearts, and so to us they become “temptations”. There is temptation in the seductive advances of a woman or the flattering attentions of a man. There is temptation in the companionship of foolish and worldly friends. There is temptation in the coarse and filthy speech of associates. There is temptation in worldly entertainment. There is temptation in business, in the home, at work, at play. There is temptation in the hallowed traditions, impressive ceremonies, good works and appealing programs of the religious systems. There is temptation in the means and methods of the flesh — even in our serving of God. There are temptations of pride and presumption inherent right within our walk in sonship. The higher you go in God the more sophisticated and cunning the temptations become. Where is it temptation does not lurk? Wherever man is, there temptation is. There seems to be no escape from it.

Men try to avoid infection, in case of an outbreak of disease, by staying away from the infected area. So men through the centuries tried to escape the assaults of temptation by leaving the busy, evil world and fleeing into solitude. Some buried themselves in monasteries and convents. Dr. Zodiates tells of a time when he visited a monastery on the island of Corfu in Greece. It was situated high on a hill, and below it was a beach, with a public swimming area. There was a monk there who was trying to get one of the visitors to take some of his money and buy him a pair of binoculars so that he could watch the people on the beach. It is pretty certain that his observation was to be concentrated on those of the opposite sex. He was a monk, he was isolated in a monastery, but still within him he had the desires of the flesh.

Others have fled to rural areas, to live as hermits. Some joined religious communes, and a number, even in this walk of sonship, have escaped to wilderness retreats. But it was all in vain. Temptation followed them to their retreats, and many were the fierce struggles within and without. You see, my beloved, you may leave the world and all its problems behind, but the inescapable fact remains that when you arrive secure within your ivory tower, or at your secluded wilderness paradise, it is but a short time until you discover with dismay that the most real and powerful problem of all you have brought along with you — YOURSELF! Learn this and you will understand a great mystery — the problem is not with your environment, it is not with anything outside of you; the problem is YOU! If there was no evil and if there were no evil people anywhere in the vast universe, you would still be tempted by the evil in your own heart, for “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14).

Humankind has an enemy — a wily nemesis, an adversary, described in God’s Word as desperately wicked, deceitful above all things. This enemy has adversely affected every generation of humankind from the garden of Eden to the present. Just who, or what, is this inimical deceiver? The prophet Jeremiah unmasked this enemy in these words of inspiration: “The HEART is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” and he went on to ask the searching question, “who can know it?” To the enlightened mind of this prophet, the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. How many times have you heard it? Someone perpetrates an unbelievably ghastly crime; like the ax murders of an entire family by a young lad barely in his teens, or the brutal murder of a father and a mother by a teenager a few years ago, who buried them in a shallow grave, and then repeatedly drove a tractor over the site, in an attempt to cover the crime — and yet relatives, close friends and near neighbors all said, in a state of bewilderment and shock, “But he was such a nice, quiet, decent boy!”

A motion picture some years ago portrayed the dual lives led by a judge, who had two families, some distance apart! He had “married” two different women, was actually living with each for a certain number of days each week; would then disappear, as if he had some important responsibilities in a distant town, when in actuality he was going to spend the remainder of that week with a second family! Obviously, each wife thought she knew this man thoroughly! After all, just how well do you know your own spouse? Interesting, isn’t it? We feel we truly know our husbands, wives, children; our closest and dearest friends. But according to the Word of God we don’t even know ourselves! We, perhaps above all people, are most often deceived by our own hearts! There is a deeper part to all of us — a part that only God knows!

A friend has so aptly written, and I have shared this a few times before, but am compelled to set it before you once again: “We should not find this so amazing a passage of scripture if it were not for one important thing. Jeremiah did not list an exception, saying, ‘The heart is deceitful above all things except the devil!’ He merely stated that the heart is deceitful above all things, PERIOD! Since Jeremiah spake by the Spirit of God, this could not possibly have been a slip of the tongue or something uttered before it was thought through. If the heart is deceitful above all things, it naturally follows that there is nothing more deceitful. The heart of man, then, is the MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE WORLD!

“There is no doubt whatever in my mind that Jesus had this very scripture in mind when He spoke the words recorded in Mark 7:15-23. ‘There is nothing,’ He said, ‘from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, these are they which defile the man.’ Having said that, He uttered the statement that so often followed His teachings when there was contained in them a great mystery. ‘If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.’ If we will be honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that we have fostered and

taught for generations a concept that directly contradicts the words of Jesus Christ, for we have, indeed, declared that there IS something from without a man that can enter into him and defile him. We have called him Satan (an adversary), and so he is! We have called him a murderer and a liar, and so he is! We have had much truth about him — but the one thing we have NOT known about him is his LOCATION! We have said that he was without — Jesus said that he is within! If there is nothing from without a man (and in the Greek that reads: not one thing) that entering into him can defile him, then we must conclude that satan’s activity is not without, but within.

“As we continue to read this passage, we hear Jesus say, ‘For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within and defile the man.’ Every sin category imaginable is contained in this discourse. Every thing that a man could ever think or do that is evil is said by Jesus to come — not from outside of man but from within!”

This carries us back to the curse laid upon the serpent in the beginning: “Upon your belly shall you go.” This judgment speaks of infinitely more than a literal snake slithering along upon his fleshly belly. God also told the serpent, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). Just as the “heel” speaks of infinitely more than a location on the foot, and the word “head” speaks of something greater far than a mere physical head, so, “upon your belly shall you go,” paints for the eyes of our understanding the picture of the serpent crawling in humiliation, prostration, limitation, and subjection upon the ground. The Psalmist uses a similar expression in Psalm 44:25, “For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.” These are graphic figures of speech that denote a prolonged prostration and a depth of subjection as could never be conveyed or expressed in normal terms.

The very fact that God states that the serpent was to crawl upon his belly reveals that he is now lowered into the dust-realm, into the nature of man, and confined to the earthy, restricted to action upon and expression through the MAN OF DUST. How truly this accounts for the words of the apostle in Ephesians 2:2, “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, THE SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE.” Ah, yes, the evil spirit is IN MAN! When the serpent was confined to the dust realm, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to declare to you that you will find satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe! You do not meet the devil in rocks, trees, fish, fowl, beasts, mountains, rivers, valleys, caves, nor on far-away planets, in distant galaxies, aboard flying saucers, nor in any other object or location outside of man. You don’t have to worry about the devil stealing the keys to your car and driving off with it! But you may need to be concerned about the devil in men doing so! You need not fear the devil breaking into your house with a gun and blowing your brains out, but the devil in men has done so many thousands of times! The devil will never come as a hideous spirit creature in a funny red suit to seduce or rape your wife, but the devil in some man may surely attempt it. I must tell you frankly that I have not had any problem with that devil out there someplace, but I have had a great deal of difficulty with that devil whose countenance I behold when I look in the mirror!

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

“Deliver us from evil.” This is the last petition in the Lord’s Prayer and, to my mind, the whole prayer has been one tremendous crescendo by which we are brought from realm to realm and from glory to glory to the grand finale, the mighty climax, the wondrous consummation, and glorious end of all that goes before. DELIVER US FROM EVIL! The number seven was sacred, and this, the separate, seventh petition in the Lord’s Prayer, comprehensively sums up and fulfills the rest.

It voices a universal longing. There is not one of us that has not at some time prayed for deliverance, if not with our lips, then with our hearts. It is a prayer that is older than human history. It is as old as man. It is as old as sin and suffering and tears. But though so old, it is as new as the last item you read in the daily paper. It is as new as your latest breath. It is a prayer that we can never cease to pray as long as we live in a state of limitation, growth, change and development unto perfection. Deliverance — that is what Adam and Eve were seeking when, in the consciousness of their guilt, they hurried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden. It was the longing of the Psalmist as he held up his blood-stained hands before God and cried, “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness.” It was the prayer of tortured Job as he wailed, “When shall I arise, and the night be gone?” We hear it on the lips of the great apostle Paul as he cries, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this dead body.” It is a cry that looks forward with hope and expectation to release at last, the attainment of the goal, that glorious place of life, maturity, perfection, and incorruptibility BEYOND THE REALM OF STRUGGLE, TESTING, AND CHANGE. We are putting on eternal life, immortality. “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

It will help us to understand what deliverance from evil signifies when we see what the scriptures mean when they teach us that the life of God is eternal life. The life of God is indeed eternal, but we have received that life injected into time and mortality, so that the inworking of that life through the processings of God is experienced in relation to time rather than eternity. Let me explain. Anything that is absolutely eternal is not only unending, but is also UNCHANGEABLE. Anything that changes in any way is not eternal, for in the change some characteristic is left behind and a new one acquired. In every change something ends and something else begins, at least in form. That which dwells in an eternal state knows NO CHANGE. Change is possible only in that which is limited, imperfect, or not fully developed. The Lord declares of Himself, “I am Yahweh, I CHANGE NOT” (Mal. 3:6), and the inspired apostle testifies of Him, “with Whom there is NO VARIABleness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

God is never surprised. God has not learned anything this week, not last year, nor in the past several trillion years. If God learned one thing today, it would destroy Him. He would no longer be the omniscient One who knows the end from the beginning, for known unto God are all His works from the creation of the world. God does not experiment. God does not become stronger, mightier, or increase Himself in any way. God cannot become more pure, holy, or righteous than He is. God cannot be tempted with evil. The eternal, unchangeable nature of God has no need to be tested, tried or proven for He has already been tried to the utmost and proved beyond any question. God is the omnipotent and omniscient One. He CHANGES NOT. He is not something today that He wasn’t yesterday. He will not become something tomorrow that He is not today. He eternally is all that He is without any decrease or increase or fluctuation whatsoever. Therefore He is the ETERNAL GOD! It means more than unending, it means unchangeable, and therefore unending!

But we, in our spiritual life, are STILL BEING CHANGED! “And all of us...are constantly BEING TRANSFIGURED (changed) into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and

from one degree of glory to another” (II Cor. 3:18, Amplified). Therefore the life we have received is not truly eternal yet, it is the LIFE OF THE AGES, as the Greek expresses it, God’s life injected into time and limitation to be processed and matured into that unchangeableness which He Himself is! When the process is complete we will be as holy as God is holy, perfect as God is perfect, filled with all wisdom, knowledge and power. We will be as untemptable as God is untemptable, as unchangeable as God is unchangeable — beyond any need for further correction, proving, developing or increasing in any way. Is not this what our soul hungers and thirsts after when with inexplicable longing we pray those wonderful words, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” We are asking for the final completion of all that has gone before — the establishment of His Kingdom within, His will accomplished in us as it is in heaven, the daily bread for our spiritual growth into His image, forgiveness of our missing the mark — all leading to full stature in the incorruptibility of Himself!

When all the holy sons of God come to that place where they are so strong and so splendid in their strength that nothing can move them from their heroic devotion to the Father and His purposes; when they know that neither the cares of this world, nor the deceitfulness of riches, nor gain nor loss nor love nor glory nor the lust of the eyes nor the pride of life nor the demands of the flesh nor all the kingdoms of the world can seduce them from the life of God nor shake their faith — then the prayer is answered and the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God is wonderfully nigh at hand.

THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION

One of the amazing features of human experience is man’s capacity for ascent and descent. No creature of God throughout the vastnesses of infinity is capable of ascending to such heights and descending to such depths as is man. The carnal mind has never been endowed with the ability to measure the limits of man’s upward reach, for “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). Revelation, however, has given the spiritual man a vision of the possibility of his rise into dizzy heights of splendor and glory.

Victor Hugo once wrote, “Perhaps I am the tadpole of an archangel.” While the words were written in jest, as a reflection on the humble origin of man according to the theory of evolution, the sublime truth is that they understate the case. Man is not destined to ascend to heights angelic. Man is not programmed to become either angel or archangel. The man Christ Jesus is Himself the revelation of man’s destiny and of Him it is written, “Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son? And again, when He bringeth the first begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him. But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?” (Heb. 1:4-6,13).

“Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but...we shall be like Him,” proclaims the Word of God. Divinity through sonship to God is the limit of man’s ascent. He may be like the Son of God who is God, blessed forevermore. Sons of God must learn to think of themselves as a totally different sort of people. We are indeed a peculiar people, for we have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and have become new creatures in Christ Jesus, very sons of very God. We have been lifted by Christ into a heavenly realm and all our behavior and ambitions have altered their course. So much are we become inhabitants of a new sphere that we discover that we

are no longer citizens of this present evil world. We have acquired a new citizenship in a celestial realm, both experiencing and enjoying the rights of citizens in that higher world.

When I have traveled on occasion to a foreign country, it didn't take very long to recognize that I was not a citizen of that country. Generally I was treated with genuine courtesy and warm hospitality and made to feel much at home; but I knew that I was not at home, and because I was not a citizen, I was excluded from a great many rights and privileges. It was when my plane landed again in New York or Miami, and I stepped out into the familiar scenes to tread once more my native soil that I realized the value of my citizenship and rejoiced to be at home again. On more than an occasion or two, upon returning from another land, I felt the compelling urge to prostrate myself and kiss the earth of my homeland as I have seen others do! This same joy of citizenship I have seen on the faces of others who turned their feet homeward and neared the shores of their fatherland. And this is how it ought to be.

But now we have become citizens of a new land, even a heavenly country, and we ought to think of ourselves as citizens of the heavenlies, inhabitants of the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Far too often Christians sing about heaven as a future hope or a distant reality. Such songs as, "Won't It Be Wonderful There," "When We All Get To Heaven," "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be," and "In The Sweet Bye And Bye," patently deny our new birth into the realm of God and our citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. We are no longer citizens of earth. Every man is a citizen of the land where he was born. We have been BORN FROM ABOVE and are now citizens of the heavenlies. We no longer dwell upon the earth, but have been seated in Christ at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We should not think of ourselves as belonging to this present evil world or any of its human institutions, but citizens of the celestial realm with all its supernal glories. Carnal minded men cannot understand realities so grand and glorious as these and will oppose with all their human power any thought of heaven as a present possession. Only the spiritual mind sees and acknowledges the truth as it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:9-10,12-13). It is a divine fact that we have been raised up with Christ and made to sit together with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:1,6). It is a divine certainty that we have been delivered from the power of darkness, and have been translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13).

Man's immense capacity for ascent is matched only by his vast capacity for descent. The potential for the glorious ascent to the throne of God in the highest heaven may be contrasted only with the possibility of a tragic descent into the darkest of the deepest depths. This was the mistake that the prodigal made. This is the mistake that Adam made in that long ago beginning. Alas! the earliest page of human history is stained with the record of the fall, from which mankind has never been able to deliver himself. The disintegrating power of sin has been sadly proved, through all the centuries, in destroying the noblest structures which human wisdom can erect. The earth is strewn with the wreck of broken empires. Nothing abides. Kingdoms emerge from obscurity, rise to greatness, and then crumble to decay. The glory of human legislation is perpetually turning to shame. We are constantly shocked at the swift declension in public morals, and wonder how a degenerate offspring can so soon betray the virtues which should have been their inheritance from a godly ancestry.

The specter of the prodigal brings us face to face with life's oft-repeated tragedy of descent into degeneracy. Someone has said, "No known animal possesses such a capacity for degradation as man." Those who have encountered human nature on its darker side are forced to assent to that statement. The prodigal's descent to the level of the swine pens, and Adam's descent into the horrors of sin and death and hell, throw much light upon both the process of degeneration and the penalty of degeneration. We see it in the world today where millions of men and women are brought to ruin daily; where murder and killings and deception and cruelty and greed and drugs and passion destroy everything; where nations strike out to destroy one another; where people work each other's destruction; where all is dark and torrid. You see, precious friend of mine, if a man is not rising upward into the image of God, he is sinking downward into the image of the devil. Every man is either ascending or descending. There is no standing still.

The question of perpetual motion has obsessed a great many minds through the centuries. Some men have worked themselves almost up to the point of insanity in a vain effort to discover or produce perpetual motion. Their great mistake has been that they have confined their experiments to the realm of physics. Better success will attend their efforts when they explore the realm of human nature. In the moral and spiritual realms perpetual motion not only exists but is the prevailing law. There is little else than perpetual motion. Man is moving spiritually all the time — either up or down. It is a serious matter to face such a truth as this. It means that every night after a day of ceaseless activity a man may sit in silence and contemplate the proposition that he is in some degree either better or worse than when the day began. The important thing to consider is not so much where we stand, as it is the DIRECTION WE ARE MOVING.

Someone shared the following illustration — a little chapter from human life that pathetically emphasizes the truth of which I now speak. A man who was getting prematurely old because of many years of dissipation, looked through his red-rimmed eyes to his faithful wife to whom he had often given the promise to live a better life. He was in a repentant mood and for a moment at least appreciative of the sorrows and sacrifices caused the good wife because of his drinking, carousing and running around. He said to her: "You're a clever woman, Jenny; a courageous, active, good woman. You should have married a better man than I am, dear." She looked at him a moment and thought of the far-off day of their marriage and of the man he used to be, and then answered sadly but sweetly, "I did, James." Many an unfortunate woman married a better man than she is living with today, because though the man is the same in name, he is worse than he was, worse than he ever expected to be, because sin has rapidly and persistently forced him to a sad extreme of degeneracy.

What a delightful world Eden was! No sounds of strife were there. No words of hate were spoken. There was no cry of pain nor presence of foul disease. Eden was a garden of beauty and sunshine whose air was sweet with the fragrance of love and joy and righteousness and peace in the Holy Ghost. Eden remained an enchanting domain until one thing happened — man sinned. When sin came there was born in embryo every form of human distress. And in lives and lands where sin has been given right of way, the distresses in embryo have grown into bitter realities. The cunning little serpent of Eden has become the giant fire-breathing dragon of Revelation.

We see, do we not, how in nature all things are disintegrating. The Biblical term for this is corruption. The Greek word for corruption is PATHORA meaning "to destroy by bringing into a worse state or inferior condition." We all understand this on the physical plane as year by year our bodies change — skin sagging, hair graying, bones becoming brittle, joints stiffening,

stamina decreasing, degenerative disease setting in culminating in the final catastrophe — death. The whole creation has been subjected to the bondage of corruption. “For the creature 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 children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:20-22).

“The whole creation groaneth...” The word “groaneth” signifies to sigh, to pray, to be moved with inward feeling. Creation is depicted as a slave in bondage, groaning in its captivity, crying out to be free. Today the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, and all nature is groaning under its bondage to corruption and death. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops. Can we not hear the sigh and groan of nature in the meow of the cat, in the yelp of the dog, in the shriek of the captive, in the bleat of the sheep, in the lowing of the cattle, in the roar of the lion, in the hiss of the serpent, in the cry of the vulture, in the hoot of the owl, in the wash of the sea, in the rush of the storm, in the tremor of the earthquake, and in the exclamation of all human sorrow and pain?

When we think of corrupt people, we think mostly of wicked sinners. According to our theology, corruption involves alcohol or drug abuse, adultery, fornication, or consorting with prostitutes, cheating, policemen on the take, politicians that can be bought, businessmen involved in shady deals, gambling, homosexuality, murder, rape, incest and other such wicked deeds. We narrow down corruption to mean wild passions and life-controlling lusts. Yet we have failed to understand how God looks at corruption! God’s definition goes much deeper than the passions of the flesh. The word corrupt, as I have pointed out, denotes “a change from what is solid and good to something that is putrid and decaying.” Corruption signifies something that once was whole and well — but now it isn’t, because decay and putrefaction have set in.

The very nature of man is corruptible. Paul referred to this fact when he admonished the saints at Ephesus to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22). The natural man is not getting better, as some affirm. The unregenerate man, old Adam, is corruptible. That means not only that he is dying and dead, but that he is continually being brought into a worse state and inferior condition leading to destruction. Is not this the terrible danger of the hour in which we live — enough bombs stockpiled to not only blow planet earth to smithereens but twenty more like it — and all in the hands of unpredictable, corruptible men, wicked men and seducers who are waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. You may suffer from the illusion that human nature has improved during the past fifty years since the horror of the Holocaust and the savage warfare in which fifty million men, women and children were blown into eternity, but you are mistaken. Human nature never improves, for it is a corruptible nature, growing steadily more vicious, wicked, deceitful, hateful, irresponsible and immoral.

This condition of corruptibility is so universal and unvarying that it was formalized more than a hundred years ago by scientists 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 or disordered (deteriorate).” The Second Law of Thermodynamics is diametrically opposed to the theory of evolution. It is impossible for creatures left to themselves to evolve into better, larger and stronger life-forms while at the same time all of creation is in the process of deterioration. Physical systems, whether watches or suns, eventually wear out. The trillions

of blazing infernos that make up the billions of galaxies scattered throughout the vast expanses of the unbounded heavens are one and all burning themselves out though it takes billions of years for some of them to be reduced to cinders. The earth itself is gradually slowing down in its daily revolutions and orbit around the sun. All organisms grow old and die. Everywhere there is decay, deterioration and death. Empires rise upon the ruins of earlier empires, but ere long themselves collapse, disappearing forever from the stage of history. The Law is true! ALL SYSTEMS ARE IN THE STATE OF BECOMING DEGRADED, DISORDERED AND DETERIORATED. Nothing escapes this process in the natural world. The Law is universal and all-inclusive. Everything is on a downward spiral into oblivion. That is what corruption is — the inexorable downward spiral into dissolution from which no physical thing is able to escape.

Now here is something that you possibly have never heard before. THE SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS HAS BEEN SUPERCEDED AND TRANSCENDED. This has been accomplished by a people now living upon the earth. The “corruption barrier” has been broken! The apostle Peter first spoke of it in II Peter 1:4, “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.” “Having escaped corruption” — what a word that is! What does it mean? While meditating on such things one day the words were made real to me in a way I had not hitherto seen. It seems clear to me that those who have “escaped corruption” have escaped from the inevitable DOWNWARD SPIRAL into sin, darkness and death. That does not say that such are now perfect, fully conformed into God’s image, and have glorified bodies. Not at all. It says that we have escaped the irresistible sucking power of the downward movement and now have begun to ascend instead of descend. By being made partakers of the divine nature we have experienced a REVERSAL OF DIRECTION so that now we are headed upward instead of downward. It is not so important to consider where we are standing, as it is the DIRECTION WE ARE MOVING.

Few of us look in the mirror and come to the conclusion of Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Namath. During his heyday as a player, Namath wrote a book titled I can’t wait until tomorrow . . . ‘Cause I Get Better-Looking Every Day.’ As egotistical as that title sounds, it can help us see how those who have been given power to become the sons of God should view themselves in the lifelong process of becoming like Him. In order for us to be conformed into the image of the Son, we need to keep getting better every day.

Rather than becoming worse and worse, those who have been quickened and made alive in Christ are becoming better and better! In place of sinking into ever-increasing darkness, the light of God is shining brighter and brighter. Instead of intensifying fear and deeper confusion we are blessed with increasing peace, greater faith and stronger vision. No longer are we on the path of the prodigal, sinking into the stench and want of the pig-pen, but we are returning to Father’s house, being changed from glory to glory to receive again our inheritance. Halleluyah! We are no longer on our way down — we are on our way UP! We are not getting worse, we are getting better! I tell you the truth — I am a better man today than I was five years ago, ten years ago, or forty years ago! We are not getting weaker, we are getting stronger! We are not sinking into death, we are rising up into life and immortality! If you are walking in Christ in the Spirit today, my beloved, you are a better man or woman today than you ever were before. Even if your change seems imperceptible, you are on your way up. WE HAVE ESCAPED CORRUPTION! Oh, the wonder of it!

As the end of this age descends upon us and as the darkness of the evening covers the earth as it did in the days of Noah, there is an ever-increasing conviction within that those elect of

God who are to attain the blessedness of manifested sonship will experience more and more the wonder of breaking through to the heavenly realms of light and life until that glad day finally comes when they shall be completely transformed into the likeness and power of Christ Jesus the Lord and, being filled with all the fullness of God, they will dwell no more on human planes but will walk with Christ in the glory of the resurrection, spirit, soul and body. Mortal minds are incapable of understanding or even imagining the glory that God is preparing for the age into which we are even now entering, but that purpose will find its expression in the manifestation of the sons of God.

DELIVERANCE BY OVERCOMING

“Deliver us from evil,” that must be our prayer. Do you remember that sentence in Christ’s great intercessory prayer? “I pray, not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” We are in the world, and we have no right even to wish to leave it. It is the coward who runs away, locks himself up in some monastic cell, in an effort to be holy. It is no less the coward who longs and prays for the “rapture” as his escape from this evil empire. The place for the sons of God is IN the world. That is what Jesus prayed for. He prayed that God would not take His sons out of the world. Those who cherish the thought of spending eternity in some far-off heaven somewhere have never seen the beautiful hope of sonship. But the world is full of evil, evil that presses itself, forces itself upon us at every turn. From that evil we must ask God to deliver us. We have been forgiven. We have been quickened by God’s Holy Spirit. We want now complete deliverance from sin and death. We want to be emancipated from their power. We want to be rid of their foul stains. We want to grow in righteousness, in truth, in grace, in power, in life, in victory, and to become conformed into the image of God’s Son.

Let your mind grasp this truth: The way to be delivered from evil is to completely and eternally OVERCOME EVIL. We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven. Such all-embracing majesty is far too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of UNIVERSAL DOMINION. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and universes if he is unable to rule his own spirit? “He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32). Learn this, beloved, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: You can never rule anything until first you overcome it within yourself. “To him that overcometh will I (consequentially) give power over the nations: and he shall rule them...” (Rev. 2:26-27). “To him that overcometh will I grant (consequentially) to sit with me in my throne” (Rev. 3:21).

To “overcome” means TO COME UP OVER THAT WHICH IS OVER YOU. The term implies the existence of obstacles in the pathway of the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Kingdom of God. When, within yourself, you rise up above the circumstance, the problem, so that it no longer troubles or harasses you, then you are ready to begin to control it, to no longer be the victim of circumstances, but the master of them. Come up over your own pride and inherent weaknesses. Come up over your fears and frustrations. Come up over your passions, emotions, and habits. Come up over your appetite, your temper, your lust. Come up over the myriad pressures from within and without. Come up over the world of confusion and turmoil about you. Come up over your desire to build a reputation for yourself. Come up over the lies the religious systems have fed you. You are called to be an OVER-COMER. Come over that wall! Come over into the Kingdom of God and a realm of complete victory. If we cannot come out victoriously over ourselves and over the little temptations and frustrations in our daily lives, how can the Lord trust us to reign over greater things? What kind of kings, priests and warriors would we make? How much could He depend upon us? What kind of authority would we

have? He will give us the place for which we are prepared and qualified; we must set our faces to be overcomers if we are to sit with Him upon His throne and reign with Him.

One can never become an overcomer while running from the battle. I never cease to be amazed at the number of believers who want to go through life without ever coming up over the things that are over them. Every time a hard place comes, the carnal mind drags them further and further into spiritual, emotional, and mental bondage. They look for a way out. These folk will run to the next town, the next church, the next job, the next friendship...whatever is convenient. They refuse to mature. Anything negative or challenging that crosses their will is avoided with scheme after scheme energized by the fleshly mind that is hostile toward God. Some who read these lines are running. Do you know what you will find when you stop? The thing that you have tried to escape is STILL THERE. You carried it with you. It is within you. The moment you stop running and face the issue, the wisdom of God is going to catch up with you and help you to become an overcomer. Turn to God with sincerity, and let Him help you and deal with you. The great tests and trials that we encounter are not necessarily what bring about our development as New Creatures. The little things, the everyday experiences, the nitty-gritty where the rubber meets the road, is where the real trials, the true testings, take place. This is the soil where the Kingdom of God grows in power in our lives. This is the foundation upon which the life of sonship is built.

Others, if they do not evade or run from the problem, seek “deliverance” from it! There is a vast difference between what certain Charismatics and Pentecostals call deliverance, and the Kingdom principle of overcoming. What most people call deliverance today is an easy escape out of their pressures, weaknesses and problems, not an overcoming. Overcoming means to GAIN THE VICTORY OVER THE SITUATION, whether it be within or without. In the “deliverance” practiced by many today God takes something away from you, as you would take a knife from a child. There is value in that for babes. God does take knives from children! But that sort of deliverance has nothing to do with maturity or sonship. For sons, carnality is not to be “cast out” like a demon; it is to be overcome and brought into subjection to the mind of Christ. In overcoming God’s sons are being processed so that they will know the cause and deal with the root of the trouble within themselves. The knife is not taken away — you learn how to use the knife! That is real deliverance. The dealings and processings must be thorough, until HIS IMAGE be formed in us.

Do you feel overwhelmed with weaknesses, faults, problems and bondages? Then let me show you how to discover the CHALLENGE that lies in every obstacle. I promise you that if you look for the challenge, you will find it, and then you will be able to turn the stumbling-stone in your pathway into a stepping-stone to the throne! Within every obstacle there lies a challenge — an opportunity to overcome! This is the point I want to make loud and clear. For if you want to overcome as Jesus overcame, you will need to tap into the dynamics of this principle. The only force that can cause weakness and failure is a challenge that is mistaken for a problem. But there will be no failure when we can discover the challenge in the problem, grab hold of it, and use it as a stepping-stone to higher ground. On the other hand, we can never overcome anything as long as we allow some horrendous problem to blind us to the divine challenge that is inherent in every obstacle. In our Father’s great school of sonship, in His effective training program for the future rulers of the world and the universe, He knows just exactly which obstacles to place in our pathway for our development and processing. If we try to use our faith to “move the mountain out of the way,” such action will not bring us to the place where faith can be perfected to OVERCOME the mountain — scale its heights, climb over it, and conquer it. Ah, my precious brother, sister, would you “move the mountain” by faith or would you conquer the mountain and bring it under the dominion of the Kingdom of God?

Those who set their faces to overcome all things are thus born as God's warriors and kings who shall bring the Kingdom of God to earth.

"DELIVER US FROM EVIL!" This prayer reaches far deeper than the mere request to be kept out of evil's way. It is not removal from the presence of evil, not a "rapture" to paradise on some distant planet called heaven that is sought, but a mighty change in our STATE OF BEING. It asks for increased victories of grace, for overcoming power, for transformation of nature, for the putting on of the mind of Christ, for a new spirit and a new heart, for the quickening of spiritual faculties, and conformation into the image of God. God is working out His purpose in our lives. He tests and tries us as needed to develop divine character in us. The more perfect God's spirit within us enables us to become, the fewer trials will be necessary. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," WE ARE ASKING GOD TO PERFECT US AND BRING US TO THE PLACE WHERE SUCH TRIALS ARE NOT NEEDED. "But deliver us from evil," immediately follows because deliverance from evil — that is, full and eternal victory over all evil within and without — is the way we are led out of or beyond temptation!

The whole creation is joining with us in unutterable groans and birth pangs, earnestly looking forward to its release with ours, out into full and free and eternal inheritance. EVERY CREATED THING is waiting, looking anxiously and with a kind of universal travail — waiting for what? A great manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit? More missionaries? More Bibles and gospel tracts? Greater evangelistic crusades? Another televangelist? Or are they waiting for the combined efforts of all churches to get together in an all-out assault against sin, sickness and evil? Are they travailing for another preacher, another ministry, another revival, or even another "sonship" Convention? NO, NO, A THOUSAND TIMES NO! Creation is not waiting for any of these things to take place. The whole creation, without exception, is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God which is that FULL SONSHIP, THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR BODIES (Rom. 8:21-23). It is full and complete and eternal victory over sin, sorrow, limitation, sickness and death. It is the life and glory of the Father fully revealed in a people. It is this full and final triumph over sin and death that we seek when we pray, "Deliver us from evil!" Then shall creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

The journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The Kingdom of God is within you. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from galaxy to galaxy, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious one, that you may pass your life here, careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, and seeking only the blessings, gifts and joys of Christ, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ on His throne governing the universe, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to live the life of the OVERCOMER! This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over all the vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than all heavenlies. He is teaching us to rule, to reign in life, to overcome all things and subject them to Christ. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a Kingdom of Life and Light and Love, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, nature of His nature, life of His life!

It is there that the prayer is finally and eternally answered — "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!" Amen. So be it. Halleluyah!

Chapter 23

The Kingdom, The Power, And The Glory

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father...Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Mat. 6:13).

The Lord's Prayer comes to a close in a great burst of exultation and exaltation with the words, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." In these words we proclaim that the world belongs not to earthly rulers, but to God. The world does not belong to kings, presidents, and prime ministers, or even to the people who inhabit it. It belongs to God. The world does not belong to those who have wealth and luxury and power. It belongs to God. The world does not belong to those who have become famous, those who have achieved success and received the acclaim of men. It belongs to God. The world does not belong to the strong, to the tyrants and despots who rule over men with an iron hand, nor to military men with vast armaments and powerful bombs at their command. It belongs to God. The kingdom, and the power, and the glory belong to God — forever. Empires, kingdoms, governments, and armies perish. Wealth and luxury and riches pass away. Fame, position, and the acclaim of men — none of these will last. They are all like the wind that blows for a little while and then vanishes. In the world, we look at the things that are seen, and we say these are the realities. That is the premise of all modern science. But it is the things which are not seen that are the realities. The things that are seen are temporal. The things that are not seen are eternal. Only the Lord God and that which is begotten of His Spirit endures forever.

This doxology is rooted in David's doxology in I Chronicles chapter twenty-nine. David had grown old, God had forbidden him to build the temple — this was to be Solomon's high privilege. David declared his spiritual revelation of the kingdom and the temple and asked for willing people to follow his generous example to donate of their means in preparation for the erection. We read the result: "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name."

Let us remember that in this magnificent Old Testament prayer, David had in mind the kingdom which God had promised to him. That from his line there would come One who would be the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ, and He would sit upon the throne of David and rule over this earth. As David lifted his heart to God in prayer he saw a kingdom lying in the future; he saw that kingdom as a mighty focal point, and he saw the great rays of God's revelation converging upon that focal point. In due time the Father said to His Son, "Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies my footstool." After His rejection, Christ was brought to

death through crucifixion, was buried and rose from the dead, ascended up to heaven, and took His place on the throne at the right hand of the Majesty on high. God says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" and He is bringing many sons home to glory — thus He is moving world events toward the focal point when this kingdom shall be triumphant upon the earth, when He shall reign from shore to shore, when righteousness shall cover this earth as the waters cover the sea, and righteousness and peace shall kiss each other in all realms forevermore.

Also we must remember that the kingdom does not come by human manipulation. It does not come by ecumenical movements. The World Council of Churches cannot establish this kingdom, neither can the united notions of the United Nations establish it. It does not come by any man-made program, nor by any human force, but is established in one way and that is by the catastrophic and cataclysmic manifestation of God in His sons to put down all unrighteousness and establish His kingdom here in power and glory. And that is what you express when you say, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."

Now, at the end of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus acknowledges the Source of the power every son of God needs to carry out the truth expressed in this Prayer — the One who makes possible all the revelation and the glory we have received. "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." In modern English it says, "For the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to You!" Through these words we are expressing something like this: "Father, I know you can do it, because you've got it all! Yours is the kingdom. Yours is the authority. Yours is the power. Yours is the ability. Yours is the advice, the counsel, the wisdom. Yours is the glory; the magnificence and majesty are yours! You have what it takes to bring us to sonship. You have what it takes to establish your kingdom in every heart and life. You have what it takes to change the world." When our children come to us and ask for things, they ask because they know all the resources are in our hands and we will do our best to provide their needs. This is what we acknowledge when we ascribe to our heavenly Father the kingdom, the power, and the glory!

If our whole spirit, soul and body are in tune with this chord, not only has the Lord's Prayer found its proper ending but Jesus Himself has reached His goal. Indeed, if we can conceive the end of the evolution and history of the world to be a majestic hymn of praise resounding through all the breadth and height of space, not a concert of instruments, but the joyful expression of thousands of millions of redeemed and transformed spirits, then no psalm or poem has approached this paean so nearly as these immortal words: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory!"

With these words the Prayer returns full cycle. We began with the Father; we end with the Father. Just as the Prayer opened in an attitude of reverence and honor, with the statement, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," so now it closes with the affirmation of the greatness of our God, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever!" We have stood with the disciples watching our Lord and listening to His gracious words as He taught the sons of God how to pray to the Father in heaven. We have felt the awesome wonder of His simple commanding majesty. Our hearts have burned within us as the blessed spirit of truth has taken of Christ's teaching and unfolded the expansive potential we sons have through prayer. As I muse within my spirit about the wonder of my sonship to God, there seems to be an intensified yet inexpressible cry for the Father in heaven to become more fiercely real, and all things earthly to become a fainter shadow.

THINE IS THE KINGDOM

We began with the thought of the Father, who in the secret place of His presence rules and reigns in love among glorified saints who are His willing and loyal subjects; and we prayed that His kingdom might come experientially within us upon this earth and in the whole world of mankind. Now we remind ourselves that that kingdom is already here, brought by the spirit and power of Jesus Christ into our very own lives and hearts. “Thine is the kingdom!” My prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God may enlighten the eyes of all of God’s elect to see that only God’s right is right; only God’s good is goodness; only God’s power is power; only God’s glory is glorious; only God’s law is law; only God’s love is love. All this has been perfectly revealed to us in the person of the firstborn Son of God, Jesus Christ.

The kingdom is God’s just because all things were created and made by Him and therefore belong to Him. In the light of this truth I would like to reaffirm something that the world at large, and many Christians, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD’S WORLD! Long before time began, long before a single heavenly body inhabited the vast regions of space — GOD WAS. When He told Moses to tell Pharaoh that the “I AM” had sent him, God was talking about His eternal, present-tense existence, before anything else had been “framed by the Word of God.” I cannot — try though I may — picture a time when there was nothing but God in all the vast expanse we call space...not one star, planet, solar system or galaxy. I cannot imagine what it could have been like not to have a world with its towering mountains, its vast canyons, and its majestic waterfalls thundering down from the awesome heights in indescribable power, then sweeping on to the fathomless seas. The total absence of all these things is beyond my poor, limited comprehension. But the truth remains, as stated in the first four words of scripture: “In the beginning God...”

Long before the worlds were made, long before the billows rolled across the boundless seas, long before the mountains thrust their towering, snow-capped peaks up through the clouds, long before there was one flower, or the song of any bird, or the roar of any beast, long before there was any light, or the glory of daybreak, or the beauty of the sunset...yes, long before there was anything at all...THERE WAS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. Then the blessed Word of God rolls back the curtain of antiquity and shows us God at work, creating all that is, and all that ever was. This passage of scripture goes a mighty step further and establishes for all time and eternity the ownership of this world and the heavens above: “In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth.” He made it, and it is His. No one can take it from Him. It was then that God wrote His signature of ownership — a signature that reaches from the earth to the farthest outposts of the cosmos.

There is an understanding that is developing in the consciousness of the “called out ones,” those who are going beyond the static creeds and empty traditions of the church systems and pressing on into the purposes of God, to know that ALL the earth — is the Lord’s. Not just a tree or two, not just a mountain or two, not just a nation or two, not just the church, not just those apprehended to sonship, but all the earth is the Lord’s and the very fullness thereof. We are His whether we know it or not, we are His whether we like it or not, whether we desire to serve Him, or whether we are presently in rebellion against His will. It is both heartening and assuring to read such scriptures as these: “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). God has everything in the palm of His almighty hand. He is sovereign. Jesus is King! Jesus is Lord! Job said, “In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath (spirit) of all mankind” (Job 12:10). The current population of planet earth is more than six billion people. And GOD GIVES BREATH AND LIFE TO THEM ALL AND THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF.

In the Convention for Forming a Constitution for the United States of America, in 1787, Benjamin Franklin, the oldest member, then eighty-one years of age, arose and spoke as follows: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in that struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived for a long time; and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His encouraging aid we shall proceed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel: we shall be divided by our little, practical, local interests; our prospects will be confounded: and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages. And what is worse mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by...wisdom, and leave it to chance, war or conquest. I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business..." While the government of our United States is not a perfect government by any means, and certainly is not itself the Kingdom of God, nevertheless our founding fathers did recognize HE WHOSE RIGHT IT IS TO RULE IN THE KINGDOMS OF MEN, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof!

The prophet Daniel penned these inspired words: "The Most High...liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth ACCORDING TO HIS WILL in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:34-35). God is saying to us that HE IS SOVEREIGN. Another way to express that truth is: God owns the earth and everything in it — He does what He wants to do and nobody can stop Him from doing it. In particular He is sovereign with what He does with the earth. God does not have to ask anybody's permission to do anything He wants with any part of the earth — and none can hinder or resist Him!

Now, I was raised with the mentality that somehow the devil got the whole thing and that the earth belongs to "the prince of the power of the air" who is "the god of this world." NO, IT DOESN'T! God owns it all and He gives it to whom He wills. He has the right to appoint stewards over creation based on His purpose and their faithfulness, regardless of moral, religious, or other considerations. All who have ruled over the earth and the kingdoms of men were given a temporary lease from the Lord God Almighty and when their lease expired it was given into the hands of others and none could change it or do anything about it.

If the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, then we need to somehow come to understand that God has never at any time dealt with satan on a percentage basis. God never did tell satan that he could have ninety percent and God be satisfied with ten percent. Neither did God ever say that satan could have ten percent and He, God, would settle for ninety percent. WITH GOD IT IS ALL. ALL belongs to Him. First, because He created it, and second, because He redeemed it. Just as you may temporarily leave a valuable watch at the pawn shop and later return to redeem it, so God assigned to satan a temporary and limited sphere of influence over the creation, for the outworking of His wise and wonderful plan, but HE HAS

NOT CEDED OR TRANSFERRED OWNERSHIP OR EVEN ONE INCH OF IT TO SATAN FOR A POSSESSION. The reality is, after giving the adversary a limited lease and sphere of operation, God came down in the Person of His Son and redeemed the world and everything and everyone in it. In the same way that you get your watch back from the pawn shop when you redeem it, so God gained full control of the whole world when He redeemed it. To say that there is any part of God's creation that satan now controls or that he will possess forever is a horrible blasphemy against God.

Ah, yes, even though the world has been redeemed, there are still men in open rebellion against God. But this, too, shall end. As one has written, "Not always, however, shall men be in opposition to our Creator, for after all present travail is ended, and man has run his course of self-will and rebellion, there shall be an inflow of the love of God into every heart which shall draw the creature back to his Creator, to serve Him with a whole heart, and worship before Him in complete obedience to His will. So great a transforming power is the operation of His grace in man, that we shall come to Him in love, and serve Him because we want to serve Him, freely and joyfully." Truly, the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof!

But we must turn the words we are considering upon ourselves. To say, "Thine is the kingdom," is not simply an acknowledgment of God's rule, but renunciation of our own. If the kingdom is the Lord's, then it is not ours. But how feverishly we build little kingdoms of our own — kingdoms of possession, kingdoms of power, kingdoms of accomplishment, even religious kingdoms of control over other men's lives in the name of the Lord. Then like Nebuchadnezzar of old, we look upon them with great pride and satisfaction, thinking that by our own might and for the honor of our own majesty they have been built (Dan. 4:30). And it is a wonder that the Lord does not cut us down and drive us into the fields even as He did that proud and boastful monarch. But He is longsuffering and would teach us by this Prayer to voluntarily forsake our silly thrones and yield our all to Him. Some years ago the Duke of Windsor abdicated the throne of England for the sake of the woman he loved. When we pray, "Thine is the kingdom," we must do the same. It is an act of total abdication, prompted by our overwhelming love for our heavenly Father and His great and eternal purposes.

"For Thine is the kingdom." It is the Father's kingdom. It doesn't belong to anyone else. It doesn't even belong to Jesus. Paul tells us that Jesus will turn the kingdom back over to the Father so that all things would be understood as coming from the Father who is All and in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). "Yours," says our Lord, "is not the kingdom, though you be called to sit down in it, and occupy honorable places in it; though each of you has some place in it, from the least to the greatest, some work and office assigned you by the Great King, to rule over a portion of the works of His hands. Yours is not the kingdom; nor, as so many of you come to think, when all of your efforts have failed, and you have despaired of overcoming, is it the devil's kingdom. We are indeed the channel and supply of the kingdom unto creation, but our Father is the source, so therefore we exult as obedient sons ought to exult, "Thine is the kingdom!"

THINE IS THE POWER

Now we pass on to the next phrase, "Thine is the power." This is not only a recognition of the power of God, but a confession of our own powerlessness. We must be careful even in this walk of sonship lest we suppose that we have something to contribute, that we can add something of importance to the great purpose of God. You may have heard of the fable of the elephant crossing a crude, rickety bridge with a mouse riding upon his back. When the elephant stepped on to the firm ground on the other side of the bridge the mouse crawled into the elephant's ear and exclaimed with elation, "Man, we sure made that bridge shake, didn't

we!” We are so tempted to think that it is our own power that counts. We think that our works, our dedication, our faith, our perseverance, our fasting, our prayers, our holiness, our love, our gift, our ministry, our anointing, or our influence count for something and contribute something to the power of God and His kingdom.

Indeed, we can even deceive ourselves into thinking that we are quite indispensable to God and that without us He would have little power. The Pharisees held that opinion too, but Jesus pointed out to them that God is able of the stones to raise up children to Abraham! Sometimes we are concerned about our manifestation — the manifestation of the sons of God. But I am not so concerned today about the manifestation of the sons — I am more concerned about the manifestation of GOD in His sons! May we recall the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel wherein He said, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). Although the Lord works through us, and creation waits eagerly for the manifestation of God’s sons, it is HIS POWER and NOT OURS that accomplishes the task. The words of the old hymn are still wonderfully true: “Nothing in my hand I bring, Only to the cross I cling.”

There is sometimes a disparity between a piece of machinery and the power that runs it. In such cases one has a choice — reduce the size of the machine or increase the volume of power. A brother once related, “I can remember the time when the threshing machine was run by hand in my home community. Several shifts were necessary, and the work was very strenuous because the machine had to be driven as fast as possible. Now it is being done differently. By means of modern motive power a hundred times as much is threshed each day. And the men need not work as much now as they did before. It is the power that makes the difference. It threshes, sifts and cleans the grain all in one operation, and saves the work of many men.”

I often think of this when I observe the feverish activity of the church world. We live in a world of aggressive and high-powered leadership. Men are enamored, even in the religious world, of big organization. Human leaders occupy the stage. God disappears from the common view. The churches are infected with a virus of man’s greatness, man’s personality, and of man’s great organization. Promotion is the order of the day. We sing the praises of our leaders, and men claim to be the great power of God. Their program, their ministry is going to save the nation, change the world, and bring in the kingdom! We magnify their statistical claims; exalt the masses who throng to their crusades, advertise the great attendance, the membership, the size of their buildings, the magnitude of their budgets, the coverage of their television shows, the effectiveness of their outreaches. Yet, when one walks the streets of our great cities there is little indication that these ministries even exist! Crime continues to increase, public morals are in the gutter, the divorce rate escalates, humanity is drowning in a flood of drugs, violence, sex and godlessness. While we have unprecedented religious activity we also have sin abounding and evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse.

That the machinery has become too heavy is due to the fact that men are operating it with human labor, fleshly strength and carnal means instead of running it with power from above. They are filled with doctrine and program, tradition and church activity, ceremonies, rituals, entertainment, soulful excitement, sensational hype, and lying signs and wonders, and though they profess it to be Christ’s work, they would not know Christ if they met Him on the street. Oh, let us awake and turn from such vanities and come to know HIM in the power of His resurrection! The powers of heaven are at our disposal for they are our Father’s powers and we are the sons of His love. And God does have a plan for the salvation and deliverance of all humanity!

The scriptures clearly reveal how ownership is one of the central thoughts in both creation and redemption, the link that binds them together. Two things are always inherent in ownership — purpose and responsibility. Do you not know that if a person makes or buys anything he surely has some PURPOSE in mind for it? And is it not also true that when a person makes or buys something he has a RESPONSIBILITY to it? The man who purchases a good hunting dog has a definite purpose in owning the dog, and if he is not a hunter he will not buy it. With ownership of the dog there comes the responsibility for the dog, to feed and care for it and treat it humanely. You have, I suppose, sometime bought something? As you have paid your money for it and it was delivered to you did you not have a plan for it? And are you not now responsible for it?

Take a simple illustration. More than thirty years ago Lorain and I bought a house in Sarasota, Florida. It was a lovely little two bedroom white frame house, entirely adequate for that time. Some years later the Lord led us to Mississippi to live and minister among a group of saints, and we were there for almost two years. During that time we rented out our house in Florida. The original tenants left, and we rented the house to a man and his wife and grown son, none of whom we had previously known. You wouldn't believe what those people did to that house within the space of a few months! If you have ever had rental property, you would believe it! Evidently, they didn't sweep those beautiful hard wood floors even once, the dirt was ground so deeply into the wood until the entire finish was ruined. Windows were broken, stuffed with plastic or rags. Water had run over the kitchen and bathroom floors, loosening the tile. The furniture was demolished, sofas and chairs propped up on bricks with great gaping holes staring insultingly at us. On and on the disaster went. The place was completely "trashed". Needless to say, because we were the owners, it didn't take us long to swing into action! The tenants were promptly given notice and evicted. Then followed the long, tedious process of RESTORATION. Ah, BECAUSE WE OWNED THE HOUSE we had PURPOSE for it and RESPONSIBILITY to it. Because of that purpose and responsibility we were willing to spend the money that had to be spent, expend the energy involved in long days and weeks of hard work until ALL WAS RESTORED to its original beauty and usefulness.

We are not in this life because we willed to come into existence. The whole human race is not here because of its own will. GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for our existence, for it was He who issued the grand fiat: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." God is responsible for our existence here in the flesh, lowered into the realm of vanity, sin and corruption. The whole human race is God's responsibility because He is both Creator and Owner. We are here because of our Father's plans, desires, purposes and will, and God is a God of principle. Having begun a work, He will finish it and not throw it aside because it was marred by sin and death. This, too, was part of His plan.

While men are busy blaming others for the world's problems, and the devil for their own, God Himself as Owner of all takes His great responsibility for all and therein lies the foundation of the whole scheme of creation and redemption. Romans 11:36 says from the Diaglott, "Because out of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things. To HIM be the glory for the ages. Amen." The Amplified Bible beautifully renders this, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him. To Him be glory forever! Amen." To say the least, it will give us great peace of mind and heart if we can see and understand that all things came out of God and were created by Him. And it will help us greatly if we can understand that God as Creator and Owner takes responsibility for the world today. GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for every human being that has ever lived, is living, or ever will live. GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for every nation, every government, every empire that

has risen and fallen, and every condition and circumstance of all mankind today and in every time and place since the foundation of the world. And because He is responsible and has great purpose for His creation HE WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

I believe that God now loves all lost men and women. There are lost men in jails and prisons and mental hospitals. They are in saloons and brothels and in sickness and death and judgment and hell, and God loves them all with an undying love. 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 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!" is the word of the Lord. 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 chapter eight Paul, moved by inspiration, states that the whole creation groans and waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 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 children of God" (Rom. 8:18-20). I see it. I see something stirring in the atmosphere. I see a people being taught of God, purged, purified in the refining fires, processed, perfected, taking on the mind of Christ, transformed again into the image of God, filled with divine love, grace, wisdom and power, taking their rightful places — sons and kings and priests unto the Father.

These have received a vision of their destiny in God, of what they are being prepared to do for creation. They are here by divine appointment. They have been born for this hour. They have been called and chosen and are being made faithful. They have been drawn out of and separated from all of the religious realms that they might learn the higher ways of the Kingdom of God. The message of the hope of sonship and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is going forth in power in this day and circling the globe as thousands of the Lord's people are heeding the call to this unique walk in the Spirit. God has removed 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 ordained for His firstfruits company. You'll have to pardon me, for I may seem slightly crazy, but lately I've wanted to rush out into creation and run up to a tree or a river or the brute creation or the sick and suffering or the vilest of sinners or into the most impossible situation and say, "Hang on — the manifestation of the sons of God is at hand! It's even now beginning in the earth!" There is such an urgency in my spirit. Yet I must wait, even as creation waits, for the Father's hour of manifestation, for "Thine is the power."

I once heard of the freshmen of a certain university, who, at its three hundredth anniversary, carried a banner with the inscription, "This university has waited three hundred years for us." I do not hesitate to tell you that the universe has waited long millenniums for us — the manifested sons of God! This manifestation is so stupendous, so glorious, so powerful, so earth transforming, that creation can afford to wait for it, yea, is willing to wait for it, and with glad anticipation and joyful expectation does wait for it. "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).

I notice that America was discovered at the time when Christianity was waking up from the long dream, the terrible night, of the ten centuries of the Dark Ages. The church of God had gone down into deep darkness and degradation, until Truth was almost lost and liberty destroyed. I notice that the great power of the Christ reawakening the conscience of the sleeping church began to move amongst the nations at the time when Europe, Asia, and Africa became aware of the existence of the American Continent. Now there are no more continents on this planet to discover, for all the earth is known, and scarcely upon this round globe is there an island that has not been placed upon the map. The whole world now knows the extent, the height, and breadth of the land of all the area of this earth. Its highest mountains have been measured; its deepest depths have been explored, and the whole world is known. Now that we know it, the one great thought is, WHO SHALL POSSESS IT?

“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, 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. 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 Moscow, and in Beijing, and in the whole wide world for God, for “it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.” I am not willing to cede even one thing or one person to the devil, as some wickedly do, for “the earth is the Lord’s; the world, and they that dwell therein.” The question follows: Can God bring this to pass? The answer rings loud and clear: “Thine is the power!”

Earth’s power is very helpless power. Ah, yes, Jesus has real power — “power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life” (Jn. 17:2). Other men spoke and their words died with their echo: Jesus spoke and His words shook the world. Other men died martyr deaths and were not long remembered; He died, and His cross now stands against every skyline. He is the true King, the MAN WHO CAN. He has power — like dawn’s banners, like the unseen constraint of the tides, like the fragrance of rare perfume, like great music, like buried seed, like that spirit in history which litters time with the debris of proud empires and wills that the “meek shall inherit the earth.”

Because all the earth is His, and because Jesus is His King, God is raising up the body of the Christ, a Royal, Kingly Priesthood, sons of the God of heaven 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 and break the power of selfhood and rebellion and sin and death and the devil that men may be quickened to God. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. God’s Royal Priesthood shall reveal to all realms the awesome POWER OF GOD’S LOVE AND GOODNESS, until all men bow low before Him and with worshipful wonder and joy proclaim, “Thine is the power!”

Chapter 24

The Kingdom, The Power, And The Glory

(continued)

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father...Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Mat. 6:13).

This Prayer our Lord taught us to pray has taken us on a long journey and now we have come at length to the end. There is so much more that might have been said, and that perhaps ought to have been said. And so much more still that I do not know enough to say.

THINE IS THE GLORY

This brings us to the next phrase, “Thine is the glory.” In praying these words we not only proclaim God’s glory, but disdain any for ourselves. A brother has said that the three things which most easily destroy the ministry of preachers are the gold, the girls, and the glory. This final test is the hardest. It is because we covet the glory that there is so much petty jealousy and strife among brethren. We are so concerned that our church, our talent, our opinion, our counsel, our position, our gift, or our ministry gets the praise and the glory. We want to get the credit. And the credit IS the glory! It is said that the phrase that proved the turning point in the life of Dwight L. Moody was this: “The world has yet to see what God can do with a man who is fully yielded to Him.” But a more probing version of that statement is this: “The world has yet to see what God can do with a man who will not touch the glory.” Of course, neither statement is entirely true, because the world has seen both in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ! But service given for praise of men is destined to find a place with the wood, hay, and stubble, which will be consumed in the blazing fire of the final day of testing.

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Gal. 1:3-5). TO HIM be all the glory! Stop trying to snatch God’s glory. It is His. You cannot add to it, you cannot diminish from it. What you can do is proclaim it and demonstrate it. But you cannot add to God’s glory. There were certain teachers who came into the church at Galatia and said, “You must do certain things to enter into life. You must be circumcised and keep the law. You must perform certain works.” Today they would say that you must be baptized a certain way, baptized in the name of Jesus, baptized for the circumcision of the heart, use the sacred name of God (Yahweh), believe this doctrine, keep that day, or worship in such and such a way in order to enter into life. But if you are going to do certain things to get life, then you are going to get the glory. If I “earn” my way into the Kingdom, if I climb myself unto a higher plateau in God, if I’m doing it through human effort, or through external means, then I’m getting the glory.

I can say, "I paid the price, I did what was necessary, I qualified for this attainment in God." But Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith, Jesus is the Captain of our salvation, Jesus loved us and purchased us with His own blood, Jesus redeemed us from this present evil world, He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, Jesus is our forerunner, having entered into that which lies within the veil, opening up the way for us to follow. God the Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, He called us and apprehended us, He predestinated us unto the adoption of sons and in due time sent forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts whereby we cry, "Abba, Father" — and HE gets ALL the glory!

It disturbs me when people speak of Christian musicians as "entertainers," "performers," or of their ministry as a "show". The spirit of God is opposed to the emphasis — it is the terminology of the world, the spirit of Babylon, not the Kingdom of God. If I get up in the midst of the Lord's people to minister the Word of God, if I have any God-given talents or gifts, or revelation or power, they are sovereignly bestowed, and not by any merit or ability of the flesh. When I minister the life of God I would be truly embarrassed if my ministry were referred to as a "performance" or a "show". And it makes me uncomfortable when people applaud. I understand that they may think they are applauding the Christ in me, or the value of the word ministered, but it smacks of the spirit of the world by which men are applauded for their own talents and professionalism.

We must be very certain that all the glory goes to Him — and that's NOT false humility. We are merely servants of God. We are bondslaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. In like manner, those called to a ministry in music may have the best voices and musical abilities in the world, but if their emphasis is on "we are performers" or on "entertainment" then they have missed the point that their music is a ministry. God does not "put on a show." God is not a showman. God is not an entertainer. God is not an actor. God does not "perform" for either the saints or the world. God is in the business of bringing the Kingdom of God to pass in the earth. A person or a group is either ministering by the Holy Spirit as a member of the body of Christ, or performing and entertaining as an instrument of the world. Matters not whether they are singing, playing music, preaching, prophesying or healing — the principle is the same. When you go to a worldly concert it is appropriate after each song to applaud the vocalist or the instrumentalist, giving glory to his talent and the discipline exerted to perfect it. He responds to this praise by bowing and saying, "Thank you very much." He thereby recognizes and receives the glory given him. His goal is money — your goal is enjoyment, entertainment.

That is the way and spirit of the world. But in the Kingdom of God all talent is recognized as the free and sovereign gift of God. It is developed and perfected through the dealing of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. Those who sing, preach, prophesy, or heal for the glory of God are but servants of the Most High God. They neither desire nor accept, even indirectly, the glory that belongs to the Lord. Those who are blessed and quickened by such ministry give praise and worship to God. "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen!" If you want to encourage the minister and say, "Oh, I saw new truths and received life through the ministry God has given you," then that's wonderful. If you say, "My heart was touched as I worshipped God in the music," then the Lord is praised. But when the applause is in recognition of the good job the man did — it is religious humanism. We have a secular humanism where God is ignored or denied and everything revolves around man — but now the same is being done in religious Babylon that is called the church. Why are we praising men when the glory should go to God?

I suppose there are those times when a ministry is so electrifying, when it's so stirring, when it's so moving, when it's so divinely appointed, when it's from such a high realm in the spirit, when it's so quickening and so overwhelming that spontaneously we applaud as an expression of the emotion that is swelling up in our hearts, and I suppose there are those legitimate times for that to occur — but in the context of today's system of things they are very rare. What we are seeing today, more and more, is the applause of the human instrument, which is going to the human instrument rather than to our Father in the heavens to whom belongs ALL GLORY AND PRAISE.

Many religious people cannot receive the things I now say, but, because it is the truth it will strike a chord within the hearts of all of God's elect. To pray, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory," demands full humility and obedience. And right here is where the kingdom laws come into operation. When we abdicate the throne of our own lives and our own strength and our own ambitions, plans, and ways, the Lord makes us kings and priests unto God. When we confess that all the power is His, He makes us strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. When we refuse to touch the glory, He glorifies us with the glory He had with the Father before the world was. And this is an unfolding glory, an ever-intensifying glory that shall shine as the stars and the brightness of the firmament forever.

We are so made that we cannot help hungering and thirsting after the glory. We are not as the beasts of the field, which have only physical appetites to satisfy. We are the sons of God, the offspring of the Most High, who cannot live on bread alone. The trouble with us is that we do not recognize glory when we see it. What we commonly take to be glory is not glory but only glitter. We spend our lives in pursuit of money and prestige. We are fascinated by pomp and circumstance. We are enticed by power. The greatest curse upon any man is his exaltation of Self — Self-willing, Self-seeking, Self-glorifying. What is it that brings so much tyranny, strife, intimidation, bigotry, misunderstanding and suffering in the world? Is it not because men and groups of men are the sole suns in their own little solar systems? The universe to them is like a house of mirrors, which on every side reflects nothing but their own persons. They fill the air with the clamor of their own egotism, the fury of their own desires, the obstinacy of their own opinions. We see it in the home, we see it in business, we see it in relationships and institutions, and most often we see it in the church! Men flaunt their personalities, their self-serving programs and grandiose schemes to convert the world, pawning themselves off to the Lord's people as the very power of God, filching vast sums of money out of the purses of the poor and the widows, while being strangers to the voice of the Holy Spirit and crassly ignorant of the ways of the heavenly Father.

I am frankly appalled at the shallowness, gullibility, and lack of spiritual discernment among the people of God, for they give heed continually to the voice of such strangers, but the voice of the Good Shepherd they do not know. Why are the children of God so ready to blindly accept every subtle teaching and plausible program that is thrust at them, without earnestly seeking the help of the blessed Spirit WHO ALONE HAS BEEN SENT TO GUIDE US INTO ALL TRUTH. Any preacher today who can come up with some fantastic notion can corral God's people in support of his delusions, and the more fantastic the notion the more people run after it. Some time ago a dear sister stopped to visit with us for a few hours, and during the course of our conversation she asked a momentous question. She wanted to know what, in my opinion, is the greatest danger present among God's people in this hour. I could only reply that the greatest danger I perceive today is that of God's saints being BROUGHT INTO BONDAGE TO MEN. And I will tell you frankly that there are a thousand and one different schemes and distortions of the Word of God continually being concocted by conniving and power-hungry

preachers either to bring the saints into bondage to men, or to fleece them of their hard earned money.

All such are the servants of Self, not the ministers of Christ. Sons of God preach not themselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord. Those who are quick to tell you that they have the greatest revelation or the only message for this hour, and unless you join yourself to them and their group and submit to their ministry and their order, you can't make it into sonship, immortality, and the Kingdom of God, are liars and deceivers, ego-maniacs who will take you on a disastrous trip to nowhere.

I speak the truth when I say it is high time for the people of God to begin to KNOW THE LORD FOR THEMSELVES. Let God's people come out from among them and begin to seek God, and walk with God, and hear His voice, and know God, and GOD HIMSELF will be YOUR FATHER and you will sup with HIM and He with you. Let us ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and before we realize it we will find ourselves digging deep in the storehouse of God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge and sitting with Him at His banqueting table. He will spread a table before us in the presence of our enemies, He will lead us through green pastures; He will reveal to us fountains of living water flowing unceasingly FROM WITHIN; He will cause us to rest beside cool, still streams; And HE, the Great Shepherd of the sheep and Bishop of our souls will abide with us and our cup will overflow with the unspeakable riches of His grace and the wonder of His glorious and eternal reality. Now, until Self be cast out of us, and the Father of glory be allowed to take possession of our lives, we give the glory to something or someone other than Him. It is this that Christ would teach us in the Lord's Prayer — the vision of all things in God, and by God, and for God. "Thine is the glory!" That is the spirit of sonship.

We are commissioned to preach the Kingdom, and commanded to do the works of the Kingdom; but we must always be careful to understand and acknowledge that the Kingdom is His, the power is His, and the glory is His. If we get a touch of the Kingdom in revelation, in preaching it, or in demonstrating its power, it is valueless unless we recognize that we are recipients of this Kingdom by grace, and not the Source; we are powerless apart from Him and will lose even what we have if we fail to glorify Him in it.

And now we come to the glory. What is glory? I am sure most of us knew what we were talking about when we said the kingdom and the power — but what is the glory? What is its shape, size, and color? Perhaps you feel that you have never seen it, you feel that it is spiritual, and therefore cannot be seen. Not so, my friend, it can be seen. How my heart longs to see the glory! The literal meaning of the Hebrew word for glory is weight or substance; worth, dignity and honor; splendor and majesty. In the eyes of men this literal meaning frequently lent itself to the idea that a person possessing glory was laden (heavy) with the substance and honor of this world. Jacob's flock was his "glory" (Gen. 31:1). The Assyrians' power was their "glory" (Isa. 8:7). Joseph's high position was his "glory" (Gen. 45:13). The Israelites thought that they were living to the glory of God by acquiring a weight of material wealth, power and position. Today, a number of "prosperity preachers" have the very same idea! But the prophet Jeremiah told God's people that they must not consider such human values their glory. Rather, they were to glory in the fact that they knew the Lord, whose glory was His kindness, justice, and righteousness.

When the word was applied to God, it was meant to bring out the weightiness of God's attributes. All Bible dictionaries agree that "glory" is "the exhibition and display of the excellence of the subject to which it is ascribed." Thus, in respect to God, it is the visible

manifestation of His attributes — His nature, character, power, love, justice, righteousness, etc. (Jer. 9:24). The glory of God is the visible manifestation of WHAT GOD IS. The glory of God is God REVEALED, God PUT ON DISPLAY, all that God is brought into demonstration on the visible plane so men can see what God is like. That is what men saw when they saw the glory of God. God is love, God is light, God is truth, God is peace, God is power, God is life, God is righteousness. When God brings what He is into expression and manifestation so we can either see or perceive it, we then “behold HIS GLORY.” It was with this same sense of glory that Jesus spoke about how He would bring glory to the Father. Jesus would not acquire worldly wealth, fame, power or position. On the contrary, His life would be “heavy” with the glorious, heavenly qualities of love, mercy, goodness, purity, compassion, righteousness, wisdom and power.

And now Christ has given His glory to His “many brethren” — the sons of God. “And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them” (Jn. 17:22). What a treasure! What riches! What heavenly splendor! God has called us to His kingdom and glory (Col. 2:12). We have been called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thes. 2:14). The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings that He might bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18). We are even now partakers of the glory that shall be revealed (I Pet. 5:1). Christ shall come to be glorified in His saints (II Thes. 1:10). We are called unto glory and virtue (II Pet. 1:3).

As I mentioned earlier, God’s great glory is His wonderful nature and character, the substance of His being. Some people foolishly talk about dying and “going to glory” as if glory were a place, an astral location on some other planet. But you don’t “go” to glory — the Bible says nothing about such a crude notion. Glory is revealed. Glory comes to us. Glory is given to us. Glory shall be revealed in us. When the glory of the Lord is fully revealed “all flesh shall see it together.” That is the scriptural testimony about glory. If you don’t apprehend and experience God’s glory here on earth, forget about “going” somewhere to find it!

Now this word “glory” as used in the Old Testament speaks of a VISIBLE manifestation of God. Moses said to God on mount Sinai, “Lord, I want to see your face,” and God said, “I’ll let you see my glory.” Sounds good, doesn’t it? It is good. In fact, the Bible says that when Moses implored God to show Him His glory, God said, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee” (Ex. 33:19). So you could literally say that the glory of God is His goodness. Actually, God’s goodness is His greatest glory. Let’s read the whole story. “Now therefore I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech Thee, SHOW ME THY GLORY. And God said, I will make ALL MY GOODNESS pass before thee, and I will proclaim the NAME (nature) of the Lord before thee; and will be GRACIOUS to whom I will be gracious, and will SHOW MERCY on whom I will show mercy” (Ex. 33:13,17-19). Moses requested to see God’s glory. Moses also said, “Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee.” In other words, “Show me your nature, what you are really like, unveil your real self to me!” Moses yearned to behold God’s greatest glory, the revelation and manifestation of God’s innermost being, His mind and heart. In response to this urgent request the Lord replied, “I will make ALL MY GOODNESS pass before thee, and I will proclaim the NAME (nature) of the Lord before thee!” The glory that passed before Moses was the revelation of the nature of God...and that nature is described as ALL GOODNESS. Infinite goodness is the very essence of God’s character.

David beheld this truth in spirit and cried out, "For the Lord is good; His mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. 100:5). Who can deny that what Moses really saw was CHRIST. Jesus is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3). On earth Jesus was the embodiment of God's goodness. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:17). Jesus never enforced the demands or penalty of the law. To the woman frightened and trembling with shame He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more!" To another bound by fetters of sin and sickness He proclaimed, "Thy sins be forgiven thee: take up thy bed and walk!" When accused by the bigots of religion of consorting with sinners, He said, "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved!" "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." To the thief condemned to the death of the cross He promised, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The New Testament writer witnessed of Him, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power: who went about doing GOOD (there's God's goodness again!), and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Lk. 4:18-19). Little wonder, then, that John cried out, "And we BEHELD HIS GLORY, the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER, FULL OF GRACE and truth" (Jn. 1:14). FULL OF GRACE! That is God's greatest glory! "I will be GRACIOUS...I will SHOW MERCY!" "ALL my GOODNESS!" Yes, precious friend of mine, from the cleft of the rock at mount Sinai Moses saw the Christ of God!

Now when you think of God's goodness, set aside that kind of "niceness" our culture has so often portrayed as goodness. God's goodness is powerful. So powerful that the tiniest portion of it could wipe out all the sin that ever existed in a millisecond. That's why in Old Testament times when the glory manifested, God covered it with a cloud. He had to protect mankind from it to keep it from obliterating them. You can see an example of that in Exodus 24, when God appeared to Israel at mount Sinai. "And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day God called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Ex. 24:16-17).

Make a mental note here of the fact that the glory of God appeared as "a devouring fire." As we search the scriptures, you're going to see that fire again and again. The prophet Habakkuk, for instance, says: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power" (Hab. 3:3-4). According to various Bible helps the word horns in this passage refers to bright beams. One translation calls them lightning-like shafts of splendor. The Bible tells us that in these fiery, lightning-like shafts lies the hiding place of God's power. That alone is enough to let us know that experiencing the glory is more than having a warm, "spiritual" feeling. It's an encounter with the very nature, being and power of God because His nature, being, and power is His glory! The prophet Ezekiel gives a strikingly similar picture of God's glory. He says, "Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of (God's) loins even downward, fire; and from His loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber" (Ezk. 8:2).

It seems wonderfully significant to me that in the closing pages of the book of Revelation, when the Spirit of God reveals the final and ultimate revelation of God to creation through the glorious City of God, the very last message proclaimed is this: "And the Spirit and the bride

say, COME. And let him that heareth say, COME. And let him that is athirst COME. And whosoever will, LET HIM TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY” (Rev. 22:17). Remember, before these words were spoken there was a great white throne and scenes of judgment. Multitudes were cast into the lake of fire. Our God is a consuming fire. The fire of God is God’s glory. Only the Holy Spirit can make this real to us, but a person under deep conviction is tormented. Tormented with what? He is tormented with the fire of God’s holy presence, the fire of His penetrating, burning word. He has no peace or rest, day or night. His conscience troubles him continually. When you and I were under deep conviction for our sins and past life we were tormented by the Holy Spirit, the presence of God. And we had no rest day or night. I have seen men literally run out of meetings to escape the convicting presence of God. When we were finally broken by the Holy Spirit’s dealing and repented and came to Jesus for mercy, we cried and shed many bitter tears of remorse and regret.

The smoke of their torment rises day and night. The fiery dealings of God are upon the proud, the rebellious, the blasphemers. Is judgment the last word? Is the lake of fire the concluding word? Is the torment of the damned the final word? NO! Is there no escape? Ah, “Whosoever will, LET HIM COME AND TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY!” That, my beloved, is the LAST MESSAGE! That is the FINAL WORD. And for how long shall this cry continue? For as long as the torment lasts. “And they shall be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages” (Rev. 20:10). “And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it (entrance, access) SHALL NOT BE SHUT AT ALL BY DAY: for there shall be no night there” (Rev. 21:24-25). Those gates shall always be open. Ah, the “day of grace” never ends! Should grace end it would mean the destruction of God Himself, for He is ALL GOODNESS. God’s grace and goodness and glory shall flow...and flow...and flow...until the last poor hungry and thirsty soul has marched out of the lake of fire and come through the portals of the City to partake of the GREATEST GLORY OF GOD — HIS GOODNESS, HIS CHRIST, HIMSELF!

Moses saw God’s glory on another occasion, for we read that when the tabernacle was completed and set in order, Moses and Aaron moved back with all the hosts of Israel and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and the Shekinah presence of God was with them — the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. It was a physical, visible manifestation of God. You will recall when Solomon built the temple and the glory was transferred from the tabernacle to the temple, that somewhere in their long, dreary, sinful history, the glory departed. Ezekiel saw the vision — it lifted up from the temple, abode a moment to see if the people would return back to God. They did not and it withdrew out over the city, pausing briefly over the city walls to see if the people might turn to God, but they would not. Then it went on out to the mount of Olives, and then was caught back into heaven. That was the last seen of the Shekinah glory.

Four hundred years of silence reigned and was one day broken when shepherds on a hillside had a manifestation of the glory of God as the angel said, “Glory to God in the highest.” And John said, “The Word was made flesh” — pitched His tent among us — and “we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Now we are at the portal of the Holy of holies, round which we have been moving from all directions. “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory” — that is Christ. These are His characteristics. It is a description of Him, not of His outward, physical appearance but of His inner being. “Thine is the kingdom.” That is what filled His whole spirit, making Him so royal and Godlike. He had no thoughts that were not conceived in accordance with this kingdom. He said no word that did not reflect the radiance of the kingdom of God. “Thine is the power.” His whole will was fortified by this power. It bore Him up, urged Him on, strengthened and uplifted Him. Arrayed with power from on high He goes His way through life, healing, preaching, battling, suffering,

victorious. “And thine is the glory.” All His emotions were charged with it. It is His very nature. The highest conceivable glory lived with all possible purity in a human life, is Jesus the Christ.

All who share in the glory of Jesus’ humiliation will also share the glory the Father gave to Him before the foundation of the world. Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse and foretaste of this glory on the mount of Transfiguration. Commenting years later on that unforgettable event, Peter writes: “We were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount” (II Pet. 1:16-18). No one can see — really see — the glory of the living Christ and remain the same person. To see His glory is to be changed by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit into His likeness, even as the apostle Paul affirms, “Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another” (II Cor. 3:18). As we are identified with Jesus in the walk of sonship, we too experience the glory of oneness with the Father as He is one with the Father. We also are taken in spirit to where He is and behold the glory He had with the Father before the world was. We will also be fully partakers of that glory, which shall be revealed in us, unveiled before all creation in the manifested sons of God. The hour of unveiling is wonderfully nigh at hand, praise His glorious name!

“For even the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God’s sons to be made known — waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship. For...the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance into the glorious freedom of God’s children” (Rom. 8:19,21). When Paul by inspiration penned these blessed words of hope he did not have in mind a manifestation of God’s sons after the order of which Jesus manifested while on earth. Jesus glorified the Father on the earth plane, and so do we; but this is not the glory yet to be revealed that we anticipate, neither is it the hope for which the whole creation is in travail. The creation is not groaning for another healing, for another miracle, for another sign or wonder. The creation is not expectantly awaiting another revival, or another crusade, or another healing campaign, or another seminar, or more gifts of the Spirit, or greater apostles and prophets, or even 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 galore, and none of them has ever brought 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, but a full and complete and eternal deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of corruption in spirit, soul, and body!

FOREVER

This Prayer ends by filling all time and creation with the conscious awareness of God’s being, power and love. What we ascribe to Him is not for this year, nor for the next century, nor for the next millennium, but for all the ages of time. God is above and beyond time and ages — His greatness is unsearchable, of His existence there is no end, His power is unlimited, His love unfathomable, His grace immeasurable; amid all that comes and goes, waxes and wanes, He is the One who abides “without shadow of turning.”

“Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.” “Forever” is from the Greek word AION. In late years there has been much controversy over the meaning of this little

Greek word. Certain deceivers, to further their unscrupulous ends and uphold their blasphemous and Romanish doctrine of eternal damnation, have maintained, contrary to and in spite of all revealed facts, that it means eternal. And our King James Version renders it, together with the adjective AIONIOS, as “age, course, eternal, for ever, evermore, for ever and ever, everlasting, world, beginning of the world, world began, world without end.” What a horrible mixture!

But we need not remain in darkness, for fortunately the Word of God tells us precisely what this Greek word means. Too few have taken time or energy to consider the real meaning of AION. It is the word from which we get our English word eon. Eon, according to Webster, means “a long period of TIME.” Many attempts have been made to prove that eons are eternal. But this is more than a grave error, it is the height of stupidity, for the divine Author of the blessed Bible has not Himself used them in that way. AION nowhere means eternal! Its simple meaning is an age. In its plural form it means ages. This fact can be unquestionably and incontrovertibly demonstrated from numerous New Testament passages. A glance at any Greek concordance proves that the noun AION, or AGE, is not the synonym of eternity. No one who is sane and reasonable can maintain otherwise. To do so is to contradict all known facts and to contradict God’s own Word. That is precisely what all the “eternal damnation” people are guilty of. God be merciful to them!

Now, if AION means ETERNAL, consider how ridiculous the Word of God would be! The Holy Spirit would be found saying, “the mystery which has been hid from eternities;” “the mystery of Christ which in other eternities was not made known;” “in the eternities to come;” “Ye walked according to the eternity of this world;” “by whom also He made the eternities;” “the rulers of the darkness of this eternity;” “now once in the end of the eternities hath He appeared;” “the harvest is the end of the eternity;” “since eternity began;” “in the eternities to come,” etc., etc. Let the scholars whose business it is delve into the many intricacies of expression, and worry over the many grammatical combinations. Suffice it to say here that there have been “aions” in the past, there is this present “aion,” and there are “aions” to come. And these all combined make up TIME, encompassing the whole of the progressive plan and purpose of God for the development of His creation.

The Greek text reads, “For Thine in the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to the ages. Amen.” It means long, measureless time, and contains the idea that one age follows another in a series beyond human imagining. The Bible rarely speaks of eternity even in relation to God; He remains rooted in “the ages” and thus in history and the universe as the true sphere of His work, and is thus, despite all His majesty and exaltation, the God who inhabits “the ages” — the full course of creation and redemption. From the beginning to the end HE IS GOD! He is in control. He is the creator, the initiator, the motivator, the mover, the power, the wisdom, the glory of all, in all, and through all. The kingdom is His, the power is His, and the glory is His THROUGHOUT ALL AGES AND UNTO THE OUTERMOST BOUNDARIES OF THE COSMOS — Amen!

AMEN

Remember how, after all the blessings of Gerizim and the curses of Ebal, we find the command of Moses: “And all the people shall say Amen.” When David nominated Solomon to the throne of his kingdom the priestly soldier Benaiah answered, “Amen! the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.” When David brought the Ark to Zion with songs and dances, “all the people said Amen, and praised the Lord.” And after some of the most jubilant outbursts of the Psalms we find “Amen and Amen.” The apostolic benedictions of the New Testament end with

Amen. How thoroughly this term belonged to God's people in ancient times! They used it in the wilderness three thousand five hundred years ago. They used it in the Temple after the ringing of the golden harps and the sound of the silver trumpets. The returning exiles were inspired and gladdened by it when Ezra, in the Temple court, blessed the great Yahweh Elohim, and all the people stood up and answered Amen and Amen, lifting up their hands in the courts of God. In the last book of the Bible, after the Halleluyah anthem of the angel hosts, the Immortalities around the throne of God cry Amen; and in its last chapter, and its last words, "He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly," and the bride answers, "Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus." When we say "Amen" to God's call He says "Amen" to our sonship. Thus, in heaven and on earth there is the acclamation and the echo of this lovely and faithful cry, by which the spirit of man acknowledges the God of the "Amen!" So much is meant by this grand, fragrant, immemorial word "Amen" at the end of the Lord's Prayer. And yet, to many people it is only the welcome sign that public prayer or worship has ended!

"Amen" is the word Jesus used when He spoke a deep mystery or revelation which He would impress upon His hearers. The word is translated in our King James Bibles as "verily." It is "Amen, amen, I say unto you..." It is the word used by pious Jews in Jesus' day when they responded to the synagogue prayers. It means, among other things, "It is so!" or "So let it be!" It is an expression of faith confessing that God is in control and will bring it to pass. It is the glad surrender of a son to the Father, offering himself that God may fulfill it all in and through him.

"Amen" is more than a word — it is a person. How wonderful are the words of Jesus when He says, "These are the words of the Amen" (Rev. 3:14). The word also means more than "It is so" or "So be it." When one says "Amen" he is saying "I'll back it up; everything I've said, I'll be faithful to." In Bible days people didn't usually make written contracts; they made oral agreements. When they completed the agreement, they would say to each other, "I'll keep my side of the bargain." It was like an affirmation or an oath. The parties involved knew that they must be faithful to their oral contract and carry out all the things they had agreed to do. They pledged their very word and nature to it. So, "Amen" means a commitment. It means, "I'll be faithful to this."

Jesus is the Amen! This can mean nothing other than the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the fulfillment of all the promises of God! As it is written, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (II Cor. 1:20). I do not mean that every promise of God has been fulfilled personally and individually and only in Christ Jesus; but the reality is that if we are ever to lay hold upon and appropriate the promises in our very own experience it will only be in Christ that we will experience them, for HE is the "Amen," the "So be it!" Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He is made everything unto us, for He is all. In Him all things were created and by Him all things consist. In Him all things are ours. Whatever men need today can be found in God's Christ, for He is the AMEN!

The words of Ray Prinzing are so appropriate here. He writes: "Not only do we have the sureness of HIS WORD, but we read, 'HE CONFIRMED IT BY AN OATH.' Literally, HE INTERPOSED HIMSELF by an oath. 'Because He could swear by no greater, He swear by Himself' (Heb. 6:13). He placed Himself — in all His righteousness and holiness, in all His mercy and love, in all His power and authority — as being responsible for the word which He had spoken — the promise He had given.

“When HE INTERPOSED Himself, placed Himself as the Responsible Fulfiller, as the CONFIRMATION to that which He had already promised, in order for that ‘confirmation’ to be handled and known, He took upon Himself the form of man. When He interposed Himself, He literally committed Himself to become the VISIBLE CONFIRMATION — and thus, as Paul tells us in Romans 15:8, our Lord Jesus Christ became as a servant — a minister — TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES. He is both — He is the Word/Promise, and He is its confirmation. In Him we have all the ‘yea, and Amen.’ Christ is the Word of the Promise — ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (Jn. 1:1). He is the LIVING WORD, the YEA, the AMEN, to every promise.

“Furthermore, the Son of God, Jesus Christ...was not yea and nay, but in Him was YEA. ‘For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us’ (II Cor. 1:20). Herein is a vital point, there is an inclusion, a ‘BY US.’ He is the Word, the Promise, and it is a POSITIVE AMEN, and it is BY US that the fulfilled promise redounds to the glory of God. When God gave the promise it was TO US — UPON US. ‘God so loved the world...’ THAT’S US! Therefore the promise can only glorify God when it is fulfilled in us. What an amazing revelation of His grace, that links together the ‘glory of God’ and this ‘BY US.’ He gives the promise, He fulfills the promise, works it all INTO US — and then God is glorified!

“It is also written that Jesus Christ was never ‘a maybe, a hope-so, or just a wishful possibility.’ He was not a NAY and a YEA — a nay if...or a yea if... There are no conditional clauses inserted in the promise, for IN HIM ALL THE PROMISES ARE YEA, plainly asserted; and AMEN, faithfully fulfilled. He is the ETERNAL YES of God! The SO BE IT, the I WILL DO IT!” — end quote.

“That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth” (Isa. 65:16). The Hebrew rendering of this precious passage calls God the “Amen.” The word “truth” in the King James Version is the Hebrew word AMEN. Our English word “Amen” is not really an English word at all, but merely the transliteration of this Hebrew word, that is, the Hebrew word brought over into English. Just as “taco” is a Mexican term brought into English, so “Amen” is a Hebrew word adopted into English. The Amplified Bible beautifully renders this verse: “So that he who invokes a blessing upon himself in the land shall do so by saying, May the God of truth and fidelity — the Amen — bless me; and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth and faithfulness — the Amen — to His promises...” “Amen” has the same meanings in both the Hebrew and English languages. The full scope of these meanings is threefold: “it is true” — used as a confirmation; “so be it” — used as an endorsement; and “may it become true” — used to express the hope that the uttering preceding it will come to pass. The word “Amen” is derived from the adjective “true”. It is used after prayers and blessings by both Jews and Christians. The only difference being that Jews do not usually conclude their own prayers with “Amen” as Christians do, but instead use it to confirm or endorse another’s prayer.

When Jesus calls Himself the Amen, it means that He is the divine “Yes” to all of God’s will and to the prayers of God’s elect as they pray according to His will. When the revelation of God speaks within you it is the spirit of Christ in your heart that witnesses, “Amen!” The spirit of Christ loves to do within you that for which He indwells you — to accomplish God’s will on earth. When you step forward to do God’s will Christ within you is the Amen — not the word, but the POWER. He is the divine impetus, the force, the vision, the encouragement and the strength to fulfill all of the Father’s plan and purpose. Halleluyah! Amen and Amen!

About The Author

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

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

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

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