

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Book Twelve

The Binding of Satan

and

The First Resurrection

By J. Preston Eby

Kingdom Bible Study books are not for sale for profit. They are printed in this format so that they can be given away to those without internet access. This book can be received by going to kingdombiblestudies.org, to download a pdf of the book or write them a letter requesting a paperback.

Kingdom Bible Studies
PO Box 371240
El Paso TX 79937-1240

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE Book 12
The Binding of Satan and The First Resurrection by J. Preston Eby

This publication has been dedicated to the public domain
Printed in the United States of America

Scripture Quotations taken from:

The Amplified® Bible, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation, Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

Concordant Literal New Testament Copyright ©, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387, U.S.A. 661-252-2112

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

King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

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

The New Testament in Modern Speech by Weymouth: Public Domain

Young's Literal Translation: Public Domain

Jonathan Mitchell New Testament: Harper Brown Publishing

Any authors or artists mentioned in this book does not constitute their agreement or support of the content of this book. It is the expressed desire of the author to allow this book to be reproduced in any form as long as it is given away and kept in context. Any comments may be sent to firestarternow@yahoo.com Kingdom Bible Study website is : <http://www.kingdombiblestudies.org>

Table of Contents

216 The Binding Of Satan	4
217 The Binding Of Satan (continued).....	17
218 The Binding Of Satan (continued).....	28
219 The Binding Of Satan (continued).....	38
220 The Binding Of Satan (continued).....	50
221 The First Resurrection.....	57
222 The First Resurrection (continued)	70
223 The First Resurrection (continued)	78
224 The First Resurrection (continued)	87
225 The First Resurrection (continued)	97
226 The First Resurrection (continued)	106

Chapter 216

The Binding Of Satan

I once read a story stemming from the Middle Ages at which time the Christians were in control of Jerusalem. Being in control of Jerusalem, the Christians thought that it would be appropriate for them to banish the Jews from the city. So they tried various methods until, finally, they decided that they would get the pope to come and talk them into leaving. So it was, that arrangements were made for the pope to come for a debate with the head rabbi. All of the cardinals came with the pope, and all the rabbi's assistants attended with their leader. As the debate began, the pope and the rabbi agreed that it would be best if they met alone. And so, all of their advisors left. However, the pope couldn't speak Yiddish and the rabbi couldn't speak the pope's language so they communicated by using hand signals.

The pope began his discourse by moving his arms in a big circle. Then the rabbi responded by pointing to the ground. Immediately following that, the pope held up three fingers, to which the rabbi responded by holding up one finger. To that, the pope pulled out a chalice and held it up, at which the rabbi pulled from his robe an apple and held it up high. Seeing all this, the rabbi then threw his arms up in the air and concluded, "The Jews stay!" The cardinals overheard the verdict, ran into the chambers, and pulled the pope aside. They requested the details of the debate. Why had he allowed the Jews to stay? The pope said to them, "I threw my arms in a big circle to say that God is everywhere. The rabbi responded by pointing to the ground, to say that I was right but that God was also here. I then held up three fingers saying that God is three persons. The rabbi responded by holding up one finger clarifying that God is also one person. At that, I pulled out my chalice to share with him the idea that we believe in the blood of Jesus Christ as our grace and our union with God. He then pulled out an apple referring to the original sin of Adam, that all people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and therefore we are all equal in the sight of God, meaning by this that the Jews would stay."

The rabbi's council had also come into the meeting. They asked their leader to explain what had been said in the debate. The rabbi obliged them saying, "The pope swept his arms in a circle saying that we must all leave. I pointed to the ground saying that we would not; we would stay because this is our homeland. So he held up three fingers indicating that we had three days to get out. I held up one finger and said that it was the Christians who had but one day to leave. At this, he grabbed his chalice to begin eating his lunch, so I took out my apple."

The above story illustrates the great truth that if you interpret what you see and hear about the great things of God with the natural understanding — the carnal mind — you will miss the point altogether and will, along with most Christians, arrive at erroneous and absurd conclusions. And assuredly this is no more true anywhere than when we come to the symbolisms of the visions of John in the book of Revelation!

If we understand how a machine works, then the most intricate mechanism in the world is simple, but if we lack this understanding, even the simplest device can bewilder us. Well do I remember my fascination as I listened to a friend who at that time worked at the White Sands Missile Range explain the almost incredible performance of our missile and anti-missile systems. When I expressed my astonished admiration, he smiled and said, "Well, really it is quite simple

when you understand the principle of it." Any who have received specialized training and have become proficient in their specific field, will not doubt the truth of that statement. Many years ago I watched the frustration of my nine year old daughter as she tried to connect a tire pump to her bicycle tire. Not having connected anything like that before, the harder she tried to screw the pump connector on to the valve stem the more difficulty she was in. After a short period of observation I went over and pointed out to her that it is necessary to hold the connector absolutely straight over the valve while turning it in order for the threads to join. A very simple lesson, but how important! So whether it be a multi-million dollar missile or a five dollar pump, both are quite simple when you know how they work. The way a bumble bee flies with wings disproportionate to its body size and shape is still a mystery to man, but to the bee it is merely the way of his life.

The same thought of understanding was in the heart of the apostle Paul when he wrote, "I cease not to make 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..." (Eph. 1:15-18). When men earnestly seek the face of the Lord, He raises up within them His Holy Spirit to dispel the darkness of the natural mind that ever hangs as a shroud over us that He may reveal to our spiritual minds the things that pertain to the higher realm of His kingdom. In all matters of revelation and spiritual understanding it is impossible to overestimate the importance of the Spirit, who comes to take the things of God and show them unto us. Two worlds, indeed, two realms exist all about us and within us — the natural world and the spiritual world. The natural realm is the realm of man, but the spiritual realm is the realm of God. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know (or explain) them, for they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14). Can we not see by this that the explanations of a carnal mind about the spiritual meanings of scripture would, as do many of the popular church teachings today, sound just as ridiculous and absurd as the pope's explanation of the rabbi's hand signals!

Men of the world have told me that the things recorded in the Bible are ridiculous, and I suppose to them they are, since God has declared, "it is foolishness to them." I do not hesitate to say that although the mind and heart of each and every child of God has been quickened by the Spirit of God, yet, in our spiritual immaturity we have oft times understood only a minute portion of the things that pertain to the vast and marvelous realm into which we have been birthed. Like Israel of old, even in the reading of the scriptures, a veil has been over our minds and we have been limited to that which our carnal mind and natural understanding could interpret, so that we have seen the things of God from the limited view of human comprehension rather than seeing things as they really are in the spiritual world of God. Understand this and you will know a great truth: Divine revelation always carries one beyond what the natural mind can grasp and decipher. Read any chapter or verse in the whole Bible, and if you can understand what you read with your natural mind, then you have missed the message! You have failed to discover the true meaning which lies hidden deep beneath the apparent meaning. If you do not see any truth above and beyond what is obvious on the surface to the natural understanding then you have not been touched by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God and what you do understand is not a living revelation of truth to you at all, but merely a DEAD LETTER.

As we approach chapter twenty of the Revelation there are four primary scenes presented in the chapter. As the curtain rings up, the first scene is the chaining of the dragon. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and

Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him..." (Rev. 20:1-3). In the vision John sees an angel descending out of the heaven with a great chain in one hand and the keys of the abyss in the other. He lays hold on the dragon, fetters him, throws him as it were bodily into the pit, clamps down the lid, seals it shut, and shut it remains for a thousand years. The question follows — is John seeing and portraying literal fact or is it a spiritual truth stated figuratively in the form of a drama?

John was a Jew, and to a degree a Grecianized Jew. He lived in a Greek world and used the Greek language. Ancient Greece was the classical home of the drama, therefore he was familiar with the figurativeness and allegory of the drama. In a Greek drama written by Aeschylus 400 years before John wrote the Revelation, there occurs a scene which closely parallels the opening scene of this chapter. So striking is the similarity that more than one commentator, leaning only on natural understanding, has been inclined to the belief that the author of the Revelation borrowed the concept from that Greek drama — "Prometheus Bound." Prometheus is a Greek demigod of Greek mythology. He offends the gods by stealing fire from the temple of Zeus and teaching its use to man. As punishment for teaching man how to use fire Zeus commands that this crafty trickster be bound fast in chains, and with chains about his arms and limbs and a wedge driven through his bosom, he is riveted to a rock for 10,000 years, and is finally released from torment by the mighty hands of Hercules.

Few people, however, have ever thought of taking the story of Prometheus literally. It is a story, a drama, embodying a moral truth. And if anyone insists on interpreting this twentieth chapter of the Revelation literally, then literal he must be from beginning to end. The angel, the dragon, the chains, the keys, the abyss, the lid, the seal, and the thousand years must all alike be taken literally. ALL must either be literal, or ALL must be symbolical. No spiritual mind can view it literally! It is a picture of spiritual truth and reality. What the Holy Spirit is conveying in chapter twenty is that the dragon himself, that is, the ancient serpent, the Devil, even Satan, all satanic power and influence, will be put in absolute restraint within us by the bonds of the living word of God!

In the preceding chapter we saw the beast and the false prophet captured and Babylon destroyed. But what about the dragon? Not a word there about "that old serpent"! Bear in mind that the beast, the false prophet, and Babylon are all manifestations of error, religiosity, carnality and evil. But the dragon is the cause behind the manifestations. When the nineteenth chapter closes, though the outward expressions of carnality have been brought to judgment, the instigator of these, the devil himself, is still at large, and just so long as he is at liberty to roam about, as long as deception, religiosity, carnality, lust, and sin continue in the heart of mankind, the dragon will build other Babylons and breathe falseness into other prophets. You have not destroyed the devil when you have destroyed the works of the devil! To the undimmed vision of the Seer of Patmos it is as clear as day that the work of God within man would not only destroy the works of the devil but ultimately would put the very spirit and power of deception, carnality, corruption, and evil in secure, effective, unbreakable bonds where in his confinement he is unable in any way to carry out his purposes. It is indeed wonderful!

The vision starts out with these words, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand." The Greek word used for angel is *aggelos* and simply means messenger. The usage of this word throughout the New Testament can indicate any kind of messenger from an actual heavenly being, to a minister of God in the flesh, to a messenger — either spirit or flesh — from the devil, and even a person delivering a message of any kind from one man to another. This angel, however, is an angel coming down out of the heavens of God's Spirit. Those who have studied with us this far must

certainly see that the angel himself is a symbol signifying a word of the Lord which comes out of a heavenly realm, out of the spirit, out of the mouth of God. Various "angels" appear throughout the book of Revelation accomplishing a vast array of things which are the works of God wrought by the power of His Living Word. Actually, God does not send literal heavenly angels to do the great spiritual works set forth in this book, for all is the activity of the mighty Christ in and by the Holy Spirit! It is not the revelation of angels — it is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! It was Michael the archangel in type who fought the dragon in the heavens of the spirit when the dragon was set to devour the manchild, and cast him out. Let the fact be imprinted indelibly upon our minds that in this age of the Holy Spirit God does not send the literal archangel Michael to make war with, and defeat the devil, on behalf of God's sons — it is the Christ of God who "casts out" all devils, bruises the head of the serpent, and bruises Satan under our feet! If God had to marshal Michael to assist Christ and the sons of God in their defeat of Satan then Michael would be seen as the stronger and the mightier of them all!

The "angel" is none other than the Christ — the Living Word! No other can bind Satan and restrain his power and liberty. Even a great angel like the one sent to strengthen Daniel beside the river Hiddekel, was unable to come at once to Daniel's aid when he (the angel) was obstructed by one of the satanic "princes" sent to monitor the affairs of the kingdom of Persia (Dan. 10:10-13). Michael did come to assist that angel and gave him success in his mission — but this angel in the Revelation has the key to the bottomless pit; and throughout the Revelation the One given the KEYS to death, hell, and the pit is none other than God's glorious Christ! The prince of darkness can only be bound by one mightier than himself, and that One is Christ who has received the keys. No other "angel" has ever been given these wonderful keys!

Now we come to a different work, for not only is the dragon cast out of our heavens (Rev. 12), but now he must be bound in our earth! So the symbolic angel possesses the key to the abyss, and carries a great chain, and moves swiftly with omnipotent power and authority in our earth realm, for he has come to our earth out of the heavens of the spirit, to lay hold upon the dragon; he binds him firmly with the chain, casts him into the abyss, and locks and seals him in, that he may no more deceive the nations for a thousand years. What a picture! This, of course, signifies the work of God now wrought within the life of each and every member of God's elect, and eventually in the life of every man and woman of Adam's race. The great light of divine revelation shines brightly upon the process — the "angel" comes down from heaven, that is, the message, the word, the revelation of Christ has to come down out of the subconscious of our spirit into the consciousness of our human reality. The voice of the Son of God must be heard out of the spiritual and heavenly realm — but earth must hear His voice! The word from heaven must be made flesh within us. Only in this way can the dragon be bound in the depths of our being. So it is with every son of God, and so shall it be unto every man. John in astonished wonder beholds the unfoldment of this divine process in the drama of the vision he sees!

THE JUDGMENT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE DRAGON

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:2-3). And then later we read, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are..." (Rev. 20:10).

Our text deals with the judgment and destruction of Satan, which takes place in two aspects or stages: first a binding or imprisonment, then finally a casting into the lake of fire and brimstone. The twentieth chapter of the Revelation is one of the most difficult in the book, and,

perhaps with one exception, the most widely misunderstood. In order to grasp its meaning it is absolutely essential to preserve a sense of perspective. To many minds the two great subjects of its first ten verses are the first resurrection and the millennium. But the real object of the vision is not to describe either. Even these are misunderstood and misinterpreted, but they are both purely incidental to the main object of these verses, which is to set forth the overthrow of Satan. Of the four enemies of God's Christ revealed in the Revelation — the beast, the false prophet, Babylon, and the dragon — he is the chief. All along he has been the real troublemaker, for he is called "that ancient serpent," thus identifying him as the same old serpent who seduced Eve in the Garden. He is also the "devil," meaning slanderer, the one who accuses us before God within ourselves — the spirit of condemnation. And he is "Satan," the adversary, ever standing in opposition to test and try us in our upward walk in God. He has always been behind the other three, instigating and directing, although unseen and unrecognized. The overthrow of those others, his three great agents, has already been described in chapters seventeen through nineteen. But we cannot know the full victory over the very last enemy, death, until this enemy has been fully dealt with in our lives!

In chapters seventeen and eighteen we see the dramatic and cataclysmic judgment and destruction of the soulical system of Mystery Babylon. Chapter nineteen ended with the war between the Rider of the white horse and His army and the beast and the false prophet culminating with their judgment and their end in the lake of fire. Now that picture has passed, and John sees a new vision, and this one seems to follow the last one in sequence, for verse ten informs us that the devil himself is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone *"where the beast and the false prophet are."* So now we are to witness the judgment of God on the dragon who all along has been the instigator of all the activities of Mystery Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet!

God has given all His judgments to us for our redemption, deliverance, purification, and transformation. As we receive His judgments into our lives they are His judgments upon our own bestial nature, and upon the beastly religious systems and the beastly world system which have dominated and controlled us. Christ enables us to overcome these by the blood of the Lamb — by the raising up of His divine and victorious life within us — and by the word of our testimony, that is, our acceptance and profession of Divine Truth as it is revealed to us by the spirit. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (I Cor. 15:26) and that ultimate victory is shown to us a little further on in our present chapter. The sequence of these things in the Revelation is so vitally significant and important! So we see that between the destruction of Mystery Babylon, the beast, the false prophet, and finally the last enemy, death itself — there is one other adversary that must be dealt with in our lives and that is he who has the power of death — the devil! (Heb. 2:14). That satanic root which lies in the abyss of our own hearts must be fully overcome and eradicated, and that precisely, my beloved, is the spiritual drama now set before us in the opening verses of chapter twenty! Jesus fought all these battles and overcame every adversary within Himself, and in Him and through Him we shall also be made more than overcomers!

Let us consider with care that this vision opens with the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is also the Devil, and Satan, being arrested and put in a maximum security prison for a time — symbolically one thousand years to be exact. But yet, the dealing of God with Satan is not finished at this point — a further work must be executed in relation to him — so he is let out on bail, as it were, for a little while, during which time he does his very worst, following which he stands trial for his crimes and is sentenced to his ultimate judgment — the very same lake of fire and brimstone where the beast, the false prophet, death, hell, and all men who abide in the realm of death have been placed "for the ages of the ages." It is my conviction that we can

never understand the vision John sees, or the truth about the binding of Satan, or his casting into the bottomless pit, or the loosing again of Satan for a short season, and his eventual casting into the lake of fire and brimstone, until we truly UNDERSTAND just who and what Satan is!

SATAN — A SPIRIT!

What scientists have discovered makes it relatively easy to believe in the existence of worlds, or spheres of life, beyond the comprehension of human senses. In the realm of sound, for example, we know that the human ear is quite limited, that sounds which are very real are inaudible to us if they are below or above a certain range of frequency. And the same is true of sight. The existence of radio waves, gamma rays, ultra-violet light rays, etc., also helps us to realize the power of invisible forces which are beyond our comprehension. In Ephesians 2:2 Satan is described as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The Amplified Bible states it this way, "At one time...you were following the course and fashion of the world...following the prince of the power of the air. You were obedient to him and were under his control, the demon spirit that still constantly works (Greek: *energeo*, energizes) in the sons of disobedience...for we are not wrestling with flesh and blood — contending only with physical opponents — but against despotisms, against the powers, against the master spirits who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (spiritual) sphere" (Eph. 2:2,6-12).

The message is clear — we have had the FALSE GOD in us! It came as a revelation to me when I saw that the Holy Spirit lives and moves and energizes in those who have been "begotten of God" and "born of the Spirit" — regenerated. The spirit within us that is born of God is renewed and raised up within us in the image of God. But then I read that if the Holy Spirit is working in the children of God, there is also a spirit energizing within the children of the Devil. "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Who can dispute the poignant words of the apostle John, "Ye are of God, little children...because greater is HE that is IN YOU, than HE that is IN THE WORLD" (I Jn. 4:4). Then two verses later John clearly identifies these two spirits which are in the people of God and the people of the world: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the *spirit of error*." Paul adds to this his testimony: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:12).

This gives us a most wonderful understanding of the workings of spirit. Spirit, like everything else in nature, has its opposites — positive and negative, good and evil, light and darkness. The negative power, Satan, is an invisible spiritual influence — energy — which exerts itself upon the mind, desires, emotions, and will of men. We must certainly realize that what we call "flesh" and the "Adamic life" and the "carnal mind" is actually animated, energized, inspired, and activated by a life principle. Understand that and you will understand where Satan's seat is! "IN WHOM the god of this world hath BLINDED THE MINDS of them" (II Cor. 4:4). The spirit of God is the spirit of truth; the spirit of the Devil is the spirit of error. "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness (wrong understanding, perverted knowledge) to light (truth), and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). Some teach that in all the universe there is only ONE SPIRIT. And truly, in the sphere of the kingdom of God, there is but the one spirit, for "he that is joined unto the Lord IS ONE SPIRIT" (I Cor. 6:17). The question follows — What about he that is not "joined unto the Lord"?

The fact that a thing is "spirit" does not necessarily make it equal to or of the same character as God. God is not God, in fact, because he is spirit — neither is that which is spirit

necessarily of the same mind and expression of God just because it is spirit. There must be something more than that to make it qualify for godhood. Using the physical body as an example, let us note that although it is flesh from the very moment of its conception, it could not be said that everything that is "flesh" is HUMAN! Thus, it is that man's substance is flesh, but his being is much more! Obviously, there are more than one kind of flesh. What makes a man human is not the fact that he is flesh — he is human because he takes on a particular shape and is endowed with an intellect and a certain set of emotions and capacities. Paul states it this way, "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds" (I Cor. 15:39). Learn this, O man, and you will know a great principle: ALL FLESH IS NOT THE SAME FLESH! All flesh came from the same creative hand of God, but the quality and characteristics differ. What depth of meaning this adds to the statement of the apostle wherein he says, "Know ye not that he which is joined unto a harlot is...ONE FLESH?" (I Cor. 6:16). Obviously, all flesh is not one flesh. The flesh of a fish and the flesh of a dog can never be one flesh. But any flesh which is of the same nature and may be joined in a union of life with its own kind is one flesh. And may I add, though there be gods many, and lords many, to us there is but one God, the Father; and though there be spirits many, to us there is but one spirit, and one body, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

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

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

Oriental imagery is never more graphically displayed in all its eloquence than in the use of the biblical word "serpent" as a figure of Satan. This symbol, along with a number of other word pictures, is very expressive of his nature and activity. I make no apology for declaring to you the truth that each and every creature of earth typifies a higher reality in the realm of spirit — good or bad, positive or negative. This can be seen clearly in the words of Jesus when He says, "And

the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven (the realm of spirit). Behold I give you power to TREAD ON SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS, and over all the power of the enemy" (Lk. 10:17-19). Spake He of serpents and scorpions of the field? Nay, my brother, my sister, He spake rather of spirits possessing the nature typified by serpents and scorpions, hidden and cunning, dangerous and deadly, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the thoughts and desires and ambitions of the carnal mind, full of deadly venom. Even the fowls of heaven, as the law of Moses shows us, clean and unclean, each bespeak of a kind or quality of nature, expressing those characteristics that originate in the spirit realm. Hence, in scripture unclean birds are a type of corrupt natures that express themselves in high spiritual realms, as John the Revelator reveals in these words, "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and *hateful bird*" (Rev. 18:2). We know the Lamb, the meek and sacrificial nature of the Christ within, the Son of the living God, gentle, kind, compassionate, pure and holy, redemptive, blessing all He touches; but have we not known also the nature of the beast, wild and ravenous, that spirit, so obvious in the world, which stomps and rends and breaks in pieces and devours, of whom Peter warns us, saying, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

Let us meditate deeply upon this word — spirit. The English word is from the Latin spirare, meaning "to breathe," the words respiration, expiration, and inspiration all being derived from the same source. The word "spirit" in the Old Testament is the translation of the Hebrew word ruwach, the primary significance or root-meaning of which is wind. Similarly, the New Testament Greek word is pneuma, coming from pneo, meaning "to breathe or blow," the primary significance or root-meaning also being wind. The English word "ghost" used in the King James Bible, though now somewhat obsolete and not in general use, is derived from the Greek pneuma — meaning a blowing or a wind. But let no one hastily conclude that we are about to attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is a Holy Wind, for nothing could be farther from our thought!

Since one cannot live without air and breathing in the physical world, wind and breath are used symbolically of the Holy Spirit, apart from whom there can be no life in the realm of the divine. The Holy Spirit is thus God's breath, God's out-breathing, God's energy force by which He accomplishes His purpose and executes His will. Many times we have thought of the Holy Spirit as power, and certainly He has power, but power denotes basically the ability or capacity to act or do things and it can be latent, dormant, inactively resident in someone or something. Force, on the other hand, is always active and more specifically describes energy projected and exerted upon persons and things, and may be defined as "an influence which produces or tends to produce motion, or change of motion." Power might be likened to the stored energy in a battery; it is there, but inactive. Force, however, could be compared to the current flowing from the battery, starting and running the car. Force, then, more accurately represents the sense of the Hebrew and Greek terms relating to God's Spirit, and this is borne out in a consideration of the scriptures.

It will greatly aid our perception of the activity of the Holy Spirit once we understand the simple truth that all spirit is energy. Energy has many forms, but it is not something that you can see or hold in your hand. You can think of energy as something that can make things change. For example, a moving object has energy because it can change things by crashing into them. Heat is another form of energy. Heat energy can change ice by melting it into water, and heat it more, changing it into vapor. It can run the engine of an automobile, jet plane, or rocket. There is another kind of energy, called chemical energy. It is in the coal or oil that heats buildings. It is

in the food that nourishes your body and keeps you active. There is atomic energy which can be set free from the atoms of some materials. And there is the energy carried by light waves, called electromagnetic energy. It is the electromagnetic energy in sunlight that warms the earth. Light waves, streaming out of the sun, carry energy to us across nearly a hundred million miles of space. When the energy of the light hits the earth, part of it changes to heat. Some of it is stored in plants as chemical energy.

Another kind of energy of which we, the people of God, are aware is SPIRIT ENERGY. In physics energy is known as the capacity for doing work. The Greek noun for energy is *energeo* and its verb form is *energeia*. These words are used in the Greek New Testament several times. Because of the association between "doing work" and "energy," the words are generally translated into English as "work" or "working." Since so much has been learned about energy in recent decades it would now be far better, in my opinion, to translate the words for just what they mean — energy or energizing. Let us look at a few scriptures. "That ye may know...what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working (*energeia*) of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:18-20). Yes, it was energy, *God's energy*, which RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD! And the record further states that He was raised up by the SPIRIT of the Father! Oh, yes! That is SPIRIT ENERGY!

And not only did Paul say that it was God's energy, or His invisible power in motion as force, which raised Christ up, but he went on to say that it was the same energy of God which transformed his own life and made him a minister of Jesus Christ. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working (*energeia*) of HIS POWER" (Eph. 3:7). How plain it would be rendered thus, "I was made a minister...by the effectual energizing of HIS POWER." Then on top of this Paul declares that it is this same ENERGIZING or SPIRIT ENERGY of God which is WORKING OR ENERGIZING WITHIN US to bring us unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working (energizing) of every part, maketh increase of the body..." (Eph. 4:16).

And furthermore Paul states that "he that is joined unto the Lord is one *spirit*" (I Cor. 6:17). ONE SPIRIT! ONE ENERGY SOURCE! ONE ENERGY FORCE! YOU AND THE LORD! NOT JUST POWER — ENERGY! "There is one body, and ONE SPIRIT!" (Eph. 4:4). Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! You will know a great truth when you understand the simple fact that in the kingdom of God there is ONLY ONE SPIRIT! In union with the Lord you are that one spirit. All spirit is energy, exerting a force, or influence upon creation. GOD is the supreme source of energy, the highest and purest form of energy, and the wonder of it is beyond comprehension. For while there are indeed many spirits in the world, as we shall consider later, yet in union with God Y-O-U ARE THE ULTIMATE ENERGY SOURCE FOR ALL THINGS! All creation stands on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God pouring forth the energy of divine spirit — love, joy, peace, righteousness, provision, and power! Through this ministration of the manifest sons of God ALL THINGS SHALL BE C-H-A-N-G-E-D! "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

The Holy Spirit is God's energy force. It is God's energy force projected and exerted upon creation. It is God's motion, action, and influence in one measure or another upon, in, and through man. Yahweh accomplished the creation of the universe by means of His Spirit or energy force. Regarding the planet earth in its early formative stages, the record states that "The Spirit (energy force) of God was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of

them by the breath (spirit, out-breathing) of His mouth." Like a powerful breath of living wind, God's Spirit can be sent forth to exert power even though there is no bodily or visible contact with that which is acted upon. I have myself witnessed many astonishing miracles of healing, provision, and manifestations of various sorts, and while I could never see with my eyes the cause of the activity I was awed by the visible and undeniable effect. Where a human craftsman would use the force of his hands and fingers to produce things, God uses His Spirit. Hence that Spirit is also spoken of as God's "hands" or "fingers." Jesus told the Pharisees, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Mat. 12:28). But Luke, in recording the same event, expresses it thus: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Lk. 11:20). The Spirit of God is the finger of God, the working, energizing, and activity of God usward. How great is His working!

There are two basic characteristics of the wind which qualify it to so fittingly serve as the supreme symbol of the Holy Spirit. The wind is first of all a powerful energy force, and secondly it is invisible. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the *spirit*" (Jn. 3:8). You cannot see the wind, and yet you are aware of its reality because of its power and the visible effects manifested all around you. In earlier times the wind was used broadly as a source of energy. Man has from antiquity known how to use sails on a boat or ship. Later, he learned to use the same principle to construct a windmill, using the force of the wind to turn grindstones, pump water, and do many other kinds of work.

Because the wind is both invisible and powerful, the biblical words *ruwach* and *pneuma* meaning wind, gradually took on much wider meanings, and came to represent any invisible power or influence, good or bad, positive or negative. And since God's power, within and without, is exercised through channels and by agencies beyond human sight or perception, therefore this word "spirit" came more and more to be applied to all of the Lord's dealings and operations. The invisible and powerful INWARD ENERGY FORCE which motivates and transforms our lives into the image of God is the HOLY SPIRIT! Yet — it is also OUR SPIRIT! For, joined to the Lord, we are the ONE SPIRIT! Only by this Holy Spirit within are we guided beyond the outer senses, and beyond the letter of the Word, into the glorious and eternal reality of "the deep things of God," even all those things which God has in reservation for them that truly love Him, which the human eye hath not seen, the human ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the human heart to understand and appreciate.

That spirit is a proper term for nature, ideas, thoughts, attitudes, desires, mind, will, and all such characteristics is illustrated by a story I read one time. An elder was telling of a young lad in a certain congregation. This boy was a devotee of baseball. He was a little leaguer. When the world series ran he came to the meeting of the church dressed in a baseball outfit, a glove on one hand and a small transistor radio in the other. His pocket was stretched by a ball. He didn't hear the ministry that came forth in the meeting. His ear was glued to that radio. He refused to miss one word of the announcer's description of the game. Now, that boy was FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF BASEBALL! He thought baseball. He talked baseball. He even took his bat to bed. It was all he cared about. He was filled with it. He was consumed by it. It was his life!

Through past decades "equal rights" of various kinds has been an issue in our country. There are people filled with the spirit of equal rights! They don't have time for anything else. They are consumed with a desire to petition, organize, and march. Nothing else matters. They eat, sleep, and dream equal rights. Their money, time, talents, and energies are exhausted as they pour themselves into the struggle for equality. They are literally FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

of equal status for all people. These people are energized, they are filled with an attitude, a mind, a disposition, a will, a passion, and all these characteristics produce a tremendous influence upon the thinking and actions of multitudes of citizens. Perhaps now we can understand what it really means to be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT! It means to not only be filled with the consciousness of the Person and presence of the Holy Spirit of God, but to also be filled with all the characteristics within that Spirit: His nature, will, ways, virtues, disposition, purpose, power, etc. How many believers settle for something far less than this!

We are living in an hour when it is popular to be known as a "Spirit-filled" Christian. Charismatic "Mega Churches" have sprung up all across the land. But truly I say to you that multitudes have settled for a superficial experience of "tongues," or being "slain" in the Spirit, or some "feeling" or "gift," and have never even dreamed of what it means to become literally filled with each and every characteristic of the divine nature and power of God! Becoming filled with the Holy Spirit must do far more for us than speaking in a tongue or becoming ecstatic in our emotions. To be filled with the Spirit means to be filled with all the spirit is — to truly become the manifestation of God in the earth! It means that the life and nature and power of the indwelling Spirit must control and swallow up completely soul and body until there is no manifestation but of the Spirit.

Jesus, that blessed firstborn Son of God, was so filled, for He possessed the Spirit "without measure" (Jn. 3:34). Jesus did not go about speaking in tongues or falling out under the power, though those are wonderful blessings, but He did go about doing the works of God and expressing the totality of the life of the Father as the writer to the Hebrews says: "He is the sole (complete, full) expression of the glory of God, the Light-being, the out-raying or radiance of the divine, and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature..." (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). And Paul prayed for the saints that they might be "**filled with ALL the fullness of God**" (Eph. 3:19). This measure is reserved for all who go all the way with God, to be sons even as Jesus was "the Son of God." Sonship is the hope of creation, and the SPIRIT WITHOUT MEASURE is the hope of the sons! It is there that the ancient serpent, Satan, along with all his works — sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death are swallowed up, and the wisdom, nature, life, power, and glory of the living God is revealed in its totality through His people unto creation!

Let us take a closer look at some of the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. He is variously defined as — "The Spirit of God," "The Spirit of Christ," "The Spirit of Holiness," "The Spirit of Truth," "The Spirit of Life," "The Spirit of a Sound Mind," "The Spirit of Liberty," "The Spirit of Burning," "The Spirit of the Father," "The Spirit of the Son," "The Spirit of Promise," "The Spirit of Meekness," "The Spirit of Understanding," "The Spirit of Wisdom," "The Spirit of Revelation," "The Spirit of Glory," "The Spirit of Counsel," "The Spirit of Might," "The Spirit of Grace," "The Spirit of Love," "The Spirit of Adoption," "The Spirit of Prophecy," "The Spirit of Power," etc., etc. These various titles, repeated many times, and used interchangeably, give us a full, proper assurance that they all relate to the same Holy Spirit of God and the One Spirit that we are in Him. These various expressions are descriptive of the spirit, nature, disposition, ability, power, and glory of the one God, and of Jesus Christ who reveals Him, and of all who are born of Him and MADE ONE IN HIM. "He that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT."

Each of these characteristics is a form of the energy of God! This energy is transmitted from the spirit within outward into soul and body to produce its power in our life, just as electricity is transmitted from a battery to an engine to make it function in a certain way. When the "Spirit of Holiness" is transmitted into our life and consciousness we begin to function in our personality in the characteristic of God's holiness, thus becoming holy and expressing holiness. When the "Spirit of Wisdom" is transmitted into our consciousness we cease from our own natural

reasoning and commence to act in accordance with the higher wisdom of God. When the "Spirit of Life" fully permeates our being even our bodies shall be quickened by His life within until this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality. Then shall be fulfilled the word which was spoken, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*..." (I Cor. 15:51).

Our failure to see that the Holy Spirit of God is not the only form of spirit in the world leads us into all manner of error and misunderstanding. There is another spirit mentioned frequently throughout the Word of God! This "other spirit" is spoken of in opposite terms, namely, "The Spirit of Fear," "The Spirit of Bondage," "The Spirit of the World," "The Spirit of Error," "The Spirit of Antichrist," "The Spirit of Jealousy," "The Spirit of Slumber," etc., etc. These terms signify the WRONG SPIRIT — the spirit, nature, disposition, power, and will which has its chief exemplification in Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, the Dragon — the same spirit manifesting itself in all who walk in, and live out of, the carnal mind, which mind is energized by the indwelling serpent! Sin, error, darkness, and death are all characteristics of the SPIRIT OF THE NEGATIVE REALM, even as holiness, truth, love, life, etc., are all characteristics of the one Holy Spirit.

As mentioned previously, there are brethren who are convinced that all spirit is the same spirit and that there is only one spirit in the whole world, which is the spirit of God in every man. But we are constrained to take heed to the testimony of the spirit of wisdom and revelation which instructs us, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jn. 4:1). Both the holy and the unholy spirit bear the characteristics of personality, both alike are invisible, both are powerful, both can change things, both indwell, empower, express, and manifest through man. and both are energy! Can you not see the mystery?

It is true — for the child of God there is only one spirit, and that spirit is God in the spirit of every man. It should be equally obvious that most men are not living out of the spirit of God in their spirit but are living out of "another spirit." He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, but he that is joined to the world, or joined to religion, or joined to any other thing outside of God, is also one spirit in that realm! That "other spirit" is the spirit that energizes and controls and manifests through the natural man! Why else would the apostle differentiate between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God, saying, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no (natural) man, but the *Spirit of God*" (I Cor. 2:11). Even for the redeemed, before they are brought to that full union with God, there is a distinction drawn between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:14-16).

Well did Jesus know the limitation of the spirit of man apart from the Holy Spirit. Well did He know that our understanding could not possibly ascend beyond the things of man. He did not leave us thus comfortless and confined, but promised in words that cannot fail, "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." And yet again, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me" (Jn. 15:26). And not only is there the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, there is also a spirit in the children of disobedience, the very spirit of the devil, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). How significant and full of meaning are these words of the apostle John: "Ye are of God, little children...because greater is HE that is IN YOU, than HE that is IN THE WORLD" (I Jn.

4:4). HE! Personality! Spirit! One in the saints and the other in the world! Only two verses later the apostle clearly identifies these two spirits which are in the people of God and the people of the world. "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby we know the S-P-I-R-I-T OF TRUTH and the S-P-I-R-I-T OF ERROR." Paul adds to this his testimony: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:12).

Well, my beloved, we have only begun to explore the depths of the mystery of who and what Satan is, and how he can be bound in the bottomless pit, why he should be loosed from the pit for a short season, and the great purpose in his eventual casting into the lake of fire and brimstone.

Chapter 217

The Binding Of Satan (continued)

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:1-3).

In the three chapters preceding chapter twenty of the Revelation we saw Mystery Babylon destroyed by fire, and the beast and the false prophet captured and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. But what about the dragon? Not a word there about "that old serpent"! Bear in mind that Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet are all manifestations of error, religiosity, carnality, and evil. But the dragon is the cause behind the manifestations! When the nineteenth chapter closes, though the outward expressions of carnality have been brought to judgment, the instigator of these, the devil himself, is still at large, and just so long as he is at liberty to roam about, as long as deception, religiosity, carnality, lust, and sin continue to lurk in the depths of the heart of mankind, the dragon will build other Babylons and breathe falseness into other prophets. You have not destroyed the devil himself when you have only destroyed the works of the devil! To the undimmed vision of the Seer of Patmos it is as clear as day that the work of God within man would not only destroy the works of the devil but ultimately would put the very spirit and power of deception, carnality, corruption, and evil in secure, effective, unbreakable bonds where in his confinement he is unable in any way to carry out his purposes. It is just the same in the spiritual world as it is in the physical world — it is not enough to right the wrongs done by criminals — they must be securely locked up so that they are no longer able to prey on society!

Here we have Satan presented in all his various personalities — the ancient serpent, the devil, Satan, and the dragon. In the book of Genesis this one called Satan begins as a little serpent in a garden and by the time we come to the book of Revelation he has grown into a great red dragon that fills the whole earth! Therefore it is a great and powerful and bloodthirsty monster that John beholds in spirit! By his very appearance we may say that he signifies some tremendous and evil power in the earth. In that long ago paradise Adam and Eve met with a little serpent, and there the serpent was none other than the devil. And with that in mind we find little difficulty in discovering the identity of this dragon for the simple reason that John tells us in plain words that it is the devil, for he says of this dragon when he was cast out of the heavens of God's Spirit, "*And the great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan, WHICH DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD*" (Rev. 12:9). The serpent is the fittest symbol for the devil in the garden of man's beginning because of its subtlety and shrewdness. But the little deceiving serpent of Eden does not adequately picture the devil today! The devil of today's world must be symbolized as a monster serpent. The little serpent in Eden was of no particular color and had one head and no horns at all. But the great red dragon of the Revelation is of a bright fiery color and has seven heads and ten horns!

He is described simply as "the dragon." By this title we are to think of him as the old adversary, the devil, but now in possession of great power. In the garden he was the crafty little serpent, using deceit alone. Now he also uses coercion, force, and violence! As the subtle serpent came with stealth into the garden of Eden defiling with selfhood the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam's first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion, religious fanaticism, fleshly corruption, sickness, sorrow, evil,

violence, and death. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little serpent, but in Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching dragon wreaking havoc throughout the whole earth! In Genesis Satan is an enchanting serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in Revelation he is a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, a composite of peoples, nations, philosophies, and organizations. Though Satan himself is not large, but merely like the little pesky snake to those who know his tactics, still he has gathered to himself quite a large body — over seven billions of people!

So now the network that he runs is huge and powerful and intimidating and dominates the world, all religions, including the carnal church systems of man, the educational institutions, governments, military establishments, drug cartels, world finance and economy, the press, the citadels of immorality, and we could go on and on. He is no longer the inconspicuous little reptile of Adam's early world. He is the horn of worldly strength that Jesus claims makes him "the prince of this world." How is it that Satan began as a little serpent in Eden and ends as a great dragon in the book of Revelation? Because he dwells in the minds and hearts of men and men have built him up in their minds and by their words and actions and institutions have given to him such power and authority that the little serpent has been transformed into the great red dragon! The body of that dragon is man himself, but he is expressed through all the institutions, organizations, and administrations that are built by man and are dominated and controlled by that satanic spirit in man! He is not a powerful, perverted archangel that was kicked out of heaven in some primeval age, nor is he some sinister creature from outer space, nor yet a powerful, omniscient and omnipotent spirit. Oh, no! He exists in the mind and heart of man — he's in your mind and heart if you allow him to be! That's why the scripture admonishes, "...neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). How do you give place to the devil? WITH YOUR THOUGHTS, DESIRES, AND ACTIONS!

This brings us 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 physical belly, just as the word "heel" speaks of infinitely more than a location on the foot, and the word "head" speaks of something greater far than a mere physical head in the words of the next verse: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his **heel**" (Gen. 3:15). Large sections of scripture are couched in symbolic terms, hiding much of the "mysteries" of God in figurative language. This is done quite purposefully by the Lord that the unspiritual while "seeing" actually see not and "hearing" actually hear not (Mat. 13:10-17). The deep spiritual truth of the scriptures can be understood only in the spirit and by the spirit! 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.**" Such denotes a prolonged prostration and a depth of subjection as could never be conveyed or expressed in normal terms.

The very fact that God states that the serpent was now to crawl upon his belly, which obviously he had not done before, reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, from a greater to a lesser, from a higher and more mobile to a lower and more confined. Moving on his belly limits the sphere of the serpent's activity, now he can only creep along the ground. Previously he had access to loftier realms, his sphere of activity extended to higher domains — exalted realms of pure spirit expression — but he is now lowered to the dust-realm, into the world of the natural man, confined to the earthly and sensual, and restricted to action upon and expression through THE MAN OF DUST, as the Lord pronounced to Adam in that same encounter, "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). And to the serpent he said, "And dust (the fleshly, carnal nature of man) shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3:14). Truly this accounts for the words of the apostle, "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of

the air, **THE S-P-I-R-I-T THAT NOW WORKETH I-N THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE**" (Eph. 2:2).

Ah, yes, this evil spirit is IN MAN! When the ancient serpent was lowered into the dust realm, to crawl upon his belly and eat (find his satisfaction and fulfillment in) dust, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe! You do not meet the devil in rocks, trees, mountains, rivers, clouds, fish, birds, animals, nor on far-away planets, in distant galaxies, in flying saucers, nor in any other object or location outside of man. Can we not see that under the curse God limited Satan to the dust of the earth, to the realm of the first Adam, the natural man, the carnal mind — the man of dust! *"The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven"* (1 Cor. 15:47).

Many have seen the connection between Satan and the carnal mind and, not understanding the origins of these things, have assumed that the carnal mind is Satan. The truth, however, runs deeper than that — it goes to the spirit of the mind. In words fraught with eternal significance the inspired apostle exhorts, *"Be renewed in the S-P-I-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND"* (Eph. 4:23). As one has so aptly written, commenting on this verse, *"Note that it reads: In the spirit of your mind, for this is far more than just mental gymnastics of our own self-efforts. There are beneficial results in the power of positive thinking, even on natural realms. But true transformation comes when the change is in the SPIRIT of your mind."* It is more than merely the renewing of the mind, exchanging our carnal mind for His mind — it is the renewing of SPIRIT — the spirit of the mind or that which energizes and gives life to the nature of the mind. That is the mystery! When there is the exchange of spirit (energy force) — the spirit motivating our natural mind replaced by the spirit of Christ — then our mind is able to function on the divine plane. It becomes the norm of our life to just be thinking HIS thoughts, and desiring HIS ways and purposes, because of the establishment of His Spirit force within us. It is an absolute must to receive from a realm higher than Adam can give in order to have our minds renewed. Setting the will, making New Year's Resolutions, turning over a new leaf, taking group therapy — just won't cut it! The change comes in the realm of spirit, not by our self-efforts to change our way of thinking, believing, understanding, or acting.

Every decision that you have ever made or ever will make has its origin, intent, and power in the INVISIBLE REALM — the realm of spirit. Matters not whether it is a spiritual decision or a fleshly decision. You will never understand the mystery of life until you thoroughly know that there is a negative and a positive spirit force. The negative leads to death; the positive to life. The mind is the gateway, the channel through which these energy forces affect our lives. The thoughts, desires, and urges that come to us bear the characteristics of the spirit force operating in us. Let us notice what the apostle Paul has to say about the connection between mind, our actions, and life and death. *"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not proper; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them"* (Rom. 1:28-32). What a list! It includes the very wickedest things men do along with many "innocent sins" committed by religious people every day. All these things originate from a reprobate mind — from the world of thoughts and desires! They carry with them the power of death! Conversely, the "works of the spirit" which lead to life come also from mind — from the spirit within the renewed mind! Can you not see the mystery?

Through the fall Satan became one with man, incarnate in the unconscious mind and unseen heart, the energy force behind human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, selfish desires, exalted ego, distorted emotions, religious deception and perversion, unrighteous dispositions, in the

illusions and delusions of the sense-realm of the world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. May God graciously give us enlightenment to see that included with Satan is the kingdom of Satan; therefore, since Satan is in man, the kingdom of Satan is also in man. Satan is the prince of this world because the dominion was given to Adam, and Satan rules the world through the Adamic man. Furthermore, since Satan is intensely religious (was not his first conversation with Eve about religion — in fact quite a convincing sermon on theology!), religion also is included in the kingdom of Satan and is likewise in man and spawned out of man. That is why the natural man is, in his unregenerate state, inherently religious! And that also explains why all of mankind's religions are both false and demonic! The first Adam is not a small man! On the contrary, he is a big, all-inclusive man! The whole vast realm of reality, positive and negative, is **CENTRALIZED AND PERSONIFIED IN MAN!** And it is right there that the angel finds the dragon when he lays hold upon him and binds him with his chain, and casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him! Meditate on that and you will begin to see the picture!

There are many commonly held theories about your adversary. Notice I said, "*your* adversary." Satan is not God's adversary. There is not one scripture in the whole Bible that speaks of Satan as an adversary of God! The preachers don't know that. The churches don't know that. Even the professors in the theological seminaries have never studied deeply enough to discover that. God doesn't have any enemies — they are all under His feet! That is not semantics, it is not just a cute or clever play on words — that's the truth. "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about (in man), seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Pet. 5:8). Your adversary the devil is your adversary. That means two things. First, he is not God's adversary. Second, we do have an adversary. In the realm of God's Spirit and the Christ life he is defeated. He is on a short leash, but he still has a mouth — influence. The book of Revelation speaks of the mouth of the dragon which speaks great things and blasphemies. He wasn't always a dragon; he started out first as just a little serpent, one who hisses. That is the meaning of the word for serpent in the Old Testament Hebrew. He was a hisser. Now as a dragon he has a mouth speaking great things!

As we have seen, since the serpent was cursed he has no arms or legs. He has a mouth, but he has no arms or legs. So he goes about seeking a people who will give him arms and legs, a people he can influence, control, walk in, manifest and speak through. By the time you get the serpent of Genesis 3 to Revelation 12 he has grown from a little serpent to a monstrous dragon. How did the serpent become a dragon? Paul exhorted the saints, "*Give no place to the devil*" (Eph. 4:27). Somebody gave him place! Somebody gave him undue, unwarranted authority and expression. Somebody came to church and preached more about the devil than they did about Christ. Somebody stood up and testified like an idiot and all they talked about was the devil, the devil this, the devil that, the devil has been after me all week, God was trying to do such and such, but the devil hindered and derailed the plan. Somebody gave him arms and legs and a mouth speaking great things! The truth is, billions of people have done so! And that is how the serpent became the dragon. And the only thing that will defeat the mouth of the dragon is the **MOUTH OF THE LORD!** The chain in the angel's hand with which he binds the devil is the chain of **TRUTH — THE LIVING WORD OF GOD!**

The Greek word for a "devil" is daimon and some authorities say that it means "the knowing one." As you can see in his first conversation with Eve, he is certainly the one who presumes that he knows it all! So the way to outsmart that rascal is to be invested with a higher intelligence. And Paul says of the saints, "*We have the mind of Christ*" (1 Cor. 2:16). Think of it! Most Christians, not to speak of preachers, don't really know the scriptures. They have no idea what the Bible actually says about "our adversary." The tales they spin about him are pure fiction — myths, legends, folklore, and fairy tales! But the testimony of God standeth sure: "*Greater is HE that is in you, than HE that is in the world!*" Oh, my earnest desire is to see the One who lives in you, who has **ALL AUTHORITY AND POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH**, be released and come forth! By His divine life and living word and omnipotent power you hold

right within your hand the very CHAIN that Christ has brought down from the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord for the binding of the dragon!

Men make two mistakes about Satan. Either they make him all important, or not important at all. To some the adversary is such an imposing, powerful, and formidable foe that they talk more about his exploits than they do about Jesus. Others shoot off into the other direction and deny that there even is an adversary to be concerned about. Just as Jesus is both a lion and a lamb, the devil is both a lion and a serpent. We have said that there is no devil outside of man — and that is true! However, when the devil in man projects himself into an outward manifestation so that events in the outer world are influenced, directed, changed, and controlled by his power — there is a devil without! The devil without is the emanation of the devil within. Just as you are the temple of the Holy Spirit and God is in you, yet God can flow through you to the outer world, so does the devil flow through and out from man. All the evils and sorrows and wars and tyrannies and troubles in the world today are infallible testimony to that fact! Just as the presence and power of Christ can change the very atmosphere and condition in a place, or a community, or a nation by His expression and emanation from a people, so Satan also can change the atmosphere and condition of a place and move upon people and things, even from without, although the outward manifestation has its source within. One of the adversary's tactics by which he rules is the spirit of fear. And one of his chief weapons is suggestion: "*Hath God said?*" Every thought you have has its source in either God, man, or the devil. It is conceived in the mind and expressed through words and actions. You create the world you live in by the thoughts of your mind, the words of your mouth, and the deeds of your body. You not only create your own world, but the world of all you touch.

There is an intense and indescribable longing in my heart to make at least the called and chosen elect of God truly get the good news that Jesus has triumphed, He has come down out of the heavens of the Spirit having a great chain in His hand, and He has laid hold upon the dragon, and has bound him; He bound the strongman, He judged the prince, and He divided the spoils — He has shared with us His victory! Yes, He won it within Himself, and first of all for Himself, but now He dwells within us in mighty spirit power! And today the Christ is rising up within His body, His people, His called-out ones, by His spirit, by His word, and in His omnipotent authority and power!

An event in the life of David serves as a beautiful illustration of how Christ has shared with us the spoils of His own victory. It was in the days when David and his mighty men were fighting against the enemies of Israel and Saul was after David to kill him. At one-point David, fearing that Saul would get him, went into the land of the Philistines and begged Achish, a prince of Gath, to be allowed to dwell in his country. The prince, confiding in David, assigned him to the country of Ziklag, some forty miles south of Gath. Betraying the confidence of his prince, David led his private army of six hundred men into the wilderness of Shur, south of Philistia, where he attacked three tribes, ancient inhabitants of the land. The record states, "And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish" (I Sam. 27:9).

But while David spent time with Achish, a disaster befell his adopted country of Ziklag. As David and his men returned to Ziklag they found the town smoldering in the ruins of a fire. They fell to weeping when they failed to find their wives. Not a woman could be found anywhere, dead or alive. The Amalekites (a type of the flesh) had invaded the south of Judah and Philistia. They had sacked the towns and carried away the women. They did not slay any of them, great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. David prayed and asked the Lord what he should do about it. The Lord answered him, saying, "Pursue — for surely you will overtake them and recover all." So David and his Six Hundred pursued the enemy, overtook them, defeated them, and recovered all their wives and children, and captured all the herds and goods that the Amalekites had which they had plundered from the land. David then sent a portion of the spoil to the elders of Judah, saying, "Behold, a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of *the Lord!*"

The message is just this — the enemy had stolen away the most precious possessions of David and his men, just as our adversary has robbed from man his true inheritance in the kingdom of God. But David, the type of Christ, went and engaged the enemy and **“recovered all.”** Oh, yes, our mighty Christ came and faced down the adversary and within Himself He, too, **RECOVERED ALL!** The grandest of all truths is that **CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD!** If you want to know what God had in mind when He said, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness,” you have only to look at Jesus Christ. If you want to know what was man’s inheritance in that long ago beginning, you have only to look at Jesus Christ. That is what God meant! That is what belonged to man! “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (who know not who nor where they are): in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of **CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD,** should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). Truly, “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...**taking a place and rank by which He Himself became...superior to angels” (Heb. 1:3-4, Amplified).

How totally inadequate do words become in the light of words of such wonder as these! Jesus is the prototype of what God intends man to be, of what man was in the beginning. He is God’s finished product; what every man should be and ultimately will be. Man’s full inheritance, all the wisdom, knowledge, peace, love, incorruptible life, power, and glory that pertains to man is shed forth in the life of Christ Jesus. The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. Jesus came, defeated the enemy that had plundered man’s inheritance, took him captive, bound him in the great chain of His omnipotent command, and within Himself **RECOVERED ALL!** And now, blessed be His glorious name, **HE IS DIVIDING THE SPOILS WITH HIS OWN!**

Someone says, “We’re going to take back what the devil stole.” No way! Who are you? Whom do you think you are? The firstborn Son of God took it all back two thousand years ago and it is **HE** who is dividing the spoils. You may now appropriate His victory, but you are not taking anything back, because that implies the rascal still has something. If you bind him in some way it is with *Christ’s* chain, it is by His word, His faith, His authority, and His power which He has given you as part of the spoils of **HIS VICTORY.** So far as Christ is concerned, the serpent has gone on his belly, he is chained with the great chain of the truth as it is in Jesus, he is in the pit with no bottom (no ground or rights to stand upon), the lid has been shut upon him, and the seal that was once upon the rock of Christ’s tomb, which He stripped away when He arose from hell and the grave, is now securely attached to the cover of the pit. He has no arms and legs and he can’t climb out. If you want to give him some, that’s up to you. David recovered all and then went back to the elders of Judah and said, “Behold, here is a present for you of the spoils.” **HIS** victory is yours today! If you are struggling and fighting with the devil today, either God and I are lying to you, or you have given the adversary unwarranted authority and an illegal place in your life.

THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit” (Rev. 20:1).

Keys are used to lock and unlock things. Metaphorically, a key is an answer or means or agent or instrument used to find the secret of, or the remedy for, a problem or situation. “I found the key to success.” “I found the key to overcoming disease.” “I have the keys (understanding) of the kingdom of God.” In this case the key that the messenger brings locks away an old way of thinking and an old manner of living and releases the mind and nature and power of the Christ. It locks up the curse and releases the powers of redemption!

In chapter nine Christ used the same key to unlock the bottomless pit and many ungodly things came into manifestation out of the smoke from the pit. With the key to the bottomless pit

the Lord opens the pit, the abyss of our own heart, and brings forth a revelation of what is in the pit. We have all had God open up the depths of our carnal life and reveal things out of the imaginations and wickedness of our heart that even we never dreamed were there! A dealing of God came and revealed ourselves to ourselves, making manifest the things that lurked in the darkness of our human heart. There is a time for the pit to be opened, and there is also a time for the pit to be closed and sealed. We need to clearly understand how the pit is closed and what is the "seal" that secures it!

I have found that there is a tendency in each of us to try and place the carnal mind and human heart under law and make them submit. Any man who tries to discipline and control the flesh by laws, commandments, rules, regulations, or resolutions, whether imposed from without or within, has not yet learned the important truth that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be**" (Rom. 8:7). You cannot by any self-effort make the natural man submit. Therefore we must look elsewhere for the answer. The answer, of course, is the key! Let us UNDERSTAND! "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And HE laid hold on the dragon...and HE cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him..." Now let us consider some pertinent questions. In this symbolic scene, who is it that has the key to the abyss? An angel! Where is the angel from? From heaven! Therefore, where did the key to the abyss come from? From heaven! What did the angel do? He bound the devil, shut him up in the pit, and locked it with the key! How, then, as some assert, could Satan be the one who has the key? Impossible! Who is it that has bound, and does bind, the power of Satan? Our Lord Jesus Christ! Who is the symbolic "angel from heaven" all through the book of Revelation? Christ is! And who is it that throughout the book of Revelation is said to hold the keys of death, hell, and the pit? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAS THE KEYS! Can we not see by this that all our self-efforts to overcome are futile, all the external laws, commandments, rules, and regulations of religion are worthless, only a higher power can prevail — it is Christ in you the hope of glory who has the key, the answer, the solution, the means, the agency, the instrument, the ability, the power, the secret to your ultimate and eternal victory over your adversary!

THE CHAIN

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon...and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:1-2).

There is a slight difference between the wording of the King James Bible and the Greek text. The angel carries the chain on his hand rather than in his hand. The key is in the angel's hand; the chain, however, is on the hand, that is, rolled up around it. The chain is a "great" chain, that is, it is long and heavy: for it is to hold the great and strong dragon. His jailor is duly furnished for his office. This signifies a ministry, a spiritual ministry! The angel of course stands for the revelation, manifestation, expression, word, and ministration of Christ by the Spirit in and through a people who have "put on Christ." This gives me great hope and expectation! A great chain — a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. There is a ministry, there is a word, there is an authority which is strong, powerful, complete, unbroken, having no weak links, fully able to bind the devil in this great day of the Lord! This ministry flows in some measure at this present time and shall yet flow in mighty fullness through those who grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

A chain signifies anything that prevents free action. Error is sometimes called a chain. Love is a chain that holds its captives enslaved. Pride and tradition are also chains that make us slaves to custom. The law of our parents is said by scripture to be as a chain about our neck. In this case the chain could be none of these things, for it is held by a "messenger," signifying a strong and powerful WORD OF THE LORD. It can only be the living word of God's Christ! This is the word that shall cause the earth to be "full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). The devil is strongly and securely bound by the chain of TRUTH. It should

be obvious to any spiritual mind that Satan being a spirit, the only "chain" that can effectively bind him — restrain or defeat him — is a "spirit-chain," the omnipotent word of God! The world's greatest battle between man and Satan was fought in the life of the firstborn Son of God, who faced the adversary down, declaring, "It is written!" And He is the pattern, the forerunner, the prototype for all the manifest sons of God who shall rise up in His fullness!

Jesus bound the devil everywhere He went! When the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, He told them, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children (the Jewish exorcists) cast them out? But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom (authority) of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house" (Mat. 12:26-29). Ah, yes, Jesus had already bound the strong man, the devil himself, otherwise He would not have been able to go about plundering his house — casting out devils, healing those whom Satan had bound, and destroying the works of the devil! This firstborn Son carried on His hand the great chain of the living, energetic, and powerful word of the Lord, for He was within Himself THE WORD MADE FLESH!

"When even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word and healed all that were sick" (Mat. 8:16). "And 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 shall be healed" (Mat. 8:8). "And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with **power**...and they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out" (Lk. 4:32,36). "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven" (Mat. 16:19).

THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:2-3).

Nowhere has there been more ignorance manifested than on this subject of the "bottomless pit." This message would be very simple and quickly told if we were to take everything in chapter twenty literally. Many people have the idea that the bottomless pit is "hell" somewhere in the center of the earth. Vast numbers of Christians will believe almost anything about such literalistic and carnal-minded notions. I'm certain some of my readers remember that story from back in the early 1990's about the geologists in Russia who dug so deep they actually heard screams from the people in hell. What a source of excited chatter that became among multitudes of fundamentalist and evangelical Christians! The following report by a brother in Christ reveals the fallacy of such rumors. He writes:

"Well, a man named Rich Buhler finally investigated it. TBN ran the story (about the Russian geologists) after getting it from two sources. The first was a Norwegian man named Age Rendalen. They translated it from a Finnish newspaper, *Ammennusatia*, given to them by R. W. Schamback, supposedly a 'respected scientific journal.' It is not. It is a monthly publication by Finnish Christians. They got it by word of mouth from someone who remembered reading it in the Finnish newspaper, *Etela Soumen*. They said it was not a news article at all, but in a section of letters where people could write anything they wanted. The elderly man who wrote the article said he got it from a Christian newsletter called *Vaeltajat*, published by Finnish missionaries. The editor of *Vaeltajat* said it was printed in their July, 1989 issue. He had received it from a reader who got it from a newsletter called *Jewels of Jericho*, published by a group of Jewish Christians in California. Rich Buhler concludes his report with, 'And that is where the Finnish trail came to an end.' Except that he also contacted Age Rendalen, the

Norwegian who had first confirmed the story to TBN. He said, 'I fabricated every word of it! I couldn't believe that the hosts (of the TV show) really thought the story was true and that they would broadcast it without apparently having checked it out!'"

Many years ago there was a man in Stockton, Kansas who had a well which went dry all at once and began to emit sulphurous fumes. A coal mine in the neighborhood had tapped it, causing this phenomenon. He went deranged about it. He thought the bottom of the well had dropped into hell, and the devil was coming out there. Each morning, by daylight, for weeks on end, he would station himself by the well-curb, ax in hand, and through the entire day would watch for Satan, intending to hit him on the head should he show himself. May I add to this — not wiser is any child of God who imagines the devil to be some localized entity outside himself, and the bottomless pit, or even hell, to be a hole in the ground! It is carnal-minded, man-made religion that tells us such fairy tales, that there is a literal pit somewhere in the heart of the earth, or in some other extremity of God's vast universe, where Satan will one day be cast and he will never find the bottom of it. It is a source of wonder to me that it has never occurred to these people that Satan is a spirit — why would he need a bottom to a pit? With all emphasis I must declare that both the pit and its bottom — and the great chain as well! — are in any literal or physical sense totally irrelevant to a spirit entity!

Now, what do we mean by a bottomless pit? The Greek word for bottomless is *abussos* which is derived from a root word meaning "depthless." In Greek it is called the "pit of the *abussos*" from which we derive our English word *abyss*! Perhaps it would be better translated as the "pit of the *abyss*" or the "pit of the unfathomable *depth*." "Bottomless" is a good translation of this word, for the thought of the Greek is that it is that whose depths are unmeasurable. As soon as one attempts to suppose a physical or literal reality corresponding to this picture-image, he falls into endless difficulty. My impression is that we have here a spiritual picture of a character and nature. It is true that righteousness and truth are related not only with light, but also with height, and evil and error are associated not only with darkness, but also with depth. Tracing backward to the root word *abussos*, it is interesting to note that *abussos* is a variation of *buthos* which means "profundity." It becomes, then, a profundity which in its spiritual meaning signifies a thought or a nature — so deep as to be beyond the comprehension of the natural mind!

Bear with me as I repeat again the great truth that the book of Revelation is a spiritual book. The next thing we need to remember in order to understand this great mystery is that like everything else in the book the scenes that John beheld in chapter twenty are all symbols standing for spiritual realities, both positive and negative. That the "bottomless pit" or the "abyss" in the symbolisms of scripture portrays the human heart is beautifully expressed by the prophet David. David, in describing the wickedness within man, says, "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity...they encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search (plumbing the depths): both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart **IS DEEP**" (Ps. 64:2-6). The heart is a deep! The Hebrew word used here means not only something deep, but "deeper than" other things. The heart of the natural man is his deepest and innermost sense of being. The heart is the root of all human expression and identity.

The heart is indeed the well-spring of what is called "human nature." Of that nature Jesus said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come (arise) from (deep) within and **defile the man**" (Mk. 7:18-23). We must conclude, then, that the heart of man is the very lowest realm of man's being! We have spoken often in these messages of the fact that practically everything in the book of Revelation takes place in one of three realms: heaven, earth, and sea. But now, as we come to this place of the binding of Satan we are faced with an *abyss* — something deeper, more hidden and secret, and profound than any of the three realms that preceded it! The *abyss*

is lower than the mountains, deeper than the earth, deeper than the rivers, deeper than the fountains of waters, and deeper than the deepest sea! It is the lowest realm, unseen, unknown, and depthless.

Therefore, the great mystery and the great truth that the Holy Spirit is seeking to reveal to those who can receive it and understand it is that there is a dimension of man's being which is not a result or a manifestation of anything else, but lies so deep within us that it is indeed the secret and hidden root and cause of all the evil that pertains to the world of natural men. The bottomless pit or abyss is downward, lower, in those regions beneath anything that can be observed or understood in our human lives. It is from this subterranean region of darkness that the bestial nature of man and the lying spirits of the false prophet arise. While it is a dark, evil world within us, it is also a religious world. The beastly false prophet arises up out of the earth in chapter thirteen. And Jesus lists "deceit" among the evils that arise out of the depths of man's heart. Oh, yes! Deceit was the very art the serpent employed in the religious realm to seduce mother Eve to transgress! Sometimes the Lord's elect fail to see that our natural heart is just like everyone else's Adamic heart, and every son of God must clearly perceive, understand, and overcome the very basest things, including the carnal religious things and powers that lie hidden, concealed, and buried in the unseen depths of the old, natural human heart. And just as these evil things come from deep within and rise up out of the heart (where Satan dwells!) to manifest in the earth-realm of our flesh, so, if they are to be restrained, it is right there in that depth that they must be bound, cast down, shut up, and the seal set upon them! Can you not see the mystery?

Jesus said that the very first commandment is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with *all thy soul*..." (Mk. 12:30). Here we see two different parts of our being — the heart and the soul. Obviously, each of these also has parts, for the command is to love the Lord with all (the parts of) our heart, and all (the parts of) our soul! These are both "inward parts" of our being and not outward physical parts of our body. The three main parts or divisions of man are body, soul, and spirit. Yet each of these has many parts! It is easy to realize that the body has many parts, but most people have not considered that the soul and the spirit must also have parts! And there are parts beyond these which are called the "hidden parts." "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Ps. 51:6). According to the intent of this passage, and others, the word "heart" does not refer to the physical organ located in our chest that pumps blood through our body. A study of the use of this word in the scriptures will show this to be true. The heart in scripture is the most interior portion of a person's life. In the Old Testament, the word "heart" comes from the Hebrew word *leb*. That word is used very widely for those things which spring out of man's nature. The word is taken from a prime root meaning "to be enclosed." It has reference to the deepest and most profound interior of a person!

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this when he penned these inspired words: "The HEART is deceitful above all things, and desperately **wicked**," and then he went on to ask the searching question, "**who can know it?**" (Jer. 17:9). Indeed, WHO CAN KNOW IT! That is to say, WHO CAN PLUMB ITS DEPTHS AND FIND ITS BOTTOM? To the enlightened mind of this prophet, the power of deceitfulness and the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of any man to comprehend! This heart of deceit and iniquity is buried so far down in man's being that no one can search it out or ever find it! No spiritual "spelunker" has ever descended down far enough to discover its ultimate depths or its awesome power!

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 under the pretense of some important responsibilities in a distant town, when in actuality he was going to spend the remainder of that week with his 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 often deceived by our own hearts! There is a deeper part to all of us — a part that only God knows! We should not find this so utterly astounding were it not for one important thing. Jeremiah did not list an exception, saying, "The heart is deceitful above all things — **EXCEPT THE DEVIL!**" He stated in no uncertain terms that the heart of man is deceitful above all things — PERIOD! There can be no mistake, for Jeremiah wrote under the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit! If the heart is deceitful above all things, it naturally follows that there is nothing anywhere, not in heaven above, not in earth beneath, nor under the earth, nor in the depths of the sea, nor in the lowest regions of all depths, that is more deceitful. The heart of man, then, is the **MOST DECEITFUL THING IN THE UNIVERSE!** So — if you want to put the lid on the most deceitful thing of all, and the most wicked thing of all, and shut it up, and seal it up, so that it cannot escape or express or manifest itself in the visible world in any way or on any level — what realm would you seal? You would seal the human heart together with the "beast," the "serpent," yes, the "dragon" **WHOSE THRONE IS THERE!**

In future messages we will see just how Satan is bound, restrained, rendered powerless in the heart of man. But let me close this message by saying that those who have been quickened by the Lord no longer live in the sin and death consciousness of the old Adamic man. We have been awakened to a consciousness that is beyond the human heart, for we have received revelation-knowledge in our spirit! This new birth separates us in our consciousness from the old so that we can know God in our spirit and hear what the spirit is saying! As we walk after the spirit we grow in the realization and knowledge of our true inner man, as it were a parallel universe within ourself, Christ — we learn that we are partakers of the divine nature, we now become righteousness conscious and life conscious and live and move and have our being in the life of our Father, God. The Holy Spirit brings us the knowledge of our sonship and we understand that we are members of the family of God, or the divine family which is God! Until we are quickened to know that we are sons and daughters of God, we do not have the spiritual energy to chain the devil, bind him, cast him into the bottomless pit, shut him up, and set the seal upon him. But the truth does make us free! The ransomed spirit is full of omnipotent, divine energy and its power is being raised up within all of God's called and separated elect, enabling us to overcome the world, the flesh, and **THE DEVIL!** We are learning to overcome our own hearts! Isn't it wonderful!

Chapter 218

The Binding Of Satan (continued)

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and *bound him a thousand years*" (Rev. 20:1-2).

If I titled this message "**The Millennium**," what would that mean to you? Have you heard that one day Jesus is coming back to earth again, and when He comes He will pass through the "Eastern Gate" into the city of Jerusalem, set up His kingdom on earth, and establish Jerusalem as the world capital for one thousand years? Some Old Testament prophecies which point forward to the kingdom of God on earth speak of all nations going up to Jerusalem on mules and ox carts to keep new moons and holy days. There are even references to a temple there which will be the scene of animal sacrifices which God will accept as sin offerings. This is the type of "millennium" that multitudes of Christians envision! But will Jesus really come to the earthly Jerusalem and oversee animal sacrifices, worship in a temple made with hands, celebrate new moons and feast days, and receive millions of people riding on mules and ox carts? Will He really reign over the earth as a temporal king for the literal period of one thousand years? John the Revelator uses the term "a thousand years," but none of these other things are taught anywhere in the New Testament — in fact, the very idea of any of them is contradicted again and again by both Jesus and the apostles. The only sacrifice for sin has already been made "once and for all" by the Lamb of God! The only Jerusalem from which Christ reigns is that New Jerusalem which comes down from God out of heaven! And the term "a thousand years" is used in connection with the kingdom of God only here in the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation — and not in any other "kingdom prophecy" in the entire Bible!

Six times the expression "a thousand years" occurs in this chapter. Three times it refers to the binding of Satan, and three times to the reigning of those souls who are made alive in Christ. Must we accept this literally? Is the bottomless pit a literal pit? Is the chain that binds Satan a literal chain? Is the seal placed upon the pit to keep Satan from getting out a literal seal? Are the thrones the quickened souls sit upon actual and literal seats? Is the thousand years a literal time period? There are sixty-six books in the Bible, and I have forgotten how many chapters and verses, but nowhere else between the covers of this Book is there a single reference to a reign of Christ for "a thousand years." If six verses had been omitted from this chapter, the idea of Christ reigning on earth for a thousand years would never have entered anyone's mind! A single passage, such as this, sitting as it is in the midst of all the symbolism of the book of Revelation, should not be used to explain other passages of scripture in the Bible by taking it to have a natural fulfillment instead of a spiritual one. Many take this one passage of scripture and try to fit every other prophecy of the kingdom of God into a supposed meaning of it, thereby distorting the meaning of the many other passages. To base an argument for a temporal reign of Christ for the precise period of one thousand years on a highly symbolic and figurative passage in the most allegorical book in the Bible is rather precarious business!

The "thousand years" is the longest period of time referred to in the Revelation. By what right does anyone declare that everything in the passage is symbolic or figurative except the "thousand years," which must be taken literally? If all other numbers in the book had a strictly literal fulfillment then we would have to agree that this one should also. But let me ask — does the Lamb in the midst of the throne actually have seven horns and seven eyes? Were there literally two hundred million galloping horsemen, no more, no less? Did a little stream of human blood, bridle deep to horse and two hundred miles long, actually flow from a winepress where grapes were trodden under foot? Were there seven thousand, not one more nor one less, slain in the earthquake? Ah, these are all word-pictures portraying beautiful and powerful spiritual

truths! Let us with bowed head and shoes removed from our feet see if we cannot stand on that holy ground where we are enabled by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to catch the Holy Spirit's object as He teaches by the comparative object-lesson method.

All scripture attaches a symbolical significance to numbers, as it also does to colors and dimensions. Numbers such as one, two, three, four, six, seven, ten, and twelve, and their combinations and products, represent certain realities and qualities of either the world or the kingdom of God. People often think of time when they view the events portrayed in the book of Revelation, but my prayer is that the Holy Spirit may enlighten all to see that the order of the book is not chronological in time, but chronological in our SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. It's not about cosmic chronology; it's about spiritual chronology. We do not move from one scene to the next based on the passing of time, or the arrival of a particular date, but when we are prepared for it in our experience of growth and development in the spirit and the new spiritual conditions that brings for us and through us to the whole creation. It has nothing whatever to do with days, months, years, decades, centuries, or millenniums — it is experiential chronology rather than time chronology!

In keeping with the spiritual usage of Bible numbers we are told in Revelation 13:18, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of man." Yes, man has a number, and it is six hundred sixty-six! Throughout scripture six is the number of man. Here in Revelation the sixes denote flesh. Six hundred sixty-six means flesh and more flesh! When you "count" or "calculate" the significance of the number of the beast you find that it is the number of man, the man of flesh, the natural man and the carnal mind. That is the meaning of the number! It is the number of man's bestial nature and character filling the earth with bestial manifestations, works, philosophies, systems, institutions, and organizations. The whole world system of things is nothing but flesh!

The Holy Spirit has also given us the number of the sons of God reigning with Christ a thousand years. We know that the 144,000 in chapter fourteen of the Revelation are counted and found to have the Father's name written in their foreheads in the same way that the men of the earth-realm bear the mark or number of the beast in their foreheads. Neither of these are tattoos or electronic chips! This signifies people having the mind of either the beast or of the Father. These are symbols that point to spiritual realities. These hundred and forty-four thousand are not the whole number of God's redeemed people. In verse four of chapter fourteen the 144,000 are called "the firstfruits" unto God and the Lamb. They are, therefore, the elite among all of God's people — a select company, called and chosen ones, the feet of which stand upon an eminence — mount Zion, the mount signifying kingship and dominion. Thus, the "firstfruits" are not firstfruits merely in the order of time, but of divine purpose — that ground of precedence to which Paul alludes when he says, "Every man shall rise in his own order." The writer to the Hebrews referred to those who seek a "better resurrection." And the Lord Jesus Himself often spoke of those who would be "greatest" in the kingdom of heaven. This theme abounds throughout all the types and prophecies of scripture, from Genesis to Revelation!

In interpreting scripture, one of the worst things that can be done is to take numbers and interpret them literally rather than discovering the meaning of the number. In other words, the key to the understanding of a passage with numbers is the value of the number. So, then, we need to ask the Lord, "What does this number 144,000 mean?" The explanation is that $144,000 = 12 \times 12 \times 1000$. Twelve in scripture is the number denoting divine government. We will not take time to explain that here, as it is only incidental to our present thought. Now, twelve times twelve is twelve squared by itself, yielding the number 144. One hundred forty-four is thus the divine government of God brought to its highest expression. It is divine government multiplied by divine government — the absolute fullest and most ultimate manifestation of the kingdom of God! Then the number 144 is multiplied by the number "one thousand," giving it an even greater fullness.

We need to note a feature that very, very few have seen here. The term "millennium" is, of course, another of those man-made expressions like the term "rapture" which doesn't actually appear in scripture. It is the word which is used to express the "thousand years" spoken of in our text. But where the modern church has stumbled here is that she has missed for the most part God's definition of this thousand years because she knows not the biblical name for it. She, being ignorant of God's name, has in her darkness built up an elaborate system of myths and fairy tales around the name she invented. The carnal mind always misses every spiritual fulfillment of the visions of John on Patmos! Here is wisdom: God's name for the thousand years is "The Day of the Lord," also called the "Day of Christ." One thousand is the number signifying THE DAY OF THE LORD. The apostle Peter makes this very plain in his second epistle, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as **one day**" (II Pet. 3:8). There is deep mystery here. Yet this lofty thought should assure us beyond doubt that the "thousand years" means more than the idea that every period of one thousand years is counted as one "day" with God. That may be true, but beyond that it reveals the great truth that the term "thousand years" stands for THE DAY OF THE LORD. It is the LORD'S DAY!

As I have been taught by the Holy Spirit I have come to see that the "millennial reign" of Christ is not necessarily a one thousand year period. I would like to think it is much more than that, if you want to count years! To reign with Christ for a thousand years means to rule with Christ in the illumination, glory, and power of the day of the Lord! This is not a mathematical number, denoting an exact duration of earth-time, but a spiritual number revealing the reality it stands for — the unlimited, never-ending, infinite day of the Lord! The day of the Lord is the day of His illumination, of His arising and bright shining, of His revelation and unveiling, of His glory, majesty, and power. Oh, yes! And this is what manifest sonship is all about, a people formed into the full and ultimate expression of the divine government of God, bringing to pass in the earth the illumination, glory, and power of the eternal DAY OF THE LORD! It is 12 X 12 X 1000. That is what it means! Therefore, reigning with Christ a thousand years is not telling us how long the reign will be, but signifies the type of reign it is. It is not speaking of a definite period of time, but the quality of that reign. If we can "count the number" of that reign, we can understand the sum of the matter.

While the day of the Lord certainly has a chronological reality to it, the day of the Lord is first and foremost a state of being, a state of illumination, understanding, knowledge, consciousness, and experience. The day of the Lord is the garden of Eden, it's the sabbath of God, it's the cessation of the flesh, and the strivings, desires, and anxieties of the carnal mind. It's the ceasing of trying by soulish strength to think up and work up the nature, will, ways, and purposes of God, and it's entering instead into the power of His life, light, and glory. It's the discovering and unveiling of the Christ within! That's what John discovered in Revelation 20:1-6. He discovered the Most Holy Place. There is a people on the earth today that is beginning to experience the reality and fulfillment of all that the prophets prophesied of through the ages. The third day, the third feast of Israel, and the third realm in God are all pre-figured by the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle of Moses with its dimensions of ten cubits wide, ten cubits long, and ten cubits high — one thousand cubits square! Those dimensions correspond precisely with the "thousand years" of John's vision, for one thousand is a figure composed of 10 X 10 X 10. Beyond the veil, in the Most Holy Place, the one thousand cubits point to the one thousand years of the reign of God's elect upon the thrones of judgment. Both measurements are symbolisms representing the reign of Christ and all the holy sons of God in the power of the kingdom of God and the brightness of the day of the Lord!

John discovered the Throne Zone! He discovered the glory of the day of the Lord! He discovered those realities that exist beyond the outward, visible, physical realm, hidden away in the Most Holy Place of His Shekinah! He discovered the power of the kingdom of God! He discovered the feast of tabernacles! He discovered the full salvation of the third day! He saw Satan bound and He saw souls on thrones reigning in the glory of God! He saw resurrection power! He saw the ministry of kings and priests! The old order church system had passed away

and a NEW DAY had dawned! God was doing a new thing, and great would be the glory thereof!

I do not expect men to love me for pointing out that the understanding of even some who call themselves sons of God has not progressed one whit beyond that of the theologians in the carnal church systems of man in these things! The fact is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, did not preach even one sermon about the "millennium" publicly to the multitudes that followed Him, nor did He teach it privately to His disciples when He opened to them the scriptures and explained the meaning of His parables, either before or after His death and resurrection. And yet, all of His teaching concerned the kingdom of God! Think about it — He was completely silent on this now popular doctrine! The apostles, in their epistles, are likewise stone silent on the subject of a thousand year reign of Christ. The Holy Spirit did show them "things to come," as Jesus promised, but a thousand year kingdom was never proclaimed as one of those things.

Now, don't misunderstand me! I do not say that the coming age, which is only the next stage of the unfolding of the kingdom of God, will not last for one thousand years. It may. Or, it may not. I will not debate the point with any man. What I am saying is just this: Of all the wealth of scripture truth nothing is more certain or clear than the great fact that the book of Revelation is a symbolic and spiritual book. Can we not see by this that the spiritual meaning of a "thousand years" is something grander by far than a mere time period of a number of years? There is no value whatever in the letter of the Word! It is when a man begins to see the spirit of the Word that truth and reality are quickened as life within. My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven for that divine, eternal, life-giving wisdom which is the secret of His own heart!

In Bible usage, one thousand is a round, indefinite number. Psalm 50:10 states, "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills." Does that mean only a thousand? When you get to the second thousand hills do all the cattle belong to someone other than the Lord? In like manner, does the kingdom of Christ last a thousand years, or does it stand forever? We know that the kingdom of Christ does not last only for a thousand years, for according to various scriptures Christ is the King of the ages, He is also the King eternal, and one scripture says that of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end! Do the sons of God reign with Christ for a thousand years, or do they reign throughout all ages until all things are subdued unto the Father, until creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption — meaning the last enemy is destroyed — and God is "all in all"? Is the kingdom really an "age" at all — or is it not rather a LIVING POWER AND REALITY! "God keeps covenant and mercy unto a thousand generations," says the prophet (Deut. 7:9). Does His mercy end there? "He commanded His word to a thousand generations" (Ps. 105:8). Does God's word become void at the end of the thousand generations? It should be clear to any thinking mind that the thousand is not literal in any of these. These expressions were intended to show the quality of God's faithfulness in respect to any given promise or blessing, and not the precise length of the time involved. To put the emphasis on the time expression itself would defeat the very meaning and purpose of it, because if God is faithful to His covenant and His word time-wise for exactly a thousand generations, who would want to live in the time periods beyond that? They speak figuratively of an abiding principle and the unchanging character of God throughout all generations and ages! The same is true with respect to the one thousand year binding of Satan. The symbol was meant to show how thoroughly, not how long, the defeat of Satan is!

The figure ten is a symbol of earthly completeness, so ten times ten times ten, the cube of ten, or a thousand, is merely a symbol of multiple completeness or fullness. It is my conviction that it signifies something higher by far and something infinitely more meaningful and glorious than dates on the calendar! The thousand years in our text is the number ten in the third power, signifying a complete and total binding of Satan within man and a complete and total reigning with Christ IN THE FULLNESS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD. It bespeaks the intensity, the completeness, the comprehensiveness, the broadness, the extensiveness, the richness, and the totality of both the binding of Satan and the reign of Christ in and through His elect! The

essence of the millennium is within us now because in some measure the light, illumination, and the glory of the Lord has risen within His elect and to that degree we are even now reigning with Christ! It is a spiritual number signifying spiritual realities rather than a specific number of earth years. That is the mystery.

We live in a day when almost everyone, saint and sinner, recognizes that this is a crazy, mixed-up world we live in. But most preachers and multitudes of Christians are constantly talking about how bad it is and how dark it is getting. Hogwash! It might be getting dark in the world you live in, but in the kingdom I've been translated into "...the path of the just is as a SHINING LIGHT that shineth MORE and MORE *unto the perfect day*" (Prov. 4:18). Rotherham translates, "But the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, going on and brightening, unto meridian day." The Revised Standard Version reads, "...which shines brighter and brighter unto full day." The Moffatt translation says, "...like a ray of dawn, shines on and on unto the full light of Day." Young's Literal renders, "...going on and brightening till the Day is established." The Amplified Bible is so clear and expressive, "But the path of the uncompromisingly just and righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines more and more — brighter and clearer — until it reaches its full strength and glory in the perfect (to-be-prepared) Day."

Yes, many think Christ will come and reign for a thousand years — and He will, for one thousand years is as a day, and a day is as a thousand years, and that day is the Day of the Lord in your life. Individually, the thousand years is the symbol of a time in a person's walk where he experiences the power and glory of ruling and reigning with Christ in his life. It is the symbol of an attainment and ministry whereby the authority and power of God's Christ is expressed and revealed in and through us as sons of God. I know no words, be they many or few, that could more adequately establish that the term "thousand years" is the New Testament code-word for THE DAY OF THE LORD. The thousand years is the symbol of a time in the life of a son of God where he experiences the absolute and total binding of Satan, so that Satan is not only cast out of his heavens, as seen in chapter twelve of the Revelation, but is now effectively bound in his earth, until he can say in all confidence with the firstborn Son of God, "The prince of this world cometh, and ***hath nothing in me.***" The thousand years is the symbol of that place in the life of a son of God where he experiences the power and glory of ruling and reigning with Christ. It is not a literal thousand years, it signifies an attainment of reality, maturity, and ministry whereby the authority and power of God's Christ is revealed and expressed through us in its totality as the elect of God. It is dawning within us now, but must shine brighter and brighter until the full accomplishment and revelation of it. When Satan is bound in your life one hundred percent, when Christ rules in you one hundred percent, the brightness of the Day of the Lord has reached its zenith within your life. Again — it is not a date on the calendar — it is reality in the spirit!

The elect of the Lord who walk in the Spirit and are taught by the Spirit have little interest in dates and years, or in the passing of time. Our primary interest, yea, our all-consuming passion is to KNOW HIM in the fullness of Himself! Those who love God and hear His voice by the Spirit are learning the blessed and holy truth that God's purposes being worked out in the earth are not tied to dates on the calendar but to the spiritual growth and development within God's called and separated people. God's calendar is both spiritual and experiential, not natural, physical, or carnal. It is that we might experience Christ in the perfection of His nature, in the fullness of His spirit and power, in the accomplishment of His purposes, and in the unveiling of His sonship glory, that the creation might behold HIM in the dawn of the New Day. Then everything and everyone will be blessed and quickened because of what He has wrought in us, not merely because a date on the calendar has arrived. Only by the power of Christ raised up in us, the Light that He is, can anything anywhere be transformed by our hand. By His Light all darkness shall be dispelled. The arising of His glory, the dawning of His Day, is not a date to be calculated, but an attainment to be realized! It is the power of the voice of God, and the wonder of the work of God in His elect that alerts us to the reality of this Day — not dates, times, cycles, chronologies, prophecies, numbers, or calculations of any kind.

"YE are the light of the world," Jesus declared to His disciples. **THOSE WHO ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD ARE THE DAY OF THE LORD!** Nothing could be plainer than that. We who are of the Day, and are not lovers or sleepers of the night, have a high heritage. "For ye were one time darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: **walk as sons of light**" (Eph. 5:8). "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may **be sons of light**" (Jn. 12:36). "Ye are all the sons of light, and the sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others..." (I Thes. 5:5-6). We who have received the love of the truth and have been made the light of the world have a higher calling. We have privileges, and duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business! There must be a parting of the ways with all who walk in the night of sin, negativism, religious bondage and spiritual drunkenness. It is time to forsake the shame and error of former carnal and religious realms, and time to look up, time to arise and shine!

The Day is at hand! The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. The day of the Lord begins with those who are enlightened, cleansed of all error, bondage, and carnality, and clothed upon with the glory of Christ's presence, mind, and nature. The day of the Lord begins with those who have eyes to see the true purposes of God for this hour, and commit themselves to walk therein. There is glory and power and rejoicing and praise ahead for those who walk in the light of this new Day. This is the Day of deliverance, not bondage. The bands are broken. Christ is conqueror! HE holds the key to the bottomless pit, HE holds the great chain in His hand with which to bind the devil. Oh, yes — He reigns! We are not expecting the antichrist. We are not expecting the great tribulation. We are not expecting more darkness and gloominess, for we have met the Christ, we have witnessed His power, we have received His word, we have heard His heart, we have beheld His glory, and have been made one with His purposes. His hosts are invincible, and we are those hosts. Our coronation draws nigh. The kingdom of God is within us! Its glory overshadows us! Its light emanates from us! Those who are born of the Light which He is are now standing on new kingdom ground!

The firstborn sons of God are the Day of the Lord, for upon them is risen the glory of the Lord and they are the light of the world. I know what the church system has taught, but they taught a lie. They teach that the Day of the Lord is the seven-year tribulation at the end of the age. They teach that it is the day of God's vengeance, when the fullness of His wrath is poured out without mixture and without measure upon the nations and the inhabitants of the earth. They teach that the Day of the Lord is a period of horrible trouble, suffering, cataclysmic upheavals, atomic warfare, devastation, and darkness upon earth. They have no scriptural foundation. Yes, there was such a dark and gloomy "day of the Lord" upon Israel in the Old Testament, under the law, but the revelation of the New Testament about the Day of the Lord is a very different picture! I am making known a DAY unto you, beloved, and the Day I am proclaiming is the Day of the Lord, and it is upon us now. We must not be established upon the traditions of the elders, nor the doctrines of men. We must allow the Holy Spirit to unfold Christ, that we may know Him when He appears, in whatever form or manner He appears, that we miss not the Day of visitation as did the Jews of old.

A great light shined in the darkness, the greatest light that has ever been upon this earth and yet, to this day, they have not seen it and are still living and walking in darkness. The very glory of the Father was revealed to them as the scripture said it would be. All God ever could be or ever shall be was manifested before them in Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God. No greater light could have shone unto them than that light, because the Light of lights was there to see. Most of them did not recognize Him, neither did they suspect that the Lord of glory was right there in the midst of them. If they had entered into Him, He would not have declared that another day yet remained for the children of God (Heb. 4:4-8). Let us not fall short of what He is now speaking into our hearts! God is in this Day raising up a people that is hearing His words of instruction and beginning to walk in the light of the glory of God's Christ.

I admonish all who read these lines — be established in YOUR DAY. It is a new day, the day of the Lord! It is not the day of antichrist, nor the great tribulation, nor is it the literal

millennium. It is the ever-present day of the unveiling of the glory of Christ and this day comes as a thief. Christ's presence is beginning to fill the whole earth in a new expression and the glory of the Lord is risen upon a people. This is not a fallacy, this is the sovereign work of God in the lives of those who have been called to this Day. This is the very truth, the very understanding as the Spirit has made it known unto His called and chosen people, that we might know the counsel of God for this very Day. Though multitudes continue to walk in darkness, the darkness of the world of the carnal mind and of the fleshly religious systems of man, you shall walk in the Light and the Light shall dispel the darkness! Many stubbornly cling to those things which are passing, to the former orders and moves of God that have ended, the relics of a former day of glory, the ruins of an order that God has now shaken, but those whose hearts have responded to the call to sonship and the kingdom are taking hold of those things that are new. The former heavens are being rolled up like a scroll and set aside. There is a new order being raised up, a new heaven and a new earth for you today, saints of God!

One of the deep hidden mysteries of God is the great and eternal truth that the day of the Lord is the Word of God. At the dawn of history, out of the inky blackness of the formless void of primeval chaos, the word of the Lord issued the divine fiat, "*Let there be light!*" God then divided the light from the darkness and called the light "Day," and the darkness He called "Night" (Gen. 1:3-5). The apostle John elaborates on this thought of the Word of God being the Day of the Lord, declaring, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...in Him was life; and the life was the light of men*" (Jn. 1:1,4). Note the sequence: In the beginning was the Word. In the Word was life. And that life was the light of men. The Word, the Life, and the Light are one. In our natural world the light of men is the sun, and the sun is the light which is the Day. Can we not see by this that in the spiritual world the ILLUMINATION OF THE WORD is the light of men — and the light of men is THE DAY OF THE LORD! Truly light is illumination and illumination is the dawning of truth. Truth is a Word. "*Thy word is truth.*" Truth is the Word! The Word is the Light! The Light is the Day! If you want to walk in the day of the Lord, then walk in the present truth of the word of the Lord! This is your Day! How simple, yet how very profound this divine reality!

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 the Lord, 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). 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" (II Cor. 4:6). Can we not clearly see by this that truth is light, understanding is light, knowledge is light, life is light, and walking in the revelation of the glory of Christ 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). The day of the Lord speaks of the illumination and enlightenment that come by the Spirit. The inner revelation and transformation which brings the day of the Lord into our lives begins the very moment that we turn from the dead letter of the word and seek for its spirit. We have turned from religion and the old static order of the church systems unto the living reality of the Christ within. The elect of God who are being spiritually enlightened and quickened in the full reality of Christ within in this hour are now experientially entering into the DAY OF THE LORD!

If we have considered the matter as we ought, we have surely discerned that there are two kingdoms in the world: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man, the kingdom of Light and the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Life and the kingdom of death, the kingdom of Truth and the kingdom of error. Praise God, He "hath delivered us from the power (authority, rule) 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! Whether you are in the day or the night just depends upon where you live! Isaiah spoke of this when he cried out, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: BUT THE LORD SHALL ARISE UPON THEE, AND HIS GLORY SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE!" (Isa. 60:1-2).

The day of the Lord is one continuous Day known only to the Lord, but it dawns upon different territories as it moves along in God's purposes. The natural earth-day is one continuous day, for it is always day somewhere in the world, and if you can fly fast enough with the rotation of the earth you will never again know night. The day is not only arriving each morning, it has always been in existence since God spoke the command, "Let there be light!" The day really never begins or ends, it simply moves across the earth bringing its light and warmth to different areas throughout a twenty-four hour period. Likewise, the day of the Lord is an eternal, never-ending Day, nor did it ever have a beginning, for God Himself is the light of this Day and in Him there is no darkness at all. The day of the Lord has no darkness in it! It shines and illuminates continuously. The beginning of a day means the ending of night, but in a realm where there is not, nor ever has been, darkness, day has no beginning and no ending — it is Eternal Day. This day of the Lord had its beginning for us when it arrived in our experience, to shine upon the territory of our lives. No man knows when this Day begins apart from a revelation from the Lord, for it is the brilliance which He is. He reveals the Day to those who are given eyes to see. Within my ransomed soul I have heard the voice of the Lord whispering that it is now time for the NATIONS to come to our light, and KINGS to the brightness of our rising (Isa. 60:1-3); it is time for the nations to be saved and to walk in the light of the city of God (Rev. 21:24). That is the next great step in the day of the Lord!

As one has written, "*The day of the Lord cometh, for it is (always) nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains*" (Joel 2:1-2). Have you ever watched the day arrive among the mountains, especially where there is fog or haze or where the mountains rise above the clouds? The mountain peaks receive the first light. Then as the day arrives in its fullness, light can reach the valleys. But early in the morning the peaks can be in full sunlight and the valleys are still in darkness. And so it is in the spirit. Those who rise high enough, not in their own strength or wisdom, but in their God and through His Spirit, receive the first spiritual light of millennial dawn, the first light of the new day. Those who remain in sin, disobedience, carnality, tradition, unconcern, etc., will have to stay in the darkness of judgment until they are able to rise above it so that they, too, can see the light."

The light shines in the darkness of this world at this very moment, and it shall yet shine to dispel all darkness from all realms, bringing Eternal Day. There shall be no more night! That is one of the beautiful and faithful and true promises of the Revelation. Speaking of the light of Christ John wrote, "The light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (Jn. 1:5). That word "comprehend" is an unfortunate translation. And a wiseacre did not help it by rendering it, "and the darkness was not able to put it out." That is no translation at all. The word in the Greek is katelaben, meaning actually "to take down." It is a term that would have been known by the scribes in biblical times. It is the picture of a secretary to whom the boss is giving dictation, and she stops and says, "I can't take that down, I am not able to take it down." The light shines in darkness and the darkness is not able to take it in. That is it exactly! Someone said to me, "Man, was I in darkness before I met Christ! And I don't know why I didn't see." And after we met Christ, held captive in the blindness of the carnal church systems, there was still so much we didn't see! Well, that is it, we were in darkness, and we did not see. Just as walls keep out the sunlight, so the denseness of the carnal mind evades the penetrating light of the Spirit. The darkness just cannot take it in!

Thank God, there is a time for the darkness to be chased away. You go into a room and the minute you switch on the light, the darkness leaves, it vanishes. Darkness and light cannot

exist together, although they do exist side by side. The astronauts see both day and night at the same time as they circle the earth in their orbit high above the planet. There you have light and darkness side by side and the darkness just cannot take it in. But the sunlight moves across the earth and the darkness is swallowed up. In like manner, when God's time comes for a man, a woman, a people, or a nation to be brought into His light, He has only to bring the light to shine upon them, and the darkness flees away. The hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when the sons of God shall shine their light upon the nations of earth! The darkness upon the face of all people shall be dispelled and billions shall come to the full light of God's Christ. Only the sovereign revelation of the Lord by His Spirit can accomplish this, and it shall be done.

What is light? No one has ever seen pure light, or even sunlight, for light is invisible. Those things which we see are really only the objects that are revealed by light. You and I do not see the light, we only see that which reflects the light. Remove the objects and we would see nothing. Even what we perceive in our atmosphere as sunlight, or in our houses as light, is not really light, but those things within our atmosphere and in the room where you now sit, which reflect the light. Light is invisible. Light cannot be seen! That is why "outer space" consists of vast reaches of complete darkness, unless interrupted by some planetary body revealed by some source of light. Truly did the apostle write, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." And just as truly it is written, "No man has seen God at any time." You don't see light, therefore you cannot see God, for God is light! That is why God has channeled Himself through Jesus Christ, for in Jesus is revealed all the essence of God in visible form. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus is to God what a light bulb is to electricity. Electricity is invisible but channeled through the bulb the energy becomes revealed and expressed in a visible way, a way that we perceive as light. As members of the Christ body, the light that God is, is also channeled through us. God is invisible, but expressed through His people on earth He is perceived by the world in all the glory of His attributes and power. What a marvelous thing!

The late Carl Schwing shared the following beautiful meditation on this very concept. "There is a joy which comes with the sunrise of a new day. How often I have been blessed to see the first rays of the morning as they rested atop the hills, and to watch them break through the denseness of the forest; and finally to see them reflecting in the water like a million little suns. My spirit, mind, and body were overwhelmed by the beauty and wonder of it all. So much greater is the blessing we share as we watch the Sunrise of this New Day! A joy which passes understanding is ours! As we behold Him we see the reflection of countless little sons...sons of light sending forth the morning rays of the dawn of the kingdom of God; sons of light enlightening all that the Father has made. Truly it is a morning of great joy...all that lies before us is NEW, LIFE-GIVING AND ETERNAL! And there is a part which belongs to you alone, appointed to you by the Creator, eons ago. Look inward, my beloved, and you will find your place and purpose in the depths of the Christ-son within."

Some of you who now read these lines are reading them by the light of day while others are reading them after darkness has settled upon your land. In the same way, some of you walk in spiritual light in different dimensions, while others of you walk in spiritual darkness on different dimensions. Some of you walk in the unveiling of the unbounded wisdom, understanding, glory, and power of the Christ within you, while some of you still walk in the bondage and limitation of the dead doctrines, traditions, and immature orders of the carnal church systems of man. There is only one source of life, and that is LIGHT. Life rests with light; life comes from light. Show me a man who has only a carnal understanding of the things of God and I will show you a man who has a very low level of spiritual life. He is walking in the dusk of evening time, not in the brightness of the day of the Lord. The churches are full of them! And the pulpits, too! 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 be enlightened, to experience the truth of God as inward reality. If they can receive enlightenment from us, they can obtain life and develop that life. It's a matter of your UNDERSTANDING AND ILLUMINATION! It's not a matter of whether you attend church meetings, how you were

baptized, whether you speak in tongues, or observance of rules, commandments, regulations, methods, programs, sacraments, 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, UNDERSTANDING, AND EXPERIENCE that brings transformation unto maturity.

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, in which we receive the great chain with which Satan can be bound in our earth. And it is in this Day that those who rule and reign with Christ now walk. *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: and I saw the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years"* (Rev. 20:4). The truth is so very simple. Only two things happen for a thousand years — that is, IN THE DAY OF THE LORD. Satan is bound for a thousand years, he is bound in and by the illumination of the day of the Lord; and the souls of the overcomers sit upon thrones and reign with Christ for a thousand years, they reign in and by the power and glory of the day of the Lord! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! As I have already emphasized, this "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 the children of this Day! The day of the Lord is not a thousand years — but the symbol of one thousand years stands for the day of the Lord.

The sons of God reign with Christ for a thousand years — that is, they reign with Christ IN THE GLORY OF THE DAY OF THE LORD! The sons of God overcome Satan until he is unable in any way or manner to express himself in or through their earth for a thousand years — that is, Satan is rendered inoperative and powerless by the AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE DAY OF THE LORD IN THEIR LIVES! That is the only place Satan can be bound, and it is the only place one can reign with Christ! No man who walks in the darkness of sin, or in the darkness of carnal religion, will ever completely bind Satan in the abyss of his heart; and no such will ever share the throne of the Lord. No man devoid of spiritual understanding, illumination, and enlightenment can experience the power of God to rule. No man who abides in death is able to reign in life by Christ Jesus.

The ones sitting on these thrones are overcomers who recognize that they are seated with Christ in a heavenly realm that is far above the influence of the carnal mind, the flesh, and the old Adamic heart. They are reigning with Christ over every vestige of the old life and the beastly, satanic spirit within the natural man. They have been beheaded, the old Adamic head with its carnal mind has been decapitated and they have put on the mind of Christ. For them the curse has been removed and Satan has been fully bound. They are now living in the "kingdom age" and in that heavenly dimension everything is new. They think with the mind of Christ that does not contain the curse. This reigning is reigning within ourselves — overcoming as we sit with Christ in the heavenly places! This new mind has no curse — no Mosaic law, no condemnation, weakness, sorrow, depression, lust, ungodliness, discouragement, or death. The former things have passed away and all things within us have been made new in the Day of the Lord! Isn't it wonderful!

Chapter 219

The Binding Of Satan (continued)

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. 20:1-3).

The seer beholds an angel coming down out of heaven, carrying a key and a great chain. With the chain he binds the dragon. Then he opens the door to the abyss, thrusts his prisoner in, locks the door over him, and, for extra security, seals it, so that it cannot be secretly tampered with without discovery. We will not comment here about how Satan, being a spirit, can be bound with a chain or shut up behind lock and key. In an apocalyptic vision this presents no more difficulty than for a lamb to take a book and open the seals upon it, or for a beast to rise up out of the ocean and rule over the nations, or for garments to be washed white in blood. It is the spiritual truth couched in the figurative language of the symbols to which the spiritual mind is directed!

Of the dragon, the ancient serpent, it is expressly said that he is Satan. And he was now bound by the angel for a thousand years. Let us place this picture before us vividly, for John says he saw it; we therefore can also form a living mental image of the same. Therefore, right before his eyes, while John was viewing the picture, the dragon, namely the devil, was actually being bound by the angel with the chain, so that he could neither stir nor move. This John sees! The fact that the dragon was bound a thousand years could naturally only be communicated to John as information revealed within himself by the Spirit; for the picture did not last a thousand years. I have experienced the same thing when the Lord has spoken to me in a dream or a vision and I simply knew or inherently understood something about the vision that was not communicated to me by anything I saw in the scenes shown me. If we ask — Was Satan actually being bound at the precise moment in which John saw this? Our answer is — No! For John was not being shown a one-time event to transpire in the spirit-realm, either past or future, but he was shown a great spiritual reality to be experienced in all of the Lord's people as they walk in the spirit and grow up into Christ. It was just a symbolic picture of that. And the thing that matters concerning the picture, in so far as it is a revelation of God's working within us, is not just the binding itself, but the binding for a thousand years! The deep mystery is that this reveals to us not only the fact of Satan being totally bound in the abyss of our earth, within our heart, but also the HOW of that binding!

Many commentators place as much importance upon the binding of Satan as they do upon the thousand years, since they place both out in the future, believing that so far it cannot be perceived that Satan has ever been bound, therefore the blessed time must still be in the future. They paint themselves a picture of their future thousand-year kingdom in a truly carnal manner, a kingdom of magnificent rest and blessed peace here upon earth, free from every influence of the devil. Thus, as John sees the dragon lying motionless before his eyes, bound with a chain, even so Satan would be bound in reality, in somewhat of a physical and localized way, so that he could move neither hand nor foot, and as a consequence, his devilish influence would have to cease. The question follows — Would just binding the devil make men holy? And, if God was going to bind the devil so there could be righteousness and peace on the earth, why then did He allow the devil in the garden in the first place! Would it not have been better to just bind Satan back there in that long ago beginning and save the world all the heartache, pain, and treachery men have endured for six long millenniums! Has God now learned something from His mistake in permitting the serpent into Eden? Is He now correcting the mistake so men

can be holy and the earth can have peace, not by transforming men, but just by binding the devil? Oh, no! That's not what the picture is telling us at all! And, if everything were to happen in reality as John sees it here, then it would be no Revelation presented in signs and symbols, as in verse one of the book we are told it would be; it would be no prophecy in prophetic pictures!

The thing we need to see in order to understand the deep mystery the Holy Spirit is teaching those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand is the great truth that God has had a divine purpose in Satan's activity on earth, in the lives of men; and when that purpose is fulfilled then Satan is bound. The same principle is true in our natural lives. If I am building a house I will buy certain tools to use in my work. But when the house is finished, I will either lay aside, discard, give away, or sell those tools. The job is done, they have fulfilled their purpose, therefore there is a change in their status.

Did GOD create the devil? Well, we know he did not create himself! Nor did he "just happen." The reason some have held the view that Satan was once a beautiful and powerful archangel in heaven who was lifted up in pride and somehow turned himself into the devil is because it seems to relieve God of the responsibility for evil, sin, sorrow, and death in the world. That "all things are of God" and that God Himself "created *all things*" is declared again and again throughout the scriptures. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that wicked man of rebellion against all that was of God, "Even for this same purpose have I RAISED THEE UP, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared *throughout all the earth*" (Rom. 9:17). And is that not exactly what happened as a result of what took place in Egypt in those days! The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be ascertained by these carnal little heads of ours. There is nothing fearful about this view unless the truth be fearful! I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of the prophet Amos may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and THE LORD HATH NOT DONE IT?" (Amos 3:6).

Why, oh why can men not believe the simple, unvarnished word of God? Ah, we have God's own word for it — His positive statement that He creates all things, including all the so-called evil things as well as the good things. "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create the darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I THE LORD DO ALL THESE THINGS" (Isa. 45:7). God creates evil...it cannot be! But here it is in the Word. What will you do with it, beloved? "We must explain it somehow," the fundamentalist says. "Surely it cannot mean that God actually creates evil, sin, sinners, and even devils — it must mean that He creates physical evils — famines, pestilences, hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, calamities, judgments, etc., which God sends upon mankind as punishment for their wickedness." Not so! The word here for "evil" is the Hebrew word *ra* which is used throughout the Old Testament to denote wickedness, sin, and wrongdoing. In some five hundred passages it is so used!

As soon as this truth dawns within your enlightened heart, the knowledge of whence came the serpent will speedily follow. The word of God is certain and unmistakable! The inspired record infallibly declares, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which THE LORD GOD HAD MADE" (Gen. 3:1). Two things are here revealed: the nature of the serpent is a beastly (sensual and ferocious) nature — and GOD MADE HIM! Suppose that instead of trying to explain this passage in harmony with some man-made creed, we let all creeds go and wait upon the spirit of wisdom and revelation from the Lord to give understanding of what God is teaching us! These words shining down from the very dawn of history deserve pages of comment, but can you not see that they are filled with the spirit of revelation? In only a few words they teach us that God made the serpent, God made him with a beastly nature, God made him subtle and cunning, God made him the Devil and Satan, God made him a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and God placed him in the garden of Eden with Adam!

We flounder a bit in our understanding of these things, but as time passes and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that in all the

universe a thing is a thing, and we understand what it is, ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS ITS OPPOSITE. Good without the knowledge of evil can scarcely be called good at all, for it has no opposite to be contrasted with, and thereby understood. Who could possibly speak of the day if night had never been known? How could we comprehend light if we had never experienced darkness? What could we know of life if there were no death? What could 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 or tested in relation to the opposites! No man can be declared strong until he has been tested for weakness, nor can he be called an overcomer until he has encountered and wrestled with the adversary! Those who are worthy to slay their Goliaths must first have met and 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!

Ah, beloved, there is purpose in affliction. There is purpose in trial. There is purpose in temptation. There is purpose in suffering. There is purpose in pain. There is purpose in darkness. There is purpose in evil. Yes, my brother, my sister, there is purpose in the existence and work of Satan! Without this understanding all the work of God throughout all the ages becomes a hit and miss, a trial and error affair unworthy of our omniscient and omnipotent God! If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God to bring forth the gold of His divine nature from our earthen vessels, we can rejoice with Job who said, "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath *tried me, I shall come forth as gold,*" (Job 23:10), and exclaim with David, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes" (Ps. 119:7). When we begin to see the good that comes from the assaults of Satan in our lives, and the result of our warfare with him, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the wisdom of His great mind!

A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. These OPPOSING FORCES are indispensable to develop strength. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large and beautiful, 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, will grow strong and is not easily destroyed. So it is with us as human beings. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. Adversity builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulation, never subjected to the onslaughts of the adversary, we would grow up in our spiritual life weak and vulnerable indeed! The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with spiritual and fleshly opposition, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become. 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, so He has wisely given us sparring partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong! And when we have become strong enough WE WILL LAY HOLD ON THE STRONG MAN, BIND HIM, CAST HIM INTO THE PIT, AND SET A SEAL UPON HIM! That is the mystery!

Satan is not a physical being. Therefore, he cannot be bound by any ordinary or physical means. Rocks and dirt cannot confine him inside the earth, nor can he be drowned in the depths of the sea. The fact that he has continued since Eden should be proof enough of this. Only the powerful, energetic, and living word of God can bind the devil! There is no greater authority on these things than the word of God itself. The truth concerning the binding of Satan is part of the gospel, the good news in Christ! One need not go to other sources for an interpretation, thus sacrificing revealed truth on the altar of personal opinion or human speculation. When Jesus walked this earth He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). He didn't mean that there would be no more devil in the earth after that day, as we are all witnesses, but He was describing that which, because of His mature sonship, had become experiential within Himself.

In the Revelation we see the same overcoming power operative within the saints, with in those who grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:10). This is spoken in connection with the casting down of Satan in the lives of God's manchild company, the manifest sons of God. Just as Jesus said of His own experience, "Now is the prince of this world cast out," so His many brethren come to that place of salvation, strength, and kingdom power where they too can confess, "Now is the accuser of our brethren cast down!" Aren't you glad! "Behold, I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Lk. 10:19). "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. 91:13). "Greater is HE that is in you than HE that is in the world!" (1 Jn. 4:4). The binding of Satan is a primary New Testament teaching, revealed and explained by the firstborn Son of God Himself. It is too precious and powerful to be laid in storage as a static creed to be fulfilled in some limited time and on behalf of a "lucky" few people in some future day. It's NOT about some future date on the calendar! It's about the LIFE AND POWER OF SONSHIP! The firstborn Son declared, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom (authority) of God is come to you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house" (Mat. 12:28-29).

Bear with me for a moment while I point out that the carnal mind is adept at "reading in to" the scriptures many things that are not there. We must ask the question in relation to our text whether this "binding" of Satan, this imprisonment and secure confinement of the adversary, should be regarded as absolute and complete, so that he is restrained in all of his activity everywhere and at all times, or whether it pertains only to a specific aspect of his activity. The question is answered in the text. "And he laid hold on the dragon...and bound him a thousand years...that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." It is not said that he was bound so he could no longer incite people to murder, commit adultery, lie, cheat, hate, fight, or commit a thousand other sins and atrocities. The angel brought a word out of the heavenly realm, and by and with that word he laid hold on the dragon, cast him into the abyss, shut him up, and set a seal upon him specifically so he could no longer DECEIVE THE NATIONS. It was all about deception! Now, I do not doubt that one result of the inability to deceive would be the curtailment or cessation of these many other sins — for the root of man's first sin, and therefore the root of all the sins to follow, was deception! People who sin are deceived within themselves about many issues! So the angel came with a word — that is, TRUTH! Satan is a liar and a deceiver, and Truth exposes the lie. The "chain" in his hand is truth. The links of the chain are aspects of truth. The lie is bound within us in our experience link by link — line upon line, precept upon precept. The great truth is just this: Satan is bound in relation to a people that cannot be deceived! Deception is a matter of the mind and the heart. When Satan is so bound by the light and truth of God within our earth that He can no longer deceive in any manner, methinks that all sin will cease! This has to originate as a work in the mind and in the heart!

E. Schuler relates the following history. The year was 1941. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and they began to conquer in Southeast Asia. The British were told, "Be careful, the Japanese are going to conquer Singapore, too." But the British said, "No need to worry. There is absolutely no danger of that happening. Look at all the cannons we have!" Singapore, you know, is a nation at the end of the Malaysian peninsula. If you look at your hand and think of your thumb as the Malaysian peninsula, at the top of the digit, where the fingernail is, that would be Singapore. And from the hand to that first little digit, that's jungle. At the top of the thumb, Singapore is cleared of jungle. It was civilized. It was well-defended with guns pointed out to sea so that no ship could possibly invade. Nobody could ever attack them without running right into the British guns. That's why the British weren't worried on December 7, 1941, as the smoke rose from Pearl Harbor, when they heard that the Japanese would be hitting Singapore next. The British only laughed. They felt secure. Then came February. Out of the jungle, from the

hand up through the thumb came the Japanese. And when, suddenly, on February 24, 1942, the British heard the crack of rifles, they turned around and saw the Japanese coming from their rear. In only ten days, Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese. Why? BECAUSE THE GUNS WERE POINTING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION! All of their guns were pointed to the sea. The enemy slipped up through the dense jungle behind them, and they were defenseless.

I think of many people, maybe you, your guns are pointed in the wrong direction! Millions of Christians have their guns pointed at a devil outside of them, a devil who rides the air and roams the nations, attacking from without. We have our guns pointed at this devil without and right out of the jungle of the carnal mind he slips up on us from behind and conquers us! If he doesn't come with the temptation to commit some gross sin of the flesh, or some weird cultish religious delusion, we don't recognize that it's him. Ah, he preached quite a sermon to Mother Eve, he argued all his theological points and it sounded like a high spiritual revelation that would make them like God! And she was deceived! Oh, yes, the devil slipped up on her blind side and deceived her. The good news is this. This is what God is dealing with in the binding of Satan. "That he should *deceive...no more!*" God is so filling a people with His word, so illuminating their understanding, so quickening their minds, so purifying their hearts, so girding them about with truth until they can no longer be deceived! Believe it or not, there are more scripture passages about deceiving ourselves and our hearts deceiving us than there are about being deceived by the devil! Of course, the two are intricately connected. But the Spirit of the Lord is so wrapping the chain of divine truth and revelation and experience upon the hand of His called and chosen elect in this hour until they are now being empowered to "bind that devil" in the abyss of their own hearts so that even their own hearts can no longer deceive them!

Someone says, "But, brother Eby, this is not talking about God's elect, it's talking about the devil deceiving *the nations.*" If you consider with reverent honesty the symbolism of this book of Revelation you will soon discern that the truth runs deeper than the surface meaning. Actually, we find that Satan's deception works in three realms described as "the nations," "the world," and "the earth." "That he should deceive the nations no more" (Rev. 20:3). "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the *whole world*" (Rev. 12:9). "And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of *the earth*" (Rev. 20:8). Those who read these lines must certainly see that the book of Revelation is sent to the church symbolized by the seven churches of Asia. Is not the church found in every nation under heaven? Is not the church found everywhere throughout the whole world? And is not the "earth realm" used symbolically of the carnal church systems of man? All who dwell not in the heavens of God's Spirit are deceived.

Throughout the book of Revelation we have encountered various realms where people live in their spiritual experience — the abyss, the sea, earth, and heaven. And now we meet another term: "The great dragon...deceiveth the *whole world*" (Rev. 12:9). It is the Greek word *kosmos* meaning "orderly arrangement" or "system of things." It refers to the present order or system of things upon earth — the world systems of man. It includes such things as culture, religion, politics, economics, business, education, law enforcement, military, science, government, entertainment, and various other institutions and orders that govern the lives of men and nations. The Holy Spirit testifies that "we know that we are of God, and the whole world *lieth in the wicked one,*" and "the great dragon was cast out...which deceiveth the whole **world.**" Can we not see by this that everyone who lives by the standards of this present world system and order is deceived! Does that mean they are all bad people? Not at all! There are millions of decent, honest, hard working, law abiding, good, loving, even God-fearing people who live by the norms of their culture, education, religion, ethics, and society. They live and think on an earthly, carnal, worldly plane and have never once stepped foot into that higher realm of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! It means they simply do not understand nor do they know the truth — the true nature of all things. Many of their opinions and conclusions about life, reality, truth, and the ways and purposes of God are flawed, mistaken, and erroneous. We have all been there! Even after being anointed by the Holy Spirit we have been there!

The religious systems are deceived. The educational systems are deceived. The political and governmental realms are deceived. Even the world of science and technology is deceived! I can prove these points and many more, but that is not our purpose at this time. Suffice it to say, the carnal mind, which is the seed of the serpent, with all it produces, is deceived! But what does this mean for the church, for the body of Christ, for the bride of the Lamb and the sons of God? It means that all of the Lord's people who are worldly minded are deceived. All who are earthly in their living are deceived. And all who identify with the nations rather than with the heavens are deceived. And it is right here within our thinking, in our living, and in our sense of identity that Satan must be bound! There is no doubt about it — when God's great plan and purpose for mankind is fully consummated Satan shall be bound in the heart of every man everywhere. What a glorious expectation! But at this present time God is first working out His purpose in His FIRSTFRUIT COMPANY. All that shall ultimately be wrought out in all men must first be accomplished in the firstfruits of His redemption. The "world," the "nations," and the "earth" in which Satan is being bound today is within God's sons in every nation under heaven throughout the whole world and in all the earth! Oh, the wonder of it!

It is interesting to stand in the still darkness of the early morning and watch the breaking of the dawn: first the gray streaks in the east, and then the brighter light, until the full-orbed sun ascends above the horizon. There is a sunrise with its dawn like that in the Bible! The foregleam begins with the promise in the curse upon the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It grows brighter as God calls Abraham and covenants to make of him a great and holy nation and a company of nations, who should bless all the nations and peoples of the earth. We see it in the miracles and authority exhibited by Moses as he challenges the tyranny of Pharaoh and by a mighty hand leads the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. We see it in the conquest of the promised land, in the victories of God's people over the pagan nations and kingdoms entrenched in that theater. We see it in the prophetic reign of David and the peace, glory, and dominion of Solomon's expanded kingdom. We see it in the ministry of Jesus, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, healing all that were sick, casting out devils with a word, raising the dead and proclaiming the kingdom of God in the midst of men.

The disciples were greatly perplexed when Jesus died. But then He arose the conquering Christ! The fact of the Christ's resurrection is historic. The man who disputes it disputes the best established fact in history. He was seen by those who had despaired of His existence. He ate with them. He drank with them. He walked with them in a bloodless body. He talked to the despondent and broken-hearted apostles, the eleven, for nearly forty days. It was impossible to be deceived. He spoke and was seen and heard on one occasion by five hundred, the most of whom were living at the time that Paul made the declaration that they knew Christ and had seen Him after His resurrection. He proved His resurrection by telling them that if they would go to Jerusalem and enter into an upper room, and wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit's power would come. The promised outpouring took place. Christ went up and the Holy Ghost came down! They saw Him go and they saw Him come! It shook the place where they were sitting. The divine earthquake shook Jerusalem. It shook Israel. It shook the Roman Empire until it fell, to rise no more. It shook the world. The Spirit's power came. The Christ returned in mighty spirit-power. He who IS the truth came again as the Spirit of Truth. He came as an indwelling Life. Men who were weak became strong. Men who were wicked murderers and devils were transformed into men of virtue and power with God. Men who were illogical became great and mighty reasoners. Men who were feeble stood up, and in their spiritual majesty tower today over all the men of their time. All history substantiates the claim. Every philosopher and potentate of their time had to recognize them so that Peter, Paul, James, John, and many of their successors, became the mightiest Powers even in a heathen Empire.

The Day dawned, the shadows were fleeing away, darkness dispelled. We would but deceive ourselves were we to conclude that the conflict of the ages between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between Christ and Satan, between truth and error, between light and darkness, between life and death has ended. The second thousand years is

drawing to a close since Jesus came, died, conquered death, and poured out His life-giving Spirit and, blessed be His name! He pursues His mission still and reigns in majesty over His kingdom by entering into these temples of clay, and filling our spirits and souls and bodies with His own eternal presence and power, making us one with Him, members of His very own body, of His flesh, and of His bone, and of His blood. He is redeeming a vast company of sons in whom He is raising up His mighty Spirit, inworking His glorious mind and nature, inscribing upon the heart His Law of Life. And the hour is wonderfully nigh at hand when there shall be a further transformation, the bodies of His elect sons shall be changed in likeness unto His body of glory as this mortal puts on immortality and this corruptible puts on incorruption, so that we, who were destined from the beginning to be the revelation of HIMSELF to creation may complete His mighty work for the redemption of humanity.

A new Day has dawned! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. A new age has arrived. When the age of Law ended, a new Day was born and the church appeared from the womb of the morning. Now the age of the Church is drawing to a close, and that which it was destined to produce and bring forth is ready to be born from the womb of this new morning — God's manchild, the manifest sons of God, a mature company in the full stature, life, glory, and power of HIS SONSHIP. Our Elder Brother, the firstborn Son of God, the Pattern Son, the Forerunner and Proto-type of what sonship is, bound the strong man, bound the devil within Himself, and came forth in the power of the Spirit as the Son of the Living God. Every son of God is apprehended and ordained to do what the firstborn Christ did — and now HE SHALL BE MULTIPLIED BY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF IN THE EARTH!

This is the angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand! This is the angel with the chain who lays hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and binds him a thousand years! This is the angel which casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled! Blessed promises of a mighty deliverance, which we even now begin to see fulfilled. The time has come for the nations to hear the voice of the Son of God and live. Just as in Jesus' day, this glorious and eternal reality must FIRST BEGIN IN US WHO ARE THE FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS REDEMPTION. We have mentioned earlier that Jesus said that a thief cannot come into a house unless he first binds the strong man, that is, the lord of that house. Then, Jesus says, the thief is able to plunder all his goods! Jesus used the illustration to point out that He was able to go about plundering the devil's kingdom, healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and transforming men's lives because first He had bound the strong man within Himself, the devil himself, and now He was able to spoil his kingdom anywhere and everywhere that God wanted to work.

The message is just this — the serpent, the dragon, the strong man, must be truly bound in our earth before the sons can go forth and "spoil his kingdom," in this new Day, bringing blessed deliverance to creation. Can you not see the mystery? God's called and separated elect are the first to be un-deceived! That's what it means for Satan to be bound so he can no longer deceive. The Spirit of Truth is standing up in the body of Christ in this hour and all the holy sons of God who hear His voice are being thoroughly UN-DECEIVED! There shall be a glorious victory as Satan is bound more and more in the hearts of men everywhere. The un-deceiving of the nations means a new mentality, new understanding, new thought-processes, a new paradigm — the unveiling of the truth about all things in the minds of the vast multitudes of earth. What anticipation this evokes in our hearts!

As the Father unfolds these truth to the inner man, we are able to see that our Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, first bound the devil within Himself before having power to destroy his works in others. *"For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"* (Jn. 14:30). The devil had no place, no base of operation, no foothold, no claim; he had nothing in Christ because He had bound the strong man of flesh and carnality within Himself. He is the

pattern and example for all those manifest sons of God who shall reveal and manifest what it means to bind Satan on this earth! In our text John simply says that as the Spirit showed him these things he saw an angel. The angel held in his hand the key to the bottomless pit. The next statement following this is most meaningful and divinely significant: "...and he (the angel) laid hold on the dragon." What a word that is! Oh! that men would awaken to the truth that the action of simply laying hold on the dragon is the beginning and initiation of the whole process of dealing with the devil! Christ in us must lay hold upon the dragon in us or there can never be a victory over him!

I hope that we all have become aware that the symbolism of Satan being bound and thrown into the abyss does not predict a single future event, nor a single past event. It is not a picture of Jesus single-handedly and eternally defeating the devil on the cross, because for the past two thousand years the devil has been alive and well within man's experience. Nor does the binding of Satan point to a future single and instantaneous event by which Christ will bind Satan on behalf of all creation. The binding of Satan is intensely personal and on-going. It is a parabolic description of the very thing Jesus promised to His disciples, and which clearly reveals the process. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on *earth*, shall be bound in heaven..." (Mat. 16:19). "And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all *the power of the enemy*..." (Lk. 10:18-19).

Before closing this message let us further consider what it really means for the dragon to be "bound." The entire twentieth chapter of Revelation reveals God's dealings with Satan and shows clearly and precisely what his end is determined to be. The passages now under consideration are not the whole story! Therefore, the "binding" of Satan is not the end of Satan, but merely one of the measures the Holy Spirit uses as He works a full and complete deliverance in each of our lives. Do keep that in mind as we proceed. When I think of Satan being "bound" I am reminded of expressions we often hear in the daily transactions of life, such expressions as these: "My way was completely hedged up." "My hands were completely tied." When people use such expressions, do we imagine some strong physical barrier about them or a strong hemp-cord tied around their wrists? Certainly not! We understand that a combination of circumstances rendered it impossible for them to act. Some invisible word, authority, or circumstance prevented them from doing what they ordinarily would do. Even so here! The condition is created within us which renders the adversary powerless and inoperative. It is the nature, power, and authority of the Christ!

The next thing we need to see in order to understand the mystery the Spirit would now unfold in our consciousness is the truth that Satan is not destroyed by the "thousand years" of being shut up in the abyss while the sons of God reign upon their thrones. He is only bound. There is a vital difference! To be bound and shut up in the pit signifies a restraint and this restraint is the work of the Holy Spirit. It renders helpless all the works of the devil making him inactive, limited, and ineffective in our earth, in the abyss of our heart. The full and final work of the Holy Ghost fire of God will in due time deal with the devil until there is no devil anywhere in God's vast universe, but that is a story which must be told later. Having bound the devil, the angel "cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up." The "bottomless pit" in no way suggests to us that there is any fire or suffering or torment there, but signifies only the restrictions and restraints that are imposed upon the satanic activity. Satan is still Satan in the pit, but he is hedged in by the limits and bounds which the "bottomless pit" represents. He is no longer able to deceive us! And that is no small accomplishment! He was seen cast out of our heavens in chapter twelve, but now he is effectively bound in our earth — no longer able to deceive us out of our carnal minds or fleshly hearts. He is like a vicious dog on a strong leash securely anchored, or like the angry sea, to which God says, "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38:11). He has lost his deceiving power over us. My, what a wonderful accomplishment of God that is in our lives! If you, precious friend of mine, are still fearful of being deceived, then Satan has not yet been bound in your life!

Vast multitudes of Christians have misunderstood this whole picture of the binding of Satan for a thousand years. They have assumed that the thousand years is a literal time period out in the future somewhere, and just prior to its beginning Jesus would come back to earth and all by Himself grab hold on Satan and bind him in the pit. We were going to have nothing to do with it, and then He was going to give us some marvelous power to rule over the nations. Jesus is the one who does it, true. But He does it working in and through His body of which we all are members in particular. The wonderful fact is, Jesus does not today do anything that He does not do in and through His body! Just as your head formulates your plans, your body carries them out. Your head does not do anything that it doesn't do working through your body. Just so, Jesus our Head has the plan and the purpose, but He is carrying it out in and through His body, yea, it is working in and through His body that He binds Satan and casts him into the pit! Binding Satan and shutting him up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years means nothing other than the sons of God, the body of Christ, being so filled with revelation, knowledge, understanding, truth, and the anointing, power, and authority of the Christ, that by the power of the Christ within we uncover and bring to light every hidden thing in our earth, every satanic thing that is lurking and hiding in our heart, and by the wisdom of God crown the Spirit Lord over them all!

Again — what is the bottomless pit? It is the unregenerate part of your being, the old Adamic, carnal, natural, earthly way of thinking, desiring, and acting! When Christ is raised up in glory and power in our lives His life cuts off, shuts up, and seals off all the old nature of Adam. Does it still exist there somewhere in the depths of being? Absolutely! But as we grow up in the spirit a total restraint is laid upon our carnal ideas, objectives, inclinations, desires, emotions, understanding, interpretations, ways, and every evil impulse. The revelation of Christ brings the key — and with this key the whole realm of the bottomless pit and all that originates out of it is locked up. The “key” is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus! How can we know this? Because it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death!

You see, my beloved, to the natural man the power of fear and sin and death is very real and strong. But I pray that the truth and force of what I now proclaim will grip your believing heart! Before the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus the power of sin and death is as nothing. With what ease the angel binds the dragon, casts him into the pit, shuts him up, and locks him away with the key in his hand! There is no struggle, no wrestling, and no battle. Did you not notice it? How speedily and effectively it is all performed! O, child of God, have you not considered that darkness has no power except that which we give to it? **“Give** no place to the *devil.*” When I was a child in south Alabama we had a pitcher pump from which we got all our water. The pump was down the hill a little way from the house. At night my mother would often send me to get a bucket of water from the pump. I was always afraid of the dark. To my childish mind the darkness was full of unseen dangers, wicked men, monsters, ghosts, and dreadful creatures of all kinds. They were right there ready to snatch me. They were behind the trees and hanging from the branches. They were in front of me and behind me. I would turn around and around and around all the way to the pump and back to the house, trying to face all the spooks at the same time. None of them ever touched or harmed me and, of course, as soon as the sun rose in the morning they were all gone. The fact is — they were never there! Darkness was there, and the power of darkness. By the power of darkness they existed in my mind and possessed all the power that my imagination gave them. But there was a greater power! Light is the only power on earth that could chase them away!

My beloved brethren, know ye not that ye are the light of the world? Brother Bennie Skinner once gave the following illustration. What if I came into your house at night and it was totally dark, and I found you standing in the corner saying, “I curse this darkness, I rebuke this darkness, I command this darkness to go!” I come in and you say, “Brother Bennie, please join me in prayer. We’re going to curse this darkness together. We’re going to break the power of this darkness.” I reply, “We’re going to *do what?*” “We’re going to curse this darkness that is in this room. This darkness has caused me to bump into things. I tripped and fell, I bruised and

cut my face and nearly broke my arm. This darkness is so dreadful, depressing, and threatening!" Without a word I reach over, feel along the wall, find the light switch, and flip it on. Instantly the room is flooded with light. Every thing in it becomes visible. The danger, the depression, and fear are all gone. The power of darkness is broken. What happened to the darkness and its power? WE JUST TURNED ON THE LIGHT! That's all that is necessary to defeat the darkness. You are the light of the world! Turn on the light! Ah, as soon as we know this, when we truly understand that we are sons of The Light, then the darkness is past, and the true light NOW SHINES (I Jn. 2:8). All creation is waiting for the manifestation of the SONS OF LIGHT! Know the reality and power of the Light within your own experience, my beloved brother, sister, and you will be ready to enlighten this darkened world.

Now, we have not deviated from our subject. "And he laid hold on the dragon...and bound him *a thousand years*." The "thousand years," as we have previously explained, is a code-word signifying THE DAY OF THE LORD. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as **one day**" (II Pet. 3:8). The day of the Lord is the illumination of the presence, glory, and knowledge of the Lord! Isaiah the prophet spoke of the day of the Lord, saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1 - 3). Just as cockroaches scurry away to hide in darkness when the light is turned on, so the emotions of the soul and the works of the flesh disappear from before the presence of the glory of the Lord as He arises in the dawn of His new Day within us. So long as we are walking in the light of the Lord, which is the day of the Lord; so long as we are walking in the new creation and as the new creation; so long as we are walking in the life of Christ within ourselves, we then have no trouble at all from the serpent, no problem whatsoever with the devil! All who have experienced wonderful seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when the glory of God literally floods our lives with billows of love, joy, power, blessing, and revelation know experientially that the allure of the world, the demands of the flesh, and the power of the devil are neutralized, controlled, subdued, overpowered, confined, fettered, restrained — bound — by the influence of the light and the life of the day of the Lord within! It is indeed wonderful!

God is love. Love always plans for the best for those who are loved. God so loved us, and God so loved the world that He gave His Son! Through the marvelous work of Christ provision has been graciously and fully made whereby every man may be delivered from the world, the flesh, and the devil — the dragon within. The first step in this great deliverance is the experience of regeneration whereby we are quickened to our true life and identity in the spirit within. Glorious as is the work of regeneration, it does not destroy the "old man." Carnality, or inbred sin, or the dragon, is not destroyed when one is quickened to God and Christ is raised up within — he is only suppressed. By God's grace the quickened spirit can and does begin to restrain this old man to whatever degree Christ is raised up and formed in us. Suppression is good as far as it goes. Were there nothing better provided for redeemed man than suppression, he ought to leap and rejoice with great joy over this victory over this great enemy. If a man has a family of children playing in a yard and a rattlesnake lives nearby, it would be far better to suppress the rattler than to let him roam freely. But the better thing would be to kill the old rattler, or, if it were possible in this world, an even better solution would be to change his nature! In either event the rattler as we know him, and his danger to the children, would be destroyed, and he would never poison any of the children.

It is good for a believer to suppress the dragon within, but far better to have him destroyed! A family had a favorite dog. This dog was getting old and cross. He had been faithful and was dearly loved by all the family. He was extremely vicious toward visiting children. To keep him from biting children who were playing in the yard, they put a large wooden crate over him to suppress and control him, but he would growl on the inside. One day he became so agitated that he escaped from the box and bit one of the children. That night the family had a long consultation about what to do with old Rover. At last it was decided — as much as it

grieved them — that old Rover must be put to death. He was taken out into the woods and shot. He never growled again.

It is a sad fact according to experience that many regenerated saints do not always suppress the dragon. They, at times, succumb to his stirrings and fall into carnality, or sin, or build some edifice of religious Babylon. Thus many live an up and down life, obtaining victories at one time and then falling back into defeat at other times. This is not God's plan for His children! His provision is that they, by the raising up of Christ within themselves, begin to bind that dragon, suppressing that old man of sin more and more. It is possible to live so close to God, to so walk in the spirit of the Lord, that the dragon does not dare manifest himself! I'm sure you will agree that this is not the ultimate solution, but my, what a wonderful place of victory it is! The old man of sin will do anything rather than die. That is why he first has to **"be bound"** and **"be cast"** into the pit, and **"be shut up"** and **"have a seal set upon him."** It takes action out of the indwelling spirit! He had rather play possum and continue to live in the abyss of the heart than to reveal himself and die. Therefore, the dragon is satisfied to play dead with many who walk close to God, yet he is very much alive far down in the darkness of the abyss. And the time usually comes when he comes to life in full vigor! When we understand the Revelation spiritually, we are able to grasp the spiritual significance of the following statement: *"And after that he must be loosed a little season...and shall go out to deceive the nations"* (Rev. 20:3,8). Can you not see the mystery? He may be bound, but he can also be loosed! You may bind the devil more and more within the abyss of your heart, but this is not enough! Eventually the mighty work of God in your life will enable you to fulfill this inspired word: ***"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone..."*** (Rev. 20:10). We will speak more of that later on.

If you want to see this angel that John saw you're not going to see him with your natural eyes, you must see him as John saw him, in the spirit and by the spirit. An angel is a spiritual messenger and the vision stands for a message, a word, a living expression and manifestation of God's Christ. This angel comes down from heaven, signifying that this word is not the word of man, for it comes down from above, out of the spirit of the Lord. There is a spiritual message and ministration from above coming down to affect our earth. This is the spiritual ministry of God's Christ, Head and body, and this angel or ministry has a great chain in his hand. There is a ministry coming down from the heavens of the Spirit with so much truth, so much authority, so much power, that it literally binds the dragon! John saw this happening, and I know the reality of it, because it has happened in my own experience! Satan doesn't hinder my life anymore. There is a manifestation and fullness of Christ that restrains and binds all the power of the wicked one! It means that the activities of lies, deception, accusation, religion, torment, sin, strife, sorrow, and death are bound in the earth realm of my life. And yet, I do not deceive myself, I cannot become complacent, presuming that the old dragon could not ever be let out of his prison. So, I follow on that I may see the end of this dealing of God in my life to raise us up into the full resurrection power and glory of the Christ!

Thank God, this wonderful victory is even now being established in the experience of a people apprehended of God. How we long for such a day as this for all people and all nations! And it will come in our Father's appointed time. Through past decades we have heard much of "deliverance ministries" as many have gone about "casting out devils" in lengthy sessions of exorcism attended by manifestations such as coughing, vomiting, etc. Some are told they have legions of devils and they are given names like "lazy devil," "false doctrine devil," "lust devil," "gossip devil," etc., etc. We praise God for all who are delivered in any measure from bondages of any kind, but often it is like a man at the mouth of the mighty Mississippi trying to bail out the river with a bucket — there seems to be no end to the masses of spirits, bondages, problems, and works of the flesh with which people contend. We find, however, that the redemptive and reconstructive and restorative work of Jesus Christ is not merely that which deals with the branches of the tree, but is that which essentially must "lay the ax to the root of the tree." That is, it is that which must take action against the Adamic mind, against the Adamic nature, against the dragon which sits enthroned deep within the Adamic heart, at the very root of men's lives. That is why Paul said, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). It is significant to note that the word "principalities" is from the Greek *arche* meaning commencement, beginning, origin. This bespeaks not of the branches of the tree, but the root — the commencement, beginning, origin, or SOURCE of the problem! The source of the problem is not flesh and blood, not just the human life, but the spirit which now energizes in the sons of disobedience — that is the ancient serpent, the old dragon, which sits enthroned in the human nature!

The ultimate warfare lies in that deep inner realm where the source of all things is found. As long as we content ourselves to deal with individual "demons," or to treat "social ills," or to wage war "against sin," or to struggle with the "lusts of the flesh," all of which exist in the external realm of the tentacles, we shall find ourselves ever defeated in even these things. Do not try to reform the outer world of appearances! When you meet with thievery, drunkenness, adultery, pride, deceit, cursing, false religion, worldliness, or any form of degradation, do not look at it, but through it. Do not look with the physical eyes, with the natural understanding or carnal perception — look with the eyes of the spirit, the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Look clear through the individual, discerning by the spirit the root and source of the issue — and there will flow grace to help.

We do not deal with people in their outer form or with manifest problems — we deal with spirit. We are not called to reform a person, we are not called to change the outward activity of a human body. We are called to minister the living Presence, to impart mercy, love, understanding, grace, faith, and power. Then the hearts of men will respond! *"The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men."* That is what we are called to do! Redemption lays the ax to the root of the tree, binds the strong man who sits enthroned in the nature, crushes the head of the serpent, and casts the dragon into the lake of fire and brimstone! Those are the wonderful spiritual scenes we see here in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation! Men must rise to this place of understanding, consciousness, and authority in the spirit wherein the ax is laid to the root — not to some individual manifestation, some outward expression, some external action, or some pesky little "demon" — but to the root itself — the Adamic heart where Satan's seat is! In dealing with the root, the tentacles will take care of themselves. Do not think that the "binding" of Satan is some great future event outside of yourself. Do not think that casting the dragon into the lake of fire and brimstone is some cataclysmic event in a coming age in the outer world somewhere. Oh, no! These are spiritual realities being wrought out in the living experience of all who are experiencing the "so great a salvation." It involves such a complete TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEING UNTIL THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL HAVE NO MORE POWER, PLACE, OR DWELLING IN YOUR LIFE. Then will you know God's FULL SALVATION!

Chapter 220

The Binding Of Satan (continued)

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years *should be fulfilled...*" (Rev. 20:1-3).

As we continue our study of the binding of the serpent, the devil, another clue to the mystery is found in the opening chapters of Genesis where our story begins. With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit on the inspired pages of God's Word portray the blessed scene of that first earthly son of God, in the image and likeness of God, abiding in the lovely, fragrant Garden of the Lord in Eden. There was a lovely Presence that walked in the Garden in the cool of the day, and the man presented himself there before the Presence of the Lord and walked and talked with God. We know for a certainty that there was a continual presentation of man in the Presence of the Lord, for as soon as man sinned he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden and rather than joyfully going forth to meet Him Adam and his wife "hid themselves from the Presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the Garden." God was in the Garden. Man was in the Garden. What sweet, holy communion passed between them in that blessed hour of man's innocence! But no sooner does Adam, the son of God (Lk. 3:38), present himself before the Lord than suddenly and mysteriously the serpent appears on the scene! There is a man that is perfect, but innocent — and the amazing thing is that in the presence of God and that man, there is a devil!

The patriarch Job discovered this same fact of life in his experience with God and with Satan. The record states, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job. 1:6). Can we not see how it is, my beloved, that when the sons of God present themselves before the Lord, Satan comes also among them? It is always that way! Adam, the son of God, presented Himself before the Lord and the serpent was right there in the Garden of his life! Job, the perfect man, presented himself before the Lord, and Satan showed up at the same place! This very experience happened to none other than our blessed Lord Jesus — the Pattern Son. Have you noticed how strangely Matthew and Mark speak of Christ's temptation? "And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness *to be tempted of the Devil*" (Mk. 1:2; Mat. 4:1). What a strange statement! Jesus had just presented Himself before the Father at Jordan, and the Father witnessed of Him before all: "This is my beloved Son *in whom I am well pleased.*" Just as God declared Job to be a perfect man, so He declared His Son to be well pleasing to Him in every way. The Holy Spirit manifests Himself there upon the Son of God. Then immediately the 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 of God to be proven, to be made strong, to overcome in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious ministry and the agony and death of the cross. Before plundering Satan's kingdom He had first to bind the strong man!

Do you suppose the devil came to Jesus there as a weird-looking creature, with little, evil-looking horns protruding from his temple, and a pointed tail? How often with our childish and distorted understanding have we pictured Jesus confronted by that legendary figure in the red suit, with fiery red eyes burning from their sockets, a sadistic grin on his countenance, with pitchfork in his hands! This is nought but foolishness, for Satan is spirit, even that spirit which now worketh in the sons 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, suggesting, enticing,

urging, compelling? Have you ever seen him? Have you sometime heard his audible voice? I think not! Yet — you have sensed his presence, you have heard his voice, you have felt his power! And was it not all within yourself? It was in your mind, in your emotions, in your desires. Does not our Lord, the Spirit of Truth, speak to us in the same way? That still small voice, the inner urging, the inward knowing, the spiritual consciousness and hunger — all from a dimension beyond the natural senses! God speaks from within because He is within. In the same way Satan speaks from within because he is within. God speaks out of our spirit, Satan speaks out of the abyss of our fleshly heart.

Because it is all in our mind, spirit, and heart does not mean that it is imagination or hallucination! In the depths of my spirit I am absolutely certain that there was not some hideous personality materializing before the eyes of Jesus in that Judean desert. Remember — Jesus was not only the Son of God, He was also the son of man. Being both He was capable of not only hearing from God but hearing those things that be of man. So when we speak of that ancient serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, we are not talking about some mighty fallen angel, but that mind that savors the things of man — the carnal mind — just as Jesus told Peter when Peter tried to turn the Lord away from fulfilling the will of God for Him, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but *those that be of men*" (Mat. 16:23). The apostle James put it this way: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15). The Moffatt translation reads, "*Everyone* is tempted as he is beguiled and allured by his own desire, and Desire conceives and breeds sin, while Sin matures and gives birth to death." Everyone has desires of one kind or another, and that really can be quite natural. When we see the word "lust," most Christians think it is used exclusively in a negative, sensual, or sexual context. The word simply means desire, and a person's desires are not always adulterous or murderous. One may desire to be wealthy, or famous, or to be a great and popular ministry whom multitudes will acclaim! Even in the things of the spirit one must be keen to discern between his own desire and the desire of the spirit. "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done." That is where the battle lies, and that is where sin is born.

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. The suggestion was just this: "I know who I am; I am a manifest Son of God. I have power. No need to walk for miles and perhaps faint from weakness in the heat of the day — I can turn these stones into bread!" And in His natural mind the Voice cunningly urged, "If you are the Son of God, go ahead and do it! Use your sonship powers to fill your belly! Why should you only bless others? Use it to satisfy your own needs and desires!" Jesus quickly discerned that wily Devil and knew how to nip that idea in the bud before it had time to blossom. He got to it before it had time to conceive by entering into union with His will. When the seed of desire and the seed of will join together into one, a conception takes place — this conception makes a baby called 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). In other words — if my Father speaks and tells me to turn stones into bread, I shall do so. But if the voice is any other than my Father's voice, I must do only those things which I hear from my Father. That ended the temptation! His will in union with His Father's desire conceived and brought forth the baby of righteousness! And with that victory the first coil of the "great chain" of the word of God was wrapped tightly around the "strong man" who needed to be securely "bound" before Jesus could come up out of that wilderness in the power of the spirit to begin His sonship ministry!

The battle lay not with some mythical personage outside Himself. The conflict was within. The voice was an inner voice. The suggestion was in His mind, its powers in His emotions, desires, and will. God speaks to our mind out of our spirit. Satan also speaks to our mind out of

the old fleshly Adamic heart. There is no monster without. There is only the dragon within! There are three things in this vast world, and only three — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; briefly, appetite, avarice, and ambition. I do not think you will be able to avoid the conclusion that all the inventions, creations, and contrivances of man are in existence to cater to these three things. It was with these three things that Eve was tempted. She saw the tree was good for food (the lust of the eyes), a tree to be desired (the lust of the flesh), and a tree to make one wise (the pride of life). The temptation was not from without but from within! How remarkably the three temptations of Jesus in the wilderness parallel these three! And when Jesus, as the second man, and the last Adam, had passed the same test Adam and Eve had met in the Garden, that ancient serpent had been securely bound with the chain of truth, cast into the abyss of His human heart, firmly shut up, and a seal set upon him! Oh, yes! That is the mystery! Every temptation of the devil comes to us through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. There are no others. Not for Adam and Eve, not for Jesus, and not for us!

Let us return to the patriarch Job for a moment, for we see this same principle fulfilled in him. "Now there came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and *Satan came also among them*" (Job 1:6). May I reverently add that every time the sons of God present themselves before the Lord — Satan comes also among them! It bespeaks of a condition within these sons — our mind versus His mind, our will versus His will, our ways versus His ways. It is a heavenly place within the sons of God wherein we must be tested to show whether we be sons indeed. The devil is not bound on behalf of the unregenerated sinning masses of humanity; he is bound in the life of a man who is becoming an overcomer. Now all men will come to that place in God's appointed time, but when you see Satan being bound know that an overcomer is being born! This impudent devil of self-will is in every man, and even our Lord Himself surrendered His own will to the Father's, saying, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done" (Lk. 22:42).

Until every son has been thoroughly tested in all points it is not possible for the sons of God to come and present themselves before the Lord without Satan coming also among them. Does he not walk in the natural mind of every man? It is written, "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro through the earth, and from walking up and down *in it*" (Job 1:7). Now the Lord's questions are never for His own enlightenment. He knew well whence Satan came. Oh, yes, Satan had been walking to and fro throughout the earth — God knew this — for he walks in our earth, even that earth which we are, from the east to the west, from the north to the south, from sea to sea and from pole to pole he walks in man, in the earthly places of our souls, in the secret chambers of our minds, in the fleshly motions of our bodies, in the deceitfulness of our hearts; he travels up and down in us from the heights of our heavens to the depths of our hells. There is not a day that he leaves us, for dust is his habitation and his food. All the way to glorification this inner antagonist is present. Of course, the one who operates within also manifests and works outwardly through us. All of the "works of the devil" that Jesus spoke of were wrought in and through men. All of them! The seat of Satan is in man, but his manifestation is outward, affecting all things through man and because of man.

Now, what does God do but deliberately hand over Job, the man who God Himself pronounced to be perfect and upright, into the hands of Satan to do his worst upon him, only that he should not touch his life. It was because God desired to test Job, just as Adam and Eve were tested in the Garden, and Jesus was tested in the wilderness, that the Lord brought forth "the smith to blow upon the fire." Please note that it was not Satan's idea to persecute poor old Job. Oh, no! It was God Himself who brought up the subject! There Satan was, presenting himself before the Lord, showing up for duty, and God asked, "Where have you been?" Satan replied, "Walking up and down in the earth." There was no mention of Job at all. "Well, Satan," the Lord queried, "have you considered my servant Job? Have you noticed that he fears God and

eschews evil? Have you noticed that, Satan?" You can be assured, dear ones, that Satan had noticed Job, but he wasn't doing anything to him.

One of the most glorious testimonies of the preservation of the saints of God is given here in this passage by Satan himself. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou not made a hedge around him and about his house and about all that he hath on every side?" Praise the Lord! Yes, there truly is a hedge around the people of God, and that hedge is Jesus Christ Himself. The Psalmist recognized and rejoiced in this fact when he said, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, HE IS MY REFUGE AND MY FORTRESS: my God, in Him will I trust" (Ps. 91:1-2). "You've put a hedge around him," Satan said, "and I can't get to him!" Then he went on to say, "You must put forth Thine hand and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." The Lord, however, who searcheth the reins and the heart, who knoweth them that are His, knows who can be trusted with affliction, and will not allow any to be tested beyond what they are able to bear. He therefore said to Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power — in thy hand — only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

One can only know God by vital relationship with Him. Job KNEW God! Job knew in his deepest heart that God is good, loving, true, righteous, just, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, and faithful in all His ways. At one point in his trial he exclaimed, "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth...and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." And again, "I KNOW that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee." Being a perfect man Job understood the nature of God, he knew what God is like — how He is. Armed with this knowledge he was unshakable and unmovable as the hand of Satan moved against him. With lightning swiftness the misfortunes fell as tribulation and affliction smote this man of God. All hell broke loose upon him! His possessions were gone. His servants were gone. His cattle, his family, and his dwelling place were as though they had never been. And now he was desperately ill, tormented with pain, and without even a bed to sleep on he lies down in the ashes of what was once his beautiful estate to listen to the relentless arguments of his friends, monotonously attempting by lengthy speeches and elaborate philosophizing to make a fool of him and prove that his present despair was the result of his own sin and disfavor with God. I do not know how many days their debate continued, but such miserable comforters as these are always at hand, ready to attest that those who have entered the furnace of affliction have been bad examples as Christians, they have somewhere failed God, lacking in faith, falling short in revelation, unfaithful to God's purposes, or that they harbor secret sins and so are deserving of punishment. Unless the Lord Himself has convicted them of sin, or unbelief, or disobedience, sufferers should pay no attention whatever to them. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God" (1 Jn. 3:21).

In one tragic day all Job's earthly wealth and glory had vanished as a mist before the rising sun. But did Job curse God for all this calamity? Did he even curse the Devil? Was he a fair weather saint without spiritual understanding? No, indeed! He rent his mantle, shaved his head, and falling upon the ground, he WORSHIPPED GOD with the unmistakable words of reverence, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!" (Job 1:22). You see, beloved, all the external evidence shouted aloud that God did not love Job, that God had forsaken him, that God did not see him, that God was not concerned about what happened to him, and that God wasn't just. It seemed that God had now revealed Himself to be the opposite of all Job had experienced and known of Him. But, praise God! Job knew God! He therefore knew that in spite of all the apparent external evidence to the contrary, in spite of how terrible and hopeless things appeared, God had not forsaken him, God did love him, God did see him, God was concerned about what happened to him, God was in control of everything, and God was just. Ah, this is faith — trusting God's goodness, wisdom, and faithfulness — that ALL is according to His purpose, IN SPITE OF ALL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY! Faith declares with Job, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust Him" — and then after being slain — TRUSTS HIM! Job, stripped of all, tried by fire, tested in the furnace of affliction, found that the

key to life is not some creed or doctrinal statement about what we believe about God, but that which we know of Him by virtue of intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him. Truly, "the trial of your faith is more precious than gold that perisheth" (I Pet. 1:7).

I am convinced that Job is none other than a picture of God's Christ. The first man Adam walked in the same land of fertility and blessing, the kingdom of heaven on earth, in the quickening presence and shimmering glory of God — but when the adversary appeared and he was put to the test — he flunked the test. But blessed be God! the second man was tested in all points like as we are and — He passed the test! When the Lord Jesus told His disciples that He beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven, He was saying that He had seen Satan FALL OUT OF HIS (JESUS') HEAVEN, or actually, Jesus had seen Satan FALL BEFORE HIM and become subservient to Him in the realm of spirit. He had bound the strong man! So far as Jesus was concerned Satan was no longer in possession of any authority whatsoever. Jesus spake not of a historical event, not of some mighty archangel that was expelled from heaven before the foundation of the world, but a living reality that He had seen occur within His own consciousness, life, experience, and ministry. THIS WE ALL MUST SEE AND KNOW if we are to know victory in our lives, if we are to truly walk as the sons of God. We must realize that if Satan has fallen he is not the powerful and formidable head of a mighty kingdom, but a serpent slithering about in the dust realm expressing himself through corrupted flesh. This must be embraced as reality within ourselves. When we realize that Satan has fallen before the Christ within us, then we are ready to be set free! All that remains is for us to lay hold upon that Devil, bind him with the chain of the living word of God, cast him into the pit, shut him up, and set the seal upon him!

Jesus saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven. In chapter twelve of the Revelation Satan is seen being cast out of the heavens of the manchild, the manifest sons of God. He must first be cast out of our heavens, out of our spiritual domain. To those who have Satan yet in their consciousness elevated to a position of power, and who carry on in their thinking an image of him as some god-like formidable foe — HE HAS NOT YET FALLEN, HE HAS NOT YET BEEN CAST OUT OF THEIR HEAVENS. Such people have made a god of him, but in your life, precious one, he is to be cast down, and you are to know once and for all that THERE IS ONLY GOD THAT RULES ALL. When this truth is revealed in power and glory within your life you are well on your way to that blessed heavenly land where THERE IS NO DEVIL ANYMORE! It is now time for the prince of this world to be cast out, the spirit of blindness in men's minds, which veils the glory of the Christ within. It is time for the Son of man to be glorified. When the life of the spirit is raised up in us SATAN IS BOUND — bound in the presence of the Lord and by the authority, power, and victory of the spirit within! This is the revelation of KINGDOM DOMINION!

The one thing that terrifies the forces of darkness is the fear that someday those who know and believe in Christ will awaken to the dynamic potential in the life of the spirit within them and begin to live fully out of that realm. When this happens, the great problems that plague mankind will begin to disappear. Ignorance will go; sin will go; disease will go; limitation will go; Satan will go; death will go; bondage of every sort will fade away and the kingdom of God will be demonstrated in men. What a hope! What a day! The wonder of it all is that this Day is even now breaking in the hearts and lives of God's elect! I proclaim to you that the crisis hour in the history of the world has come, and God's people must now arise and shine and courageously take hold of life and kingdom dominion and bring deliverance to the whole world. Truly, we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this!

Men of God throughout the church age have tasted the earnest and firstfruits of this kingdom dominion, but just as the seed planted eventually produces a harvest of many seeds in which the life settles, reproducing in form, quality, and power the original seed, so now the life of the all-triumphant Jesus is settling in fullness of form, quality, and power within the lives of His "many brethren," the sons of God. We who have received the call to sonship are learning, growing, developing and maturing into His dominion within ourselves, the rule of His kingdom raised up within us. We can never understand the deep mystery of kingdom dominion until we

clearly see that Jesus does not now enforce His own victory over Satan and His acquisition of All Power on behalf of all creation. If He did, there would be no sin, no darkness, no sickness, no sorrow, no death, and no works of the devil anywhere! Though Jesus truly has all power in heaven and in earth, and has fully and forever overcome sin, Satan, and death within Himself, billions of men still continue to be ravaged by fear, carnality, sin, and death. It is like a boxer who fights the world champion boxer and defeats him. He has defeated him for himself, but no one else has defeated him. Now suppose that the new champion trains every other man to box as he does, and one by one they are developed into world-class boxers and enter into a match with the former world champion and each in turn defeats him. The new world champion's ability has thus been transferred, conveyed, and imparted to all men, making them champions. This is the law of kingdom dominion! This is the law of laying hold on the dragon, binding him, and defeating him! We do not merely glorify the victory, power, and authority of the man Jesus two thousand years ago, but through His Spirit we are brought into the same relationship with God that He knew. Then by the gracious ministry of the sons of God all men shall be ushered experientially into the same victory! Then Satan will be so bound as not to deceive even the literal nations anymore! How awesome is this Day!

The kingdom of God speaks of the sovereign royalty, the absolute domain of God's government ruling in the spirit and by the spirit. The kingdom of God is the rule, the authority, and the power of God fully manifested in the earth in and through a people, kings and priests unto God. It's a pace, a walk, a lifestyle, an experience, a reality, and a ministry in the Spirit of God where the power of all darkness is absolutely dispersed. Satan is bound — every injurious thing shall be bound for a thousand years — that is, bound by the illumination of the presence, glory, and power of God coming upon men in and by the DAY OF THE LORD! The power and authority flowing from the ministry of the manifest sons of God is the dominion of the kingdom of God in the day of the Lord. Within that function of the Spirit the enemy with all his works is bound!

Think about it — when deception is bound in men's lives, when superstition is bound in men's lives, when ungodliness is bound in men's lives, when hatred and strife and violence are bound in men's lives, when darkness and religion and carnal works are bound in men's lives, when sickness, sorrow and pain are bound in men's lives, when carnality and greed and bigotry, are bound in men's lives, when crime and injustice and sins of all kinds are bound in men's lives — what release we will have in the earth! Oh, my soul! Behold the truth that lies hidden here! If Satan were a personage outside ourselves, as the church systems teach, then how could binding him and casting him into a pit change human nature or make men holy? How could removing an external influence bring such life, victory, righteousness, peace, joy, glory, and power into the world of men? Therefore it is of great importance that we see that Satan is indeed the spirit that now worketh IN the children of disobedience. Bind that spirit, my beloved, and you have broken the power of darkness in man!

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image (expression and revelation) of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). "But even unto this day...the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (II Cor. 3:15-16).

Can we not see by reading these instructive statements that if we can effectively express outwardly the reality of the indwelling Christ, the world will see God. The Christ is unveiled in and through the members of the Christ body. The good news we are proclaiming is hid to those that are lost because the god of this world has blinded their minds and put a veil upon their hearts. The word "lost" is from the Greek *apollumi* meaning "to die or perish." The good news is hid to those who are still dying or perishing. Are you perishing? Is it not because the good news of life in Christ is still veiled to you — is not living and energetic in your experience? When the power of Christ becomes more operative and energetic in your life than the dragon in your heart, the dragon — the god of this world — will be bound, the scales will fall from your eyes, and the

veil will be stripped away from your heart! Then you will be living in what men call "the millennium," in the brightness of the day of the Lord! This wonder is not reserved for some future day, it is a NOW revelation!

It is now time for the prince of this world to be cast out, the spirit of blindness in men's minds, which sets up a barrier to the glory of Christ. Turn, O man, and behold the Lord! See the Lord as He is in His temple! The god of this age doesn't want this for any man. The god of this age is old Adam, the outer man, the man of your first birth, the man of flesh, who minds earthly things. It is your manhood, your humanity that doesn't want to fully see the Christ, because for you to really see the Christ is to give up all the reasonings, preconceptions, understanding, knowledge, decisions, and pursuits of the flesh to find the life-source which is the antithesis of SELF. The Adamic mind of selfhood will seek to keep you looking away from the tree of life by every means at its disposal. Contrary to what some New Age Philosophies teach, Self is not the Spirit or the Christ within, for except a man deny himself and take up his cross he cannot be a disciple of the Christ. Except a man hate his own life and lay it down He cannot find the Christ. That is what Jesus taught! Self will blind you so that you will not turn to the Lord. Why must the prince of this world be cast out? So that the light of the glory of Christ, who is the very image (Greek: character) of God may shine to men! The character is in you, it is in the Christ, in your spirit. When you behold this Christ within the glory of Christ begins to shine and the veil is done away; the character of God is seen by all about. But there is a deep mystery here. If the "god of this world" is the one who blinded your mind, and put the veil upon your heart, does it not follow that HE HAS BEEN BOUND in order for the blindness and the veil to be removed! Oh, yes! When the Christ has sufficiently arisen in your life it is HE who lays hold on the dragon, binds him, and casts him into the pit. Then the Christ shines forth more and more, revealed in all His glorious and eternal reality! And that, my friend, IS THE "MILLENNIUM"!

Chapter 221

The First Resurrection

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and *reigned with Christ a thousand years...this is the first resurrection*" (Rev. 20:4-5).

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

"It is appointed unto man once to die," say the Word of God. And, short of the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, nothing would ever have changed that! It is as inevitable as God Himself can make it. Millionaires may offer their doctors vast fortunes to prolong their lives a month...a day...at least an hour...or even a few minutes. From time to time I have seen the advertisement of a new drug which is touted as a major breakthrough in the fight against some dread disease, which is exceedingly expensive, costing thousands of dollars per treatment, only to discover that in the studies that were done it prolonged the victim's life by a mere three or four months. But there comes a time when all the money in the world cannot stay the hand of death. The word "death" has many meanings to many people. And it also has various applications and significances in the scriptures. To some it means the final and futile end of all their efforts — the leaving behind of all that they have striven for all their lives. There were no pockets in the ancient burial shroud, for those departing this world take with them only what they have in their hearts. All other treasures — no matter how valuable, or what the cost to the individual accumulating them — are left behind. Then, too, there is the sorrow of departing with loved ones. This is death's most devastating blow — the absence of someone we love so dearly. And, if this were the end, we would be most miserable indeed. **BUT IT DOES NOT END THERE!**

The resurrection from the dead is indeed a thing which seems incredible to the mind of the natural man. Yet almost two millenniums ago Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed by the Spirit of God these startling words: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (Jn. 11:25-26). This, of course, is the greatest thing anybody could ever know and this assurance centers in Jesus Christ and His resurrection. This is the hope and the only hope of all mankind! Until Christ came into the world men had no hope. We do not realize that today. We think that people have always had hope. But that is not so! Except for those few people who clung to the promises of God given in the Old Testament, most of the world, more than 99.9 percent of them, dwelt in absolute hopelessness. There was no substantial promise; there was no concrete evidence; there was no man in any civilization, culture, or religion that had ever conquered death or risen from the grave; there was nothing but the vain wish which was so often the father of the thought that perhaps people who died lived still in another world, or should come back reincarnated in another body, and thus live again. Everywhere, people watched with great despair as their loved ones were lowered into the grave. "If a man die, shall he live again?" was the burning question left unanswered. There were nothing but shadowy unsubstantial wishes

that filled the hearts of men. And in the night watches, those cold doubts came swirling into the heart and mind, chilling the soul; thoughts that came right out of the sepulcher and the tomb.

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

Jesus Christ came and offered no vain speculation or philosophical argument, but offered His living body as the One that had risen from the dead. Christ arose from the dead and that was the greatest moment in the history of this world. He declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jn. 14:19). What a wonderful thing that is, to live forevermore! To live forevermore in a new body fashioned like unto His glorious body with no more pain, no more aches, no more arthritis, no more back trouble, no more diabetes, no more clogged arteries, no more gout, no more cancer, no more weakness, ageing, nor death! All of that is gone. We shall have a new body, fashioned after His own body of glory and power, a body of immortality and incorruption, where the sting and the dark victory of death shall be forever abolished. Aren't you glad!

Therefore the Spirit saith, "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21). Here we have the top of the ladder, reaching into the celestial realm — the blessed end to which Christ and life in Him is to lead. Beloved brethren! Let us lay aside all presumption and purge ourselves of every form of deception. I admonish you this day — do not allow any man to deceive you into believing that he can in some way minister immortality into your mortal body — unless he himself dwells in an immortal body! Some have professed to be able to baptize people into immortality, while others have said, "Come and follow me, grab onto my coattail, and I will lead you into life and immortality!" Some have held seminars to teach people how to put on immortality, some have attempted to confess or meditate their way into life, while others have foolishly hoped to live forever by eating health food. I can tell you without any fear of contradiction that all the fruitarians and vegetarians and food faddists of all previous generations are now lying silent in their graves along with all who subscribed to any other "method" or "technique" devised by man for putting on immortality. Jesus was the first man to break the death-barrier and He did not do so by employing any of the methods listed above! Some in our day have professed to have already put on immortality, to have even now passed over the grave; but it should be obvious to any thinking mind that the wrinkles in their skin, the gray in their hair, the redness in their tired eyes, the daily need for food, water, and sleep, the constant need for air, and the unchecked ageing of their bodies give the lie to their confession. I remember sitting in one man's living room who said that he was already immortal and could not die, and, furthermore he recounted thrilling stories about him and his wife traveling about from place to place caught up by the Spirit as was Phillip in the book of Acts. Yet as I sat before him he was unable to rise from his chair because of intense pain he was suffering, which he attributed to demons that were attacking him

because of his stand for truth. I passed his way again a couple years later only to discover that he had died and was now both dead and buried.

The word cannot be broken: "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the **Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: WHO SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY...**" How can corruption impart incorruption? How can any man lift either himself or others out of the pit of corruption by his own corruptible bootstraps? "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the TREE OF LIFE WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD," saith the Lord. Let me present this Tree of Life: Christ, risen, glorified, and exalted above all heavens! HE is the tree of life in the paradise of the kingdom of heaven on earth! It is there in that paradise of God where it is blessedly true that He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). Oh, yes, we are seated together with Him in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord!

Once we see that in that kingdom we have been translated into we are living and walking in heaven, understanding will soon dawn of what the apostle means when he says that "our conversation is *in heaven*." The word "conversation" literally means "manner of life" or "lifestyle." The living out of our life is a heavenly reality! We dwell in a heavenly dimension! Having first placed us "in heaven" the apostle then continues, "From whence we look for the Saviour." He is not saying that the Saviour is coming from heaven, and when He comes He will change our vile body. Oh, no! Heaven in the apostle's statement is not connected to Christ's coming, it is connected with OUR LOOKING. "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look..." Can you not see the mystery? IT IS OUT OF OUR HEAVENLY LIFE IN CHRIST THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR VILE BODY! It has nothing to do with Christ "coming" to change us. It has everything to do with our heavenly expectation, that just as we are seated with Christ in the heavens — so we are looking for Him to also change our vile **body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.**" This is not merely revelation, to be left for the future; for the full development of our life in sonship we must seek to enter into and appropriate it. We do this as we learn to triumph over death on every level. We do it as we learn to look to Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here and now victory over the terrible dominion sin has had in the body. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." It did so in Adam and Eve, and it will also do so in us. We appropriate His life for our whole man as we allow the powers of the coming age to possess us, to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our views, to anticipate, even here and now, the things which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Let us now see how it is that "in Christ" all shall be made alive. The verse under consideration is found in I Corinthians 15:22, and this entire chapter deals with resurrection. The word resurrection is so inadequate to express the true thought or idea that the Holy Spirit is conveying to us. The common conception of this word carries with it the idea of opening all the graves in the world and the arising out of them of the physical bodies of those who have died. But since death is something more than dead bodies, you can be assured, dear ones, that resurrection is something far beyond bringing bodies out of tombs. To have a false or limited view of the resurrection is to have a false and limited view of God's work throughout the ages until now. If our view of the resurrection is dwarfed, then our whole view of God's plan is dwarfed.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive.*" So we read that in Christ ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE. The contrast is not between corpses and walking bodies, but between the dying process and the life process in God. The Greek text actually reads, "As in Adam all are dying, so in the Christ shall all be made alive." The terms "are dying" and "shall be made alive" are in the incomplete tense in the original, which denotes an action in progress. The long drawn out activity of death in dragging men down to sin, sorrow, death, and the grave is put in contrast with the endless activity of life imparting holiness, power, incorruption, and glory. Both are a process! All who endured the first shall enjoy the second. Here is a message for mankind which should lift it above its misery! The process of His life, and hence, the process

of resurrection has already commenced with us. It began the moment we were first quickened by Him and will consummate when we have fully grown up into Him in all things! Truly, "He hath quickened us together with Christ...and hath raised us up" so that "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1). We all know we have been quickened and raised up and made to sit with Him in heavenly places, but we also know that we still have a corruptible, mortal body. The work of resurrection has therefore begun in a part of our being, and is being progressively worked out until our total transformation is complete. Yes, it is a process!

To be "made alive" is more than some instantaneous event to take place some time in the distant future. "Made alive" is not a blasting open of graves and the coming forth of the bodies that have been buried in them. "Made alive" does not point to some event when people will be soaring off into the heavens. When Jesus stood before the tomb of Lazarus, He rebuked Martha for looking for some manner of event in the far distant future, for she had said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection *at the last day.*" Jesus told her that the RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE WAS STANDING THERE BEFORE THEM. "I AM the resurrection and the life." Oh, saints of God, do you not see that the eternal Father within the Christ was and is the resurrection? "I live by the Father," Jesus declared. The resurrection was not some thing that happened to Jesus, not some event of which He was a partaker, not some day marked by the calendar. The resurrection was and is A MAN! "I AM!" — there it is! "I AM the resurrection and the life." To possess the Man, to put on the Man, to come into union with the Man, to grow into the Man is to have the resurrection, for the Man IS the resurrection. "In Christ shall all be made alive."

This is what Paul is speaking of in the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians. He bases his argument on the fact of whether or not the Christ has risen from the dead. In verse sixteen we read from the Diaglott, "For if dead persons are not raised up, NEITHER HAS CHRIST BEEN RAISED." Please notice, and most other translations bear this out, Paul says, "If dead persons are not (present tense) raised up..." He did not say, "If dead persons will not be (future tense) raised up..." He placed it in the present, that if the dead are not raised up, then the CHRIST IS NOT RAISED. If Jesus the Christ is the only one so far raised from the dead, He is most assuredly having a lonely time of it, and He too is looking with wistful eyes into the unknown future, waiting for the graves to open. But there is a note of triumph in Paul's epistle, and that epistle comes right out of Paul's own personal experience, when he proclaims in verse twenty, "BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, and become the firstfruits of THEM THAT SLEPT." Ah, the word "sleep" is in the past tense, them that SLEPT. This can but mean that they are not sleeping now, and Christ has already led forth from the dominion of death an unknown host who are WITH HIM IN THE LIFE OF THE RESURRECTION! "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above."

Truly the resurrection is not a future hope — it is a present reality. As those in Adam "are dying" so in Christ men "are being made alive." Men do not die in one day, but they "are dying" and one day the process is complete and the body goes to the cemetery. So in Christ men "are being made alive" and they are not made alive in the totality of being in one single day or in one spiritual experience. Receiving of His life we find it to be a RESURRECTION LIFE. The word "resurrection" is from the Greek word anastasis meaning — a standing or rising up. It denotes much more than our English word resurrection which we term to mean a restoring to life again. The Greek word means the WHOLE PROCESS OF ADVANCING AND RISING UP UNTIL THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE REALM IS REACHED, and our goal is nothing short of full conformation into the image of God that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Merely coming back to life, to this miserable life we have known in corruption, is not enough! We want to know Him in the power of HIS RESURRECTION! Resurrection is the process of standing up and advancing, it is arising from the dust and the low realm of the earthy, to bear the image of the heavenly. Resurrection is the process of having our life lifted up from the earth, to be raised in spirit, soul, and body into the heavenlies, joined in one in the fullness of the Spirit of God. Our

alienation and separation from God, with all the dreadful attending sorrows, are already beginning to end in this life as through Christ WE ARE MADE ALIVE!

The hope of all the glory to come is the Christ that is in His body on earth now. The hope of the resurrection to come is that He is now our resurrection and our life! The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us now. Does this not make us the body in which Jesus Christ is walking today? No longer the carpenter of Nazareth, or the teacher by the shores of Galilee, having God in Him, but now in this 21st century, He is living on earth not only in one, but in a multitude of bodies. *"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"* Jesus said, *"The Father and I will come and make our abode with you."* Jesus Christ lives in every member of His body! That is the mystery, that with our limitations, our frustrations, our weaknesses, with the marks of the Fall still upon us it is said of us, "Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world." We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. One of these days, as He becomes more and more expressed and manifested in us, He will "change these vile bodies, that they shall be made like unto His glorious body." Corporately He is arising more and more in His body! Paul says, "We groan within ourselves, we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, waiting for the adoption *which is the redemption of our body.*" As glorious and wonderful and mighty as it is to have the life of Jesus Christ made manifest in this mortal flesh, the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead expressing and manifesting through these mortal bodies, we can never be satisfied until this life of His within shall do such an ultimate work of transformation that, as Paul said, *"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."*

We are moving into the days of the seventh angel of Revelation 10:7 sounding the last trumpet. *"For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"* (I Cor. 15:52-54). The life of Christ in us will conquer all sin and death! It begins with a mystery and it ends with a mystery. Whenever you begin with God you must end with God. It begins with the mystery of the unveiling of Christ in the church which is His body, and it ends with the mystery when the trumpet blows and the mystery of God is finished and this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality. It is a mystery all the way through and the mystery produces a progressive change within us from one glory to another, beginning in our spirit and working out into the soul, and finally swallowing up the body. If you stop short of the second mystery it would give the idea that because Christ who conquered death lives in you He will conquer death in you and you simply will not die. But do you want to live forever in the shape you are in today? Yes, the life of Christ fills me with joy and peace and victory today and He has given wonderful gifts of healing, provision, and blessings of many kinds. But there is something greater than this! In order for the full power and glory of HIS RESURRECTION to be brought to its ultimate completion, our soul must be fully saved and these bodies must be changed to be like HIS GLORIOUS BODY. It is necessary that that life and that glory which has resided in these limited, mortal, dying bodies shall then have an opportunity for a full expression in a glorious, incorruptible, immortal body. It is indeed wonderful!

While it is gloriously true that Christ has given His life to all men, to the whole world, yet it is evident that there must be a progression in the development of that life in the experience of every man until every vestige of the death realm has been swallowed up, spirit, soul, and body. To those who walk with Christ there is an ever-increasing consciousness, growth, increase, unfoldment, maturation, and triumph of that life! The mighty working of His power within is followed by this very precious and understandable result: "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal (dying) bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). I believe I now see more clearly than I have ever done why it was that Paul, who, as you and I do, still dwelt in the hellish bondage of a mortal body cried out, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this

mortal **must put on immortality**...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"**

We are, indeed, terribly in bondage to the body of this death, and with us the whole creation is groaning, waiting for the day when the sons of God will fully come into their own and then deliver all creation from the bondage of corruption. I do not need to argue with any man to prove our present mortality in the flesh. If you must sleep to live, you are mortal. If you must eat to live, you are obviously mortal. If you must breathe to live, you are unquestionably mortal. We are all aware of our constant and unrelenting decay as the aging process etches its marks upon us. Our present mortality is naught but death, although we live in the spirit. Think of it! Meditate deeply upon it and cling to this realm of death no more. Reach up, my beloved, with the blessed arm of faith and embrace that bright realm above where that which is true in our spirit reaches down and takes hold upon our outer man, where this mortal puts on immortality, where death in all its aspects is swallowed up of life, where in that final victory of His life within the sons of God will upon this earth shout in triumph over both death and the grave!

The process of resurrection implies change all along the way. Human beings, it seems, have always been afraid of change. When Sir Francis Drake learned about the potato in Peru and brought it back to Scotland, people refused to grow potatoes because they aren't mentioned in the Bible. When streetlamps were introduced in Boston, local ministers preached against them, contending that "If God had intended this, He would have made the sun brighter and the moon more brilliant." The use of painkillers was also exposed by clergy who argued that bodies were created by God and should not be interfered with by chemicals. Change, however, is inevitable, and while some changes are bad, many of them are good. Not all change represents progress, but without change there can be no progress. Change is often unpleasant because it means surrendering what is familiar and leaving behind what we once valued. We often prefer to live by man-made rules that we think are constant and unchangeable. But God wants us to be controlled by His wind, by His Spirit! God's Spirit living within us HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE US FROM ONE DEGREE OF GLORY TO ANOTHER!

Truly we yearn for this change, for our desire is not to be unclothed, that is, to put off this body of flesh, but clothed upon with that glorious body of Christ out of the heavens that mortality may be swallowed up of life (I Cor. 5:1-5). Yes, we groan inwardly for this transformation to take place. As I have mentioned previously, I have met many brethren through the years who confessed that they had already put on immortality, had already passed over the grave and could not and would not die. I must be very honest and frank with you, my beloved brothers and sisters. I have not one whit of a desire to live forever IN THIS BODY OF HUMILIATION. There is no more frightening thought, no more repugnant possibility, than the idea that I might live forever, or even for a thousand years, in this body of humiliation! Thank God, there is to be a change! Hear it! *"Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform and to be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself"* (Phil. 3:21, Amplified) What a marvelous thing!

The thought of merely adding immortality to this body of humiliation, with no other change, the suggestion of such limitation, that I might have to bathe, anoint my body with deodorant, brush my teeth, gargle with Scope, and do the thousand other things mortals must do to ameliorate the offensiveness of this flesh body, the hint that I might retain this base form, that I might remain as I am with only the added quality that I can't die, falls as far short of what I conceive of a body transformed and fashioned like unto the body of His glory and majesty as hell falls short of heaven! The body of incorruption shall resemble this vile body no more than does the oak tree resemble the chemical elements of the earth which were raised up into the substance of the tree by the mighty working of the subtle and mysterious life-force sown in the earth as a seed.

Sons of God! If we would be fashioned like unto Him, co-sharers of His glory and power and wisdom as the God-man, we must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the

cross and its pardon; we must follow on to know the fullness of the New Life, the life of glory and power in human nature, injected into man through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, of which the Spirit of the glorified Jesus is the witness and the source. Now, practically everything in relationship to our sonship depends upon the clearness with which this great truth that I have stated is recognized. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the message of these words through the apostle Paul, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 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**" (Rom. 5:9-11). The double provision of Christ is here clearly set forth: reconciled by His death; saved by His life. Oh, the mystery of it!

Christ's death is the atonement, reconciling men to God, granting a full and free admittance back into Eden's lovely garden from which our disobedient foreparents were once banished. But Christ's life is the Tree of Life in the garden, the source of the life which will work in us the complete transformation into the divine nature. Sin, sickness, sorrow, fear, and death are all part of a power in our life; let us fully understand that it can only be met by another higher power. The power of sin and death works all through our life. The death of Christ, which is the atonement, reconciles us to God, but only the life of Christ can come against the power of sin and death and deliver our life from destruction. Reconciliation places us, in God's eyes, back in Eden's garden; but the Tree of Life is the power that delivers my life from the dominion of sin and death. He redeemeth my life, by His life, from death! Christ's life, not His death, living in our life, absorbing it, impregnating it, transforming it, causes us to live. This is the meaning of the profound sentence in which Paul records the first great work of salvation and pointedly distinguishes it from the second great work of salvation, saying, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved (from sin and death) **by His life!**" The first is pardon, forgiveness; the second is transformation into His image and glory!

"We shall be saved by His LIFE," says Paul. Paul meant no disrespect to the atonement when he said, "We shall be saved by His life." He was bringing out one of the great facts of salvation. If God gives atoning power with one hand, and power to save the life from destruction with the other hand, there is no conflict between these. Both are from God! If you call the one justification and the other glorification, God is the author of them both. If Paul seems to take something from the one work and add it to the other, he takes nothing from God. Atonement is from God! Reconciliation is from God! Power to conquer sin and death in the full glory of Christ's resurrection is from God! Christ is all in all, the beginning and the end. When the thing we want is deliverance from the guilt of sin, which is condemnation, let us appropriate the gift God has given to remove our guilt — the DEATH of Christ. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins" (Col. 1:14). When the thing we want is power to redeem our life from sin, corruption, and death, then let us apply the gift which God has given us for our life, the LIFE of the Son of God! "He that hath the Son *hath life*."

With my small and limited ability I cannot make the truth of the transforming power of Christ's indwelling life to be a living reality in your heart. But I can share words of exhortation with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will quicken them within your understanding thus releasing the power of life in your innermost being. There is a beautiful parable of this process of life which comes to us from the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness as they journeyed toward their promised land. The story is told in the twenty-first chapter of Numbers. The people began to murmur and complain and they spoke against God and against Moses. "Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness," they asked, "for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and we are tired of this manna." Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people: and they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you: pray to the Lord, that He may take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent of bronze and raise it up on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall be healed and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it on

a pole, and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked to the serpent of bronze attentively, expectantly, with a steady and absorbing gaze, he was healed and lived.

When an Israelite was bitten by flaming serpents in the wilderness, he never thought of applying manna to the wound. The manna was for his life. But he did think of applying the bronze serpent. The manna would never have cured his snake bite, nor would the bronze serpent have kept him from starving! Suppose he had said, "Now I am healed by this serpent, so I need not eat the manna anymore. The serpent has spared my life and done everything for me, and I am preserved." The result would have been, of course, that he would have died. The man, to be sure, was cured, delivered from the judgment of his rebellion against God, but he has to LIVE, and if he eats no manna his life must languish, and end in destruction and death. Without going to any trouble about it, simply by the inevitable processes of nature, he would have become a dead man. Thus we see that it was not a choice between the bronze serpent and the manna. He did not require one or the other — he must have both! The serpent must first redeem him from judgment; and then the manna was God's provision to perpetually give him life, and only in the strength and energizing of the manna would he be enabled to reach his promised land — the fullness of God — if he continued on in faith. Now there is no contradiction between these two things — the bronze serpent is from God and the manna is from God. But they are different gifts for different things. The serpent removed the judgment but could not sustain life; the manna gave life, but could not deal with the sentence.

Now to apply this to the truth under consideration. The death of Christ, on the one hand, is the bronze serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (on the cross)" (Jn. 3:14). Christ's life, on the other hand, is the 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 forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:50-51). In the light of these remarkable words we can reach only one of two conclusions. Either all who have believed on Christ since that blessed day when these wonderful words poured from His divine lips have partaken of Him, eaten of His living flesh, and have not died but have begun to live forever, or, **NO ONE HAS EATEN OF HIM FROM THAT DAY TO THIS**, for all, saint and sinner alike, have continued to go by way of the grave. Either Christ has given eternal life to all who eat of Him, and there is a life — consciousness and being that transcends the grave — or He lied and did not give His flesh for the life of the world, so that none has ever sat at His table and received the life of which He spake. Do you really believe that God is that wicked that He would send forth redemption and then withhold it for another two thousand years? Let me ask you a question, my friend. If you had the power of immortality in your hand right now, would you wait another two thousand years to share it while billions of mankind continued to go out into endless nothingness? Wake up! my beloved, let us get beyond the fantasies and fairy tales of a merely carnal and earthly and physical understanding of truth! "He that hath the Son **HATH LIFE**," saith the Lord. "And we know that we **HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE**," add all who know and love the truth.

Of all the wealth of scripture truth nothing is more certain or clear than the fact that our sins are not forgiven by bread, nor are our lives nourished and supported by death. Our life is not made incorruptible and eternal by Christ's death, nor transformed from glory to glory from the power of sin, death, and the grave by the atonement. Our life is not redeemed from destruction by the crucifixion of Christ, nor is it brought to perfection from day to day by the death of Christ. But we are saved, as the Holy Ghost sayeth, "by **HIS LIFE**." We cannot live upon death. And after, by the atonement, we are forgiven, and have entered by faith through the gateway into Eden's fair garden, the kingdom of heaven on earth, having acceptance before God, we shall then be saved, delivered, changed, perfected, transformed, and fully glorified **BY HIS LIFE!**

The pattern for all this is clearly laid out in the opening chapters of Genesis. When man sinned, he was expelled from the Garden, from the life of the spirit in the presence and power of God. When the sinning and sorrowful couple left the Garden of God, the Lord placed fiery

cherubim with flaming swords at the entrance to Eden to prevent man from entering back in, specifically to shut man up from the Tree of Life. That is clearly what the Hebrew text intimates. Now, some brethren have taught that in order to enter back into Eden we must pass through the flaming swords of the cherubim and have our flesh nature burned away. But that is a serious mistake! We do not enter back in through the flaming swords. Oh, no! We are forgiven, pardoned, reconciled and justified by the death of Christ. Can we not see by that that upon our pardon and reconciliation God removed the cherubim with their flaming swords so that we could re-enter Eden by His sovereign grace. It is grace that brings us in! "Just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me; and that Thou bidst me come to Thee — O Lamb of God, I come...I come!" That is the mystery. And why does He bring us back in by pure grace? **SO WE CAN BEGIN TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE AND LIVE!** You don't eat the fruit of the Tree of Life to get in; you are ushered in so you can have access again to the Life. And that is what will bring you to life, perfection, and glorification!

To sum up, therefore, it is one thing to be reconciled by the death of Christ, and quite another to be saved by His life. If forgiveness, reconciliation and justification could make men to be **CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD** then all the baby Christians in all the carnal church systems of man would be well on their way to sonship. The death of Christ can make one a justified believer, bringing him to life, but only the mighty working of the indwelling Christ, only a constant and continual eating of the Tree of Life which He is can enable us to put on the mind of Christ and be transformed in soul — mind, will, emotion, and desire — and then transfigured in body by the power of **HIS RESURRECTION**. He redeemeth my life from destruction. How? By His life! This is the power of a full and complete salvation! Unspeakable are the blessings of the high and heavenly realm of God's incorruptible life which flow from the glorified Christ in our spirit outward to the soul and at last to the body. Blessed Tree of Life! It is ours, for Jesus is ours. Blessed life of the ages! We have the possession within our earth of its hidden power, and we have the prospect before us of its fullest glory. May our daily lives, in all we think and say and do, be bright and blessed proof that the hidden power dwells within, daily preparing us for the glory yet to be revealed. May the eternal and incorruptible fruit of our redeemed life within be the power to live to the glory of the Father, our fitness to share the glory of the Son!

THREE STEPS IN REDEMPTION

As we meditate upon these words of truth concerning the power of His resurrection, surely we must realize that the process of resurrection touches the whole man — spirit, soul, and body. We are in a travail to partake of His fullness, being conformed to His likeness, and the basis of this travail can be more fully appreciated when related to the three parts of man's being. Paul enumerated these when writing to the Thessalonian saints: "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5:23).

Everything God created consists of many "parts." The geologist can explain to you the many "parts" of planet earth. The botanist is able to give you the names and functions of the various "parts" of a flower. The astronomer will point out the many billions of "parts" that make up the vast universe. God has also created man with many "parts." These are not just the physical parts or organs of the body, but also parts of the mind or soul, and parts of the spirit.

The human body is that part of our being which we all know best. It is the physical, natural, earthly tabernacle made up of members such as feet, legs, arms, eyes, ears, and organs such as heart, lungs, and kidneys. But we have other parts of our being besides these. Do not think that the term "parts" in respect to our inner life originated with me! The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Jeremiah with this promise, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make...after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:33). The "inward parts" in which God places His law are not the kidneys, liver, or gall bladder! They are, rather, the inward parts within our soul; not the inward parts of our body. The passage above is quoted in the New Testament this way: "I will put my laws in to

their mind, and write them in their *hearts*" (Heb. 8:10). Here we see a slight, but important, variation. Jeremiah says "into their inward parts" but the writer to the Hebrews renders it "into their mind." This comparison shows that the inward parts are not of the body, because "mind" is not of the body. Our "brain" is of the body but not our mind. A corpse has a brain — but no mind! I have seen living people, heart beating, all vital functions stable, but with no mentality — mind. The mind, therefore, exists only through a union of physical brain with life essence. The Psalmist adds this testimony concerning the inward parts of man, "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Ps. 51:6).

In the creation account in Genesis we read that God formed man out of the dust of the ground and "breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life." The result of the uniting of the body with the breath or spirit of life is said to be that man "*became a living soul.*" Let us now note carefully the process by which the first human soul was brought into being, as this will help us to understand more clearly just what a soul really is. The scriptural account of this we have just quoted. The soul is here shown to be the result, or product, of a union of the body, or organism, with the breath of life — "man became a living soul." Here I would draw your attention to two significant facts. The word "breath" in Hebrew is the same word as "spirit." And in the New Testament the term "living soul" is in the Greek text *zoe psuche*. *Zoe* is the Greek word for "life" or "living" which in every case is used for divine life, God life, and eternal life. *Psuche*, of course, is the word for "soul." The term signifies a divinely living soul, not created through the union of the air of our atmosphere with the human body, but through the union of divine spirit with the human body. Thus, it was not the infusion of earth wind or air into Adam's body that made him a living soul, but GOD BREATHED into his nostrils the SPIRIT OF LIFE and man became a divinely living soul! The soul itself is not the spirit, just as it also is not the body.

Now a soul can die even as a body can die! "Behold, all souls are mine...the soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE" (Eze. 18:4). The soul can also be saved from this death (Heb. 10:39). Thus seen the soul is really that which results from the union of organism (body) with the life-giving qualities of the "breath of life." Scientists still don't know just what "life" really is! The "breath of life" is certainly something more than breathing in air. If breathing in air was all it means then we could pump air into a corpse and it should live. Life is more than that! The breath that "God breathed" into man's nostrils is spirit. And the spirit is life, Jesus said. A simple illustration is the electric light. The mechanism of the bulb with its internal vacuum, filament, etc. is not the light; neither is the electric current that flows through that mechanism the light. It is the union of the mechanism with the electricity that produces the light. Destroy the bulb (body) or cut off the electricity (spirit of life) and the light (soul) goes out. Thus, the soul of man is in reality his personality — existing in the four primary parts of mind, will, emotion, and desire. This four-fold personality and expression of man's being is produced by the union of the intricately designed mechanism or organism of his wonderfully made body with the in-breathed spirit of life. There must be life for man to possess soul, human personality.

When man first came into being as a living soul from the creative hand of God he was perfect in all his ways and for a time walked with God and lived by the spirit and the word of God. They knew nothing of evil; for they had never experienced it and had no knowledge of it. While they had flesh bodies, they did not walk in the desires or emotions or mind or will of the soul — they walked in the overwhelming presence and spirit of the Lord God. They were totally yielded to God, God-conscious rather than self-conscious, living in intimacy of fellowship and vital union with their Creator and Father. They did not live carnal, fleshly, selfish, self-centered, sensual, demonic lives because they were so caught up in God that they were not even aware that they were naked — that is, their "flesh" (the carnal realm) had never been exposed or manifested to them! They lived under God's spirit law, His every word, and GOD was in control of their beings through His in-breathed spirit of life. This means that both their soul and body were yielded up to the will of the spirit. Their mind, will, emotions, and desires were all dominated by the spirit of God within them!

But then — they met the serpent! That ancient serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, is not the carnal mind of man, for man's carnal mind is portrayed under yet another symbol in Eden — the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The eating of the fruit of this tree added to man's soul two new dimensions — human reasoning and conscience. This tree of the knowledge of good and evil also brought into man's life the experiencing of good and evil! Both good and evil are carnal. Adam and Eve had never before lived by either "good" or "evil" — they had lived by LIFE! Life is in the spirit. Good is something less than life just as evil is the opposite of life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil separated them from life and awakened them to the carnal, earthly, fleshly, sensual, satanic realm. Even as the Tree of Life (Christ, the Spirit) brings forth the attributes of God, the "fruit of the spirit," so the tree of the knowledge of good and evil produces the "fruit of unrighteousness" unto death. To be carnally minded is death! Every tree is known by its fruit. But let us ever be alert to the fact that the serpent and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are not symbols of the same thing! The serpent is something deeper than the carnal mind of the tree of knowledge. The serpent is the one who introduced them to the tree of knowledge!

How cunningly Satan appealed to Eve's "inward parts," those "hidden parts" of her own soul, her own mind, will, emotions, and desires, which under the influence of the spirit had lain hidden away, unknown, undiscovered by her until now. These inner, carnal, selfish, sensual, egotistical, reasoning, fleshly, twisted potentials within her had never been stirred before. Satan commenced to draw out these hidden, unknown aspects of her SELF, her soul, and began to awaken them within her consciousness. Suddenly she was confronted with thoughts, attitudes, motives, emotions, desires, will...that she never knew existed. This is the power of temptation, for the apostle James eloquently describes it thus: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15). And remember, my beloved, it was not the serpent that enticed Eve. The serpent beguiled (deceived) her (Gen. 3:13; II Cor. 11:3) but she was enticed by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — her OWN CARNAL MIND!

It is all there in a nutshell in Genesis 3:6: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (the lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (the lust of the eyes), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (the pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof (the works of the flesh) and did eat." All of this was influenced and instigated by the serpent! And the thing we need to see in order to understand this great mystery is that as long as man's soul was under the influence of the Spirit he walked in righteousness, power, wisdom, and life. As soon as his soul came under the influence of another spirit, self came into prominence. There was established an affinity, a union between the serpent and man's self-life, the serpent now becoming "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." And once man had eaten of the tree of the carnal mind, the flesh, HE BECAME ADDICTED TO IT. And man has been eating that fruit ever since, living in self, the soulical realm, after his own satanically inspired desires and emotions, out from under the control of the life-giving Spirit. The whole sin of man, then, was in departing from the Spirit, walking independent of the Spirit, "doing his own thing." This is the sin of man today!

But now, thank God, through the blood of His Son, God has brought us back into Eden and made available to us that realm of spirit-life from which man was driven out. Only this time there is a change. An improvement! The first man was made a "living soul" and walked under the spirit's dominion as a living soul. But now the second man, the last Adam has come forth and He is not a living soul but a QUICKENING SPIRIT. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son, the Quickening Spirit, into our hearts and a new man is being raised up within us, a new Adam is standing up in our lives! Our new man is Christ brought forth into an individual identity of power and expression within each one of us. Blessed Tree of Life! "He that is joined unto the Lord is *one spirit*." The Spirit of Christ within you gives you the potential to bruise the head of the serpent in that same blessed Eden where Eve was beguiled. Oh, yes! Where did you think the

serpent's head would be bruised? And the Spirit of Christ within you now enables you to bring both your soul and your body under His dominion that the spirit might reign producing life within. Old Adam was a living soul, but the last Adam is a quickening spirit! Only as the Spirit rules over soul and body can the soul be saved and the body be transformed!

Perhaps now we can understand why the scriptures do not speak of saving spirits. Only "souls" can be saved! Redemption is not for the spirit, but for soul and body. When Jesus died He cried out, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my *spirit*." His spirit did not suffer and die on our behalf. But Christ in the agony of Gethsemane cried out, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even *unto death*" (Mat. 26:38). And the prophet prophesied of Christ's death, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see (*bodily*) corruption" (Ps. 16:10). And then we read, "But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe unto the *saving of the soul*" (Heb. 10:39). The Psalmist declared, "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants" (Ps. 34:22). Redemption is also for the body: "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of the body*" (Rom. 8:23). Your spirit doesn't need saving for it is the off-spring of God, therefore of His own nature. God cannot sin and God cannot die! Is it not self-evident that that which is not created but is the offspring of God likewise cannot sin and cannot die.

Wonderful words were spoken at the very dawn of human history, recorded in the oldest book of the Bible, which state simply and powerfully the reality of man. "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Thus, "the Spirit (of God) beareth witness with our spirit that we are children (offspring) of God" (Rom. 8:16). The writer to the Hebrews reminds us, "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). Someone says, "Oh, yes, God is the Father of the spirits of all those who have been born again." Yet the scripture cries out, "O God, the God of the *spirits of all flesh*" (Num. 16:22). Jesus taught all men, before Pentecost and the "born again" experience, all the vast multitudes that thronged Him, that God was THEIR FATHER IN HEAVEN. Thus our true Father is not a man on earth, but our Spirit-Father who is in heaven! Our flesh, however, body and soul, is the offspring of the first man Adam, the soul-man, and therefore must be redeemed and brought back under the dominion of the Spirit, Christ. This is how we truly become the BODY OF CHRIST! To live in the soul brings sin and death. To live in the spirit produces life eternal — not merely a length of life, but a quality of life. Both soul and body are raised into life by the reigning of the indwelling Spirit. "Now if the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH I-N Y-O-U" (Rom. 8:11).

This is the travail of this hour, in this new day of the Lord. The travail is that there shall be a company of sons of God who, with Jesus, come into their full redemption — that place where in spirit, soul, and body they are saved, transformed, and made LIKE HIM. When this work is fully accomplished the manifest sons of God, for whom the whole creation is expectantly waiting, will be pure as He is pure, holy as He is holy, glorified as He is glorified, to sin and die no more. The curse of death will be swallowed up and full redemption will be a glorious and eternal reality. The way back into life is simply in returning by the same route that led man into death! Jesus is our forerunner who has opened up the way back into life. As we enter in with Him, appropriating the full provision and victory He has made available, we become the FIRSTFRUITS of His redemption and the forerunners for the residue of men, the whole creation, which travails with us for the manifestation of God's sons.

Man, because of his naturalness, always begins in his consciousness with that which is most obvious to him — the body. God, in His dealings, always begins in the reverse order with that which is most closely related to Himself — the spirit. With man it is always "body, soul, and spirit." With God it is always "spirit, soul, and body." Redemption, therefore, being the work of God, begins with the spirit, for the spirit is the first thing man abandoned in the fall. The spirit is the key to the salvation of the soul. Thus God begins His redemptive and restorative process by

moving mightily upon man's spirit, joining with His Spirit, and causing man's spirit to STAND UP AGAIN IN POWER AND GLORY. This is what we call metaphorically the "new birth." Now the spirit must woo the soul, and raise it up into life in union with the spirit. If you can receive it — THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION! Then spirit and soul together shall swallow up the body into union with themselves until it also is changed, transformed, fashioned into a body like unto HIS BODY OF GLORY! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

Chapter 222

The First Resurrection (continued)

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years... this is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-5).

Many passages of scripture remain locked up to man and cannot be understood with the natural mind. I am certain that one such passage is found right here within our text where the apostle says, "...and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years... THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION." The key here is the word "first," the FIRST resurrection. The Greek word used here is *protos* and literally means "first," or "foremost," that is, foremost in reference to time, place, order, or importance. It also implies that there are other orders to follow, but this is FIRST, unique in its purpose and working. As Ray Prinzing once pointed out, it bears an analogy to the birth process, and the special position that was accorded to the one born first. "*You shall set apart unto the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstlings of your livestock that are males shall be the Lord's...and every firstborn among your sons shall you redeem*" (Ex. 13:12-13, Amplified). Others can follow in due time, but they can never have that special privilege and purpose of being the first to be born.

Do I believe there is going to be a physical resurrection? Certainly! Do I believe our bodies will get back up from their dissolution and the grave? Absolutely! There have been times in my thinking when I have thought that the resurrection is not a resurrection of bodies, not something that takes place on a physical level. But you see, I have to look at the pattern — the pattern is Jesus — and His body got back up from the grave! He's the pattern, the blueprint, the example, the forerunner, the prototype of man's redemption and destiny. I go to the Word — His body arose from death and my body will arise from death. People's bodies have already gotten back up from the grave. At the resurrection of Jesus we read that "...the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Mat. 27:52-53). This has already happened as a result of the Christ's resurrection! It's a historical fact that dead bodies arose and walked out of their tombs at the resurrection of Jesus and were seen by many. This is resurrection! I believe in the resurrection of the body. Yet — I am not convinced our present text is speaking of that type of resurrection! This is a resurrection of "souls." "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and they (the souls) **lived**...this is the first resurrection." I'm not looking to come into resurrection life after I die, my vision is to lay hold upon the power of His resurrection as His life is raised up in me in the here and now!

I believe the key to unlock the interpretation of the twentieth chapter of Revelation is presented to us in this expression: "*This is the first resurrection.*" If we can determine when and how the first resurrection occurs we will progress greatly in our understanding of the entire chapter. In contrast to the first resurrection we need to go back further and discover when the "first death" occurred. It makes spiritual sense that the "first resurrection" would be the resurrection out of the "first death." The revelation of death was first presented to Adam in the Garden. "*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***" (Gen. 2:17). This is the death of the soul, for something catastrophic happened immediately in the lives of Adam and Eve as soon as they partook of the forbidden tree. Someone may object, contending that actually their soul was magnified by the fall, and I will be the first to admit that their soul's life was magnified; but it

was magnified only because it died to the life of the spirit, it died to God, it died to truth, it died to righteousness and to all that is high and holy. The testimony of scripture is just this: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."* Can we not see by this that in the day Adam and Eve sinned, their soul died. The sinning couple did not immediately die physically. The death of the body came many hundreds of years later! The New Testament vindicates this position.

Paul addressed the state of the Ephesians before their salvation, stating that they were *"dead in trespasses and in sins"* (Eph. 2:1). Can we not see by this that if it is the soul that dies as a result of sinning, then the Ephesians who were "dead in sins" were dead in their souls? Then Paul says of these same saints that *"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"* (Eph. 2:4-6). I'm sure that all will agree that what was quickened, that is, made alive, resurrected, was not their mortal bodies! Paul writes essentially the same truth to the Colossians, saying, *"And you, being dead in your sins...hath He quickened together with Christ"* (Col. 2:13). Unregenerated men are dead men! Even our Lord said of them, *"Let the dead bury the dead"* (Mat. 8:22). I don't think anyone would argue that he was speaking of dead bodies! These dead are dead souls. Other passages also make the point: *"Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead"* (Rev. 3:1). *"She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth"* (I Tim. 5:6). *"...shall save a soul from death"* (James 5:20). *"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death"* (I Jn. 3:14).

This is not a moment for fine words or eloquent speech. This is an hour for very plain speaking. The truth is that when man sinned it was not his spirit that died. We have all believed that man died in his spirit that day in Eden, and most of us have taught it that way. But as I have walked with God and been taught by the spirit of truth I have come to understand that such a notion misses the point. Let us consider this thought of man's spirit for a moment. It is doubtful that in all of scripture any subject is more prominent and yet surrounded with such great mystery as the truth concerning the spirit in man. Now let me share with you a further truth concerning the life, or that spirit which was breathed by the Almighty Father into each of us. Many scripture passages, and the parables of our Lord, call it a "seed." The Bible uses the illustration of a seed to tell us who we really are! You see, to tell a person in a darkened state of mind, bound in sin-consciousness, in their present weak and frail human condition that they are the manifestation of God on the earth, would be absolutely impossible for them to fathom. If they did understand such a concept, they would receive it into their carnal minds, become puffed up and egotistical, distort, misapply, misuse, and abuse it, becoming even a worse devil than they are.

The seed of God is in every man, and the life of that seed is the spirit of man. But you meet the drunk on the street, you see your unconverted, worldly-minded neighbor, you rub shoulders with the people of the world, you watch the parade of murderers, thieves, child molesters, rapists, and thugs of all kinds on the evening news, and you don't see God in anybody! That is because God in every man is a seed. A seed doesn't do anything. It just is. It can lie on the shelf for fifty years and never express a thing! You see no action, no manifestation of the life within; all you see is the outer shell which reveals nothing of the power that is on the inside. Seeds have been found in the tombs of Egypt that are more than three thousand years old, and they look today just as they did when they were placed there, but they have never produced a harvest. You see, my beloved, just as the seed (sperm) of a man and the seed (egg) of a woman must conceive in order to change, grow, express, and accomplish, so must the seed of the vegetable kingdom be germinated in order to be productive. The life is hid in the seed, but it is covered by the outer shell and abides in a state of dormancy and inactivity. It must be subjected to two things: heat and moisture. The rain falls upon it, the sun shines upon it, and suddenly there is effected a mighty release! There is a stirring of that life that is restrained on the inside, the shell that conceals that life bursts open, and the life within springs forth, puts down roots, and grows upward; it breaks through the earth and comes forth in mighty expression and manifestation of itself!

Can we not see by this that the spirit of man is indeed the seed of God but it is buried in, encased by, the outer man of flesh, the carnal understanding, the natural consciousness, and the inclinations of the flesh. It is here that we must tread softly and bow reverently before the spirit of truth. It is easy to say that in that long ago Eden man's spirit died, and that man is spiritually dead, and that therefore His spirit must be quickened, resurrected in order for man to again have spiritual life. As logical as that sounds I have been brought to see that it is not the truth! Nowhere does scripture state that man's spirit died. There is not one single passage in all of God's blessed Book about dead spirits. Oh, no! But a whole lot is said about dead souls and dead bodies! Men are not separated from the life that is in God because of something terrible that happened in the spirit of man; rather it is due to what happened in his soul and in his body!

Hear it! *"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. 4:4). Surely you noticed that it is not their spirits that have been blinded, but their minds — their SOULS! Again Paul writes, *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"* (II Cor. 11:3). Again we see that the serpent did not corrupt Eve's spirit — he corrupted her mind — her SOUL! And now hear this! *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled"* (Col. 1:21). This time too, we were alienated from God and were enemies of God, not because of some dark tragedy in our spirit, not because our spirit was dead — but it was in our mind — our SOUL! Perhaps we can now better understand the words of Peter when he says, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit..."* (I Pet. 1:22). We have purified, not our spirits, but our souls — and our spirit is the very instrument and vehicle of that soul-purification!

Yes, God does do a wonderful work in our spirit, but it is not a resurrection from the dead. He moves upon our spirit by His Spirit to cause it to be released from the outer husk of the carnal mind and the self-life which have encased it. The problem has not been with the spirit, for the spirit is the very breath, the very seed, the very offspring of GOD! To say that the spirit could die is to say God could die. To say that the spirit could be corrupted would be to say God can be corrupted. To say that the spirit can be blinded is equivalent to saying God Himself can be blinded. The spirit is the only part of our being that was not created. It was blown into our nostrils out of the very mouth of the Lord God Himself! Yes, the spirit within man has been covered over, hidden, concealed behind the veil of flesh. The rising up, the springing forth, the release, the revelation of the life that is in the seed comes by a mighty action upon the outer part of the seed by which its power of restriction is removed. The inner life is released. And, thank God, the genetic code is intact! Everything that life ever has been, is now, and ever shall be is right there in the seed! When the life springs forth all that hindered is broken asunder. Every step of the revelation of Christ is an unveiling!

There are some conclusions which the Holy Spirit would mark indelibly upon our minds. With the inward witness of the Spirit I cannot help but conclude that since the scripture presents to us the "first death" as being that of the soul, then it is this dead soul which must be resurrected first. Therefore, when the apostle reminds us that *"Even when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ,"* we must bear in mind that it was not Christ's spirit that was raised from the dead — it was His soul and His body! When Jesus died He cried out, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." His spirit did not suffer and die on our behalf, for it was alive and well in the hands of His Father in heaven. But Christ in the agony of Gethsemane cried, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." And the prophet prophesied of Christ's death, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see (bodily) corruption." His spirit had been committed into the hands of His Father in heaven. It was His soul that was not left in Hades and it was His body that burst forth from the tomb. Think of it! If we are *"quickened together with Him"* then it can only be in soul and body that we, too, are quickened. And when we study the various passages that speak of us now being raised, now being quickened, now having passed from death unto life, we know it is not in our body that

this reality is being accomplished — it is the dead soul which is first made alive. Truly, **THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION!**

It is erroneous to speak of the resurrection of the body and omit the resurrection of the soul. Man's body is not all that dies or is dead. Death seized upon Adam in the very day when he sinned, although many hundreds of years passed before his body finally went back to the dust. Two Greek words are used to speak of the resurrection. The first is anastasis, generally translated "resurrection." The second is egiro, translated as "raise, raised, or risen." A close examination of the texts where these words are employed reveals that they are used interchangeably and both are applied to both the resurrection of the soul and the body. There is neither time nor space to go into a detailed examination of these facts here, but the truth can be readily apprehended by anyone willing to take the time and make the effort to do a word study of these two terms.

When Jesus came He found this world a cemetery — all were dead. To these dead men Jesus announced, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment); but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear *shall live*" (Jn. 5:24-25). It should be obvious to every enlightened mind that Jesus was not talking here about the resurrection of dead bodies out of the cemetery, for that would mean that not one dead person in the past two thousand years has heard the voice of the Son of God and lived! He spoke of the resurrection of souls that were dead in trespasses and in sins, dead to God — unresponsive to spiritual things and the spiritual realm.

Yet there are millions of earnest believers who know that they have been made alive in Christ, but who would invent still another physical resurrection to take place at some future date which they term "the FIRST RESURRECTION!" "First" infers that there could not be any other before it. In his wonderful revelation of the powers and realities of the kingdom of God John saw thrones, and sitting on them he saw the "souls" of those to whom authority was given to act as judges. These were also the "souls" of them that were beheaded (died to SELF) because of the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and **THEY LIVED** and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And then he adds: "*THIS is the first resurrection.*"

Perhaps the indignation of some will be aroused because of this statement, but if you carefully scrutinize the statements above surrounding this "first resurrection," you will be forced to agree that this passage is not even dealing with a first "bodily" resurrection at all, for John sees souls, not bodies. True, the term "souls" at times in scripture denotes "people" or "persons," that is, the entire being, spirit, soul and body. An example of this is found in passages like Genesis 46:26-27 wherein we read, "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; and the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." But in this case you can substitute the term "people" for "souls" all through the passage. Try it and see! Now try the same method with our text. Here in Revelation 20:4 you cannot do so! The phrase is, "the souls of *them*..." The only word in that phrase for which you can substitute the word "people" is "them." "The souls of the people that were beheaded..." You cannot grammatically substitute the word "people" for "souls." So John is not seeing people, he is seeing peoples' souls, and these souls had been made alive, caught up to the throne, and were now capable of judging and reigning with Christ for a thousand years — in the illumination and glory and power of the day of the Lord! Isn't it wonderful!

The fact of the soul's living and reigning with Christ in heavenly glory and power being called the first resurrection is not difficult to understand. Every child of God has a soul as well as a body. The soul first experiences God's transforming love and power: it is raised first, here in this present life for the elect of the Lord, and the soul's union with the spirit is the harbinger of

that resurrection yet to come when even our vile body shall be changed that it may be fashioned like unto HIS GLORIOUS BODY! For some years now the Spirit has been speaking to many of God's called and chosen elect that it is now time for a people to lay hold upon and apprehend even this bodily transformation — resurrection. And during this same time the Lord has been preparing us for just such a glory — transforming our souls, bringing forth souls that are adapted and equipped to express themselves through such a body of glory as mature sons of God — souls that have been fully saved, fully redeemed, fully quickened, fully purified, fully transformed, fully made overcomers, brought into union with the spirit, raised up out of the dust of the death realm and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Oh, yes, I know something about that! This is not doctrine, theory, or conjecture, my beloved brother, sister, but a present and powerful and living reality that God is working in my life, and in your life! This is the power of the first resurrection! Any other kind of resurrection must take place at a later time, in another order, and as the result of this first one! That is the mystery.

The first resurrection is just one of many events revealed in the book of Revelation. This is not a book of outer world events but it contains the keys to inner spiritual events that will uncover Christ — Head and body. Revelation is really another "gospel" written in signs and symbols concerning the working of Christ in His people and which takes up where the four Gospels in our Bible leave off. Another interesting and significant teaching in connection with the first resurrection is the statement which immediately follows: *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"* (Rev. 20:5). Who are, or what is, the "rest of the dead?" Can we not see that the "rest of the dead" can refer only to that part of each of us which has not yet been raised up into life — the mortal body. That is certainly the "rest" of the dead in my life! And there are two conditions which must be met for the body to be transformed. First, the soul must be fully redeemed, transformed, and raised up to live in His sight, for that is the first resurrection. Second, the body cannot be changed until "the thousand years are finished," that is, until the day of the Lord in our life is consummated — until the day of the Lord in our life has fully and completely done its work in us! The body can only be changed when we have completely become new creatures in Christ Jesus by the release of our spirit and the resurrection of our soul that has been dead and wasted because of our old Adamic nature. We are being made alive as a new people, conformed to His image, because we have risen in newness of life and are seeking those things which are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. This is the first resurrection!

This new life is not something that is going to happen some day, somewhere. This new life has already happened and is happening, first in our souls as we put on that precious mind which was in Christ Jesus. We have the life of the ages now because we have been resurrected into the kingdom of God. *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son"* (Col. 1:13). We do not have to go to the grave to receive this resurrection and translation. Blessed be God! We are not waiting for our "rapture." Nothing new must be added, and no specific prophetic events must occur before we have this translated life. Our death to Self, our beheading, the losing of our old Adamic head of the carnal mind, is but the gateway to a larger, fuller, heavenly life — the more abundant life of sonship to God. As we sign our death-warrant and consign to the grave the "old life," it is only to find that we are recipients of a life infinitely more wonderful and glorious — as the firstfruits of His redemption. Marvelous truth! Glorious fact! How it enriches! What treasures of grace, what a reservoir of power, what radiance of glory — what a wealth of meaning! That is the matchless energy which works in the believer — **THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION!**

The words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, spoken in the splendor of His resurrection to the expectant hearts and attentive ears of His wondering disciples, hold a significance far beyond the scope of human understanding. Perhaps the greatest words ever spoken were uttered by Jesus when, at the moment of His ascension He promised His little band of foot-step followers, *"...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). The Lord didn't say to these disciples, "Now fellows, be

sure to arrange a beautiful, impressive, and well-advertised Easter Sunrise Service each spring to bear witness to my resurrection." Oh, no! He arose by the power of God and ascended up into heaven in the sight of those men whom He had chosen and selected to carry forth His redemptive ministry throughout all the known world of that day. To these He left His parting instructions, upon them He pressed the infinite purpose: "...ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you: and YE SHALL B-E W-I-T-N-E-S-S-E-S U-N-T-O M-E!" The message is clear — you will not merely witness, you will not only speak words, or bear a testimony, or declare a message — but you will BECOME, you will, within yourself, literally BE the witness!

Some teach that the great mark of the resurrection was the empty tomb. People travel thousands of miles and spend, annually, billions of dollars to go see that empty tomb in Jerusalem. But the apostles never referred to it! They did not need an empty tomb for THEY THEMSELVES were the witness! Christ was alive in them! The very same wisdom and power and authority which He had manifested for three and a half years before His crucifixion was now manifested mightily through these men into whom had come His RESURRECTED LIFE. After healing the lame man at the gate of the temple, Peter was called before the Sanhedrin and the record states, "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD, EVEN BY HIM doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 7:4-10). The proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was in the very fact that HIS POWER had made this man whole. And this power was IN THE WITNESSES. God wants a people today who have the evidence of the resurrection within themselves, in their lives! The resurrection of Jesus is not a historical fact to be commemorated, but a present glorious and eternal reality to be demonstrated!

Ah — it isn't a day, it isn't a celebration, it isn't a sunrise service, it isn't the enthralling rendition of "He Arose," by a dawn-kissed choir, or dyed eggs, or Easter bunnies, which witness to the resurrection of our wonderful Lord. MEN AND WOMEN ARE THE WITNESSES, men and women born from above, transformed by His grace, imbued with His mind, conformed to His image, filled with His Spirit of power, living out His life. Christ is alive! Hallelujah! And I am, in the glory of my redeemed soul, raised up together with Him! It is indeed wonderful!

We cannot over estimate the value of our soul's resurrection — our soul standing up in the fullness of the Christ-life. Ray Prinzing beautifully expressed the truth of this when he wrote, "When Jesus arose from the dead He was not only ALIVE IN SPIRIT, but HE WAS ALIVE IN SOUL — that is, He had all His mental faculties together. Thank God we can be '*renewed in the spirit of our mind*' (Eph. 4:23). Redemption is for the whole man, and resurrection life is also for the soul/mind realm. There may be those days when the aging process of the natural seems to leave you somewhat disoriented. But the hope is for resurrection, and HE will finish this work in us, '*For God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*' (2 Tim. 1:7). Sound mind — literally one could say, to be calm, cool, and collected. A well-balanced mind is a part of the resurrection process at work in us.

"*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to AWAKE out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed*' (Rom. 13:11). '*Wherefore He saith, AWAKE thou that sleepest, and ARISE from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*' (Eph. 5:14).

"Awake — '*egeiro*,' gather your faculties together, and arise, stand up out from among the dead. Thus Paul clearly taught that there was an INWORKING RESURRECTION that could be experienced now, and then it would be a steady ADVANCING until we are '*changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*' (2 Cor. 3:18). '*If ye then BE RISEN with Christ, seek those things which are above...set your affection (mind) on things above, not on things on the earth...*' (Col. 3:1-3). To be carnally minded is death! Hence we need this resurrection, to RISE

UP out of that state, to have all our mental faculties attuned to the things above. Then it remains only for the body to be changed. The process continues as we are renewed into the mind of Christ, and He begins to gather all our faculties into harmony with the spirit. And ultimately these inward changes will be manifested in a CHANGED BODY. ***'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.'*** There is an on-going resurrection now, and it is the power of advancing until we are completely *'found in Him'* (Phil. 3:9) — end quote.

Can we not understand that God cannot give us an immortal, glorified body until we have a disposition and character that corresponds to, and expresses perfectly through, such a body. Should God give a glorified body to a person still walking in the carnal mind and human soulical Self-hood, He would actually create a devil! That fact reveals the true mystery of the first resurrection, the standing up in Christ of the soul — our mind, will, emotions, and desires — thus preparing us for the "rest of the dead" to be raised — our body — and fitting us for the glory and power of that kind of body.

"The game is played above the neck!" yelled the coach as he watched yet another mental lapse out on the court. He was simply expressing what others say in motivational talks to people who want to transform their minds. Some people even listen to motivational CDs under their pillow at night; they want their subconscious changed so that they can change. The truth is that much of what we are and what we become is influenced by our minds. But it takes more than motivational talks to truly transform the mind. It takes the power of the FIRST RESURRECTION! The mind that is transformed by the Spirit focuses attention on things that are above, where Christ is seated in the heavens of God's Spirit. Your body may be changed at the sounding of the trumpet, but it takes the transforming power of redemption now to change your disposition and character — your soul. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "You come behind in no gift." They had all the gifts of the Spirit, yet there was envy, strife, division, sexual perversion, drunkenness even in their meetings — spiritual immaturity!

You may have been saved thirty years ago, baptized in the Spirit twenty-nine years ago, got a miracle of healing twenty-eight years ago, the gift of prophecy twenty-seven years ago, and received the deeper revelation of kingdom truths twenty-six years ago — but when stripped of all that experience you may find that you are very carnal and spiritually immature. You have not grown in grace, you have not developed in the image of Christ, you have not overcome the flesh, there is still a childishness, a pettiness, with condemnation of others, pride, biting words, wrong attitudes, anger, negativity, fearfulness, works of the flesh, etc. Should the trumpet blow and your body of humiliation be fashioned like unto His glorious body, but your mind is unrenewed, your will is weak, your emotions unstable, and your desires fleshly, how can you express the life and glory of sonship on the level of the glory of your new and incorruptible body? You would merely have a heightened and intensified ability to express carnality on a higher level! You will have experienced the second resurrection without having experienced the first!

God will have a people today who have the evidence of the living Christ in their spirit, soul, mind, body, home, automobile, family, job, everything that has to do with them. The Biblical picture of glory and heaven and spiritual things is beauty. God instructed Moses to put garments of beauty and glory on the priesthood. When Solomon built the temple he made it beautiful and glorious. God did not make a nasty sunset or an ugly rainbow. Even the snow is beautiful, and the grass, the trees, the mountains, the seashore, and the heavens! Do not talk about Christ being glorified unless part of that glory is shining and manifesting in you. If this salvation does not help us right down here with our present problems, pressures, weaknesses, sins, and diseases, if it does not help us now to rise above our circumstances, prejudices, and traditions, it is not worth anything. Some believe that salvation happens to you after you are dead. And many believe that resurrection only happens to you after you are dead and buried. But I do not hesitate to tell you, precious friend of mine, when you are not experiencing the resurrection now, you will not be ready for it when you are lying in a coffin! In the days that lie before us, may there be a demonstration through all the elect of the Lord to all who are in need, to the effect that Christ not only died for our sins, was buried, rose again and ascended to the

right hand of the Father, triumphant up there, but may we open our hearts to the risen Christ, that that victory, that triumph, that glory, and that life of God be manifested in us, now!

Paul said that he yearned to know Christ in the power of His resurrection. Then he also said, "Christ is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:24). There is nothing clearer in the history of this world than that Christ is power. He has made new men and women of tens of millions. He has turned them right around and set their faces towards God. That is the hardest task in the universe. To create a world is nothing compared with re-creating one human soul. The victories of Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, were child's play in comparison. Their power could crush men into a feigned submission, but it could not penetrate the inner nature and change the secret heart and will and soul. This is what Christ has done again and again! Have you ever tried to reform any soul held in the grasp of some delusion, addiction, or sin? Motive after motive you urge — the injury he is doing to himself, his self-respect, public opinion, the love of friends and family, his place in this world or the next — all in vain. For a moment the poor sinful feet make a feeble struggle to lift themselves out of the mire, and then sink back deeper. A sense of despair comes over you: you feel as though there were nothing to which to appeal.

And then one day a new heart, a new will, a new mind are given by the sovereign operation of God; the man stands up in the glory of Christ! All has not yet been transformed, but a mighty power has been raised up and a glorious new work begun. If you ask him the secret, he would tell you, with Paul, that Christ is the power of God unto salvation! Now, believe me, there is nothing worth calling power compared with the power that can accomplish that. To break a man's resistance; to reverse his will; to turn the currents of his heart; to renew his mind; to purify his emotions and desires; to make him love what formerly he hated; to set his soul triumphantly superior to sin and weakness and sorrow and death; to translate him into the kingdom of the Son and give him seating in heavenly places; to make him a son of the Most High with a calling to glory and virtue: whoever can work these revolutions is strong beyond all that the mighty of the earth ever conceived of power. And Christ has done it again and again, praise His wonderful name! And He shall reign until all enemies are under His feet and the last soul in heaven, earth, and hell has been re-created into the image of God. David spoke of this mighty power when he said, "**He restoreth my soul.**" Ah, that is just what God is doing in this first resurrection — He is RESTORING OUR SOUL! That is the power of HIS RESURRECTION!

Have you considered the truth that lies hidden in these inspired words of the apostle, "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory*" (I Cor. 15:53-54). There is not just one truth in these words, but two. The apostle tells us that this corruptible must put on incorruption AND this mortal must put on immortality. Then to drive home the significant point that there are two resurrections, the first and the second, he reiterates again the dual operation of our change into spiritual beings, saying, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, AND this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory!**" Simply stated, when both of these operations of God are accomplished in us the resurrection will be complete.

Paul prefaces the above statements with these words: "*Behold, I show you a **mystery...***" How totally inadequate do words become in the face of a mystery so deep and profound as this! How weak are our explanations, how frail our exhortations! Only the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God can teach us these things as we ought to know them and may God grant that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened of Him to see that the mystery and the power of His resurrection is being raised up within us to lay hold upon our entire being until in our totality WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM.

Chapter 223

The First Resurrection (continued)

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years...*this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power*" (Rev. 20:4-6).

Surely there is not a believer drawing breath who fails to perceive at least in part the truth that lies hidden in these inspired words of the apostle, "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory*" (I Cor. 15:53-54). Paul tells us that this corruptible must put on incorruption AND this mortal must put on immortality. Then to drive home the significant point that there are two resurrections, the first and the second, he reiterates again the dual operation of our change into spiritual beings, saying, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, AND this mortal shall have put on immortality, THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory!*" Simply stated, these two statements are not just two ways of saying the same thing; putting on incorruption and putting on immortality are not the same. Incorruption is one thing, immortality is quite another thing, and only when both of these operations of God are accomplished in us will the resurrection be complete!

Oh, what a stormy sea the world has sailed from Adam's transgression until now! What indescribable travail the earth has seen under the curse of bondage to corruption! And not just man, not alone the earth, but the whole creation was made subject to this vanity and it is the whole creation that groans with a sort of universal travail, waiting for the sons of God to reach the glory and honor of adoption, waiting for the transfigured family of sons at last to speak the wonderful words of life and deliverance (Rom. 8:18-25). In the throes of corruption all things are propelled by the swirling momentum of the downward spiral to destruction, utterly helpless and powerless to invent any method of preventing the ultimate catastrophe.

The dark foreboding and terror of every creature and all things is not unlike that of the victim of punishment by the Hohenstaufen house in Germany. One of the methods of punishment, it is said, was to incarcerate the victim in a luxuriously appointed room. Instead of feeling any special remorse, he was rather delighted with his good fortune. In a day or two, however, the prisoner realized his illusionment. He noticed, as he arose each morning, that the walls had slightly contracted. At first he could scarcely conceive of it. He examined the space closely and found his fears verified. He watched the movement very closely, and sure enough, they were gradually contracting. In oiled and silent grooves these heavy metal walls were gradually drawing closer and closer. He was startled, and placed all manner of objects here and there to check the oncoming tide. But it was all in vain. The walls were irresistible in their progress. It dawned upon him that this beautiful luxurious room was a deceptive snare.

When he realized that this comfortably and beautifully furnished room was to be his death cell and the place of his doom, invariably the perspiration poured out of his temples and he cried out frantically for help. But no response came. The metal walls simply gave back a hollow echo and continued to draw closer. When the furniture had been demolished by the pressure and the walls had come so close he could not do anything but stand upright, he placed his back to the wall, and bracing himself with his hands and feet, he tried with one superhuman effort to withstand his doom. But the walls were not to be gainsaid; they were not to be denied of their prey. Finally the walls crushed him to death. Is this not the sense of every man who beholds the ravishing power of corruption in his soul and body? As old age appears, with its multiplied

physical weaknesses, degeneration, ailments, and limitations, they feel themselves crowded to the wall and think they are daily approaching their fatal and final end. Unable to make any further resistance, they passively submit themselves to the inevitable and slip away quietly from this world. Behold in this, my friend, the awesome power of the **BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION!**

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

The universe itself is no less subject to the bondage of corruption. As an article in Discover magazine reported, six or seven billion years from now the sun will begin to die, but it will not die alone. When the sun runs out of hydrogen fuel at its core and begins burning the hydrogen, helium, and heavier elements in its outer layers, it will swell tremendously, expanding out to earth's orbit. In its death throes it will swell into a red giant star, engulfing and incinerating Mercury, Venus, and Earth. Life on earth — if indeed any still exists — will surely end. A like fate awaits every star and planet in every solar system in all the two hundred billion known galaxies that make up the universe. Everything is winding down and burning out. In the light of this solemn knowledge let us prayerfully reflect upon the Holy Spirit's message of hope and deliverance, "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself **SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION** into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (placement in full, mature sonship), to wit, **THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY**" (Rom. 8:19-23).

Lift up your heads and rejoice! O creation — the sun will not burn itself out, the earth will not be incinerated, the universe will not collapse, the myriad worlds scattered through space will not pass away, civilizations will not forever continue to corrupt themselves and collapse into the dust and oblivion, and men will not unendingly continue to sink into moral morass and march inexorably toward death and the grave, because creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption **INTO THE GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD!** What a word that is! What a hope! Universal deliverance from the bondage of corruption! The reversal of the Second Law of Thermodynamics! No wonder the earnest expectation of all creation **WAITS FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD!**

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption, says the scripture. The message is clear — we must be changed! That is what it means. Mortal flesh and corrupted blood cannot inherit the kingdom realm of God. "Inherit" means "to receive or obtain, as property, rights, or duties, from an ancestor or predecessor; to derive or acquire, as traits or characteristics, **through heredity.**" When the Holy Spirit tells us that flesh and blood cannot "inherit" the kingdom of God, and that corruption cannot "inherit" incorruption, He is not telling us that flesh and blood cannot receive, obtain, or partake of the kingdom of God, neither is He saying that corruption cannot receive, obtain, or partake of incorruption. Oh, no! It's not a question of receiving — it's a matter of inheriting! In other words, the ancestors of your flesh and blood cannot pass the kingdom of God on to you. You cannot receive it from flesh and blood. Flesh and blood have no power to communicate the kingdom of God to you. In like manner, the realm of corruption cannot pass along incorruption to you. You

cannot receive incorruption out of, or from, corruption. Corruption has no power to communicate incorruption to you. It should be obvious, then, that incorruption must come from a HIGHER REALM! That corruption can indeed become the recipient of incorruption is made crystal clear by the words of Paul when he says, "For this corruptible **must put on incorruption...** and when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written..." Oh, yes — corruption can receive into itself the power and victory of incorruption — it just cannot "inherit" it from the corruptible realm! That is the mystery.

No one can deny it — we must be changed, spirit, soul, and body! Only by a mighty quickening of divine life can soul and body partake of incorruption and immortality. The word of God has made it very clear that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:21). If He cannot change our vile body then He cannot change anything anywhere. If He cannot subdue our soul and body unto Himself, unto His realm of spirituality and the kingdom of God, then how can it be said that He will "subdue all things" unto Himself? Therefore, the body of glorification is not another body — it is this vile body changed, subdued, and re-fashioned. Oh, the wonder of it!

The kingdom of God is the realm of incorruption and immortality! To enter that realm and partake of its glories and powers we must be changed! We must put on incorruption! We must put on immortality! The only way we can experience the fullness of the kingdom of God with our whole being is for us to be changed. Although we began in some small way to see the kingdom when we were first born again, and through the experiencing of Christ began to enter into the kingdom, and now by faith and obedience are beginning to possess our land, the fullness of the kingdom can only be experienced by being changed into the incorruptible and immortal life of Christ. The corruption of these carnal minds cannot inherit incorruption, and the mortality of these flesh and blood bodies cannot inherit immortality. If we are to rule and reign with Christ in His incorruptible throne of glory and power, we must be laid hold upon by the life and power from that incorruptible realm. We must be changed into His image and likeness. Nothing short of this divine nature can handle such power and glory without prostituting it!

Let me make very plain that all who are experiencing the mighty working of the life of Christ within have indeed already escaped corruption! That will sound incredible and unbelievable to many who read these lines. I do not say that your body has in any measure, at this present time, escaped mortality. But I must point out that corruption is not the same as mortality, although these terms are often used interchangeably by religious people. They do not bear the same meaning at all! As I mentioned earlier, corruption and mortality are not two ways of saying the same thing. On the one hand, mortality is the state of being liable to death. On the other hand, corruption is the process by which both sin and death work. We are mortal because we are corruptible, but we are not corruptible because we are mortal. In physical terms (although the truth runs deeper than this) we can illustrate by saying that the aging process is corruption, whereas mortality is the condition that underlies the aging process, and the final result of the aging process. The word of God does not tell us that any man besides our Lord Jesus has yet escaped mortality. "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto..." (I Tim. 6:14,16). The apostle Peter does tell us, however, that the saints of God have been made partakers of the divine nature, "**having escaped** the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:4). Having ESCAPED! Having escaped CORRUPTION! Having escaped the corruption that was brought into the world through lust, by the lust or desire of mother Eve when she "saw the tree that it was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired (lusted after) to make one wise" (Gen. 3:6). Two thoughts present themselves. First, not only did mother Eve bring corruption into the world through her lust, but that same corruption is perpetuated in the world through our lust! Second, lust, or desire, is a function of the soul, revealing the great fact that corruption is rooted in the soul, whereas mortality is rooted in the body! Another confirmation of this truth is found in the words of Paul when he says, "For to be carnally minded is **death.**" In other words, death

springs from the root of the carnal mind. Death does not produce the carnal mind, rather, the carnal mind produces death. To deal with death you must first deal with the carnal mind! In the same way, mortality is the product of corruption. It is impossible to deal with mortality without first dealing with corruption! Now — the carnal mind is of the soul, whereas mortality is of the body. Can we not see, therefore, that the only way for this mortal to put on immortality is for this corruptible to first put on incorruption! It is infinitely necessary that every member of God's elect understands this order, for it clearly reveals why in the closing chapters of the Revelation the resurrection of the soul precedes the resurrection of the body. The resurrection of the soul is the first resurrection! Deal with the soul, deal with the carnal mind, deal with the desires and emotions of the flesh, deal with the corruptible nature — raise this up into the life of God — and the transformation of the mortal body will follow. Does that not explain why so many who have earnestly sought to appropriate the promises of eternal life and thus lay hold upon physical immortality have failed and gone by way of the grave? No doubt they were seeking to immortalize the body without first ridding the soul of all its corruption! They were trying to enter into the glory of the second resurrection without first experiencing the fullness of the FIRST!

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

And that's how it was in my life until that blessed day when Christ appeared and I was born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God that liveth and abideth forever. A divine and incorruptible life was raised up from Christ within my spirit and injected into my soul and in that wonderful moment old things passed away and all things became new. By that heavenly and divine intervention my course was changed, my direction reversed, my movement turned up-side-down. Instead of continuing the downward journey, I commenced an upward climb. And now I can truthfully and joyfully testify — I am no longer getting worse — I AM GETTING BETTER! Oh, yes! I AM GETTING BETTER! I am now learning of Christ. I am growing up into Him in all things. I am renouncing the hidden things of darkness. I am putting on the mind of Christ. I am receiving His chastisements and experiencing His dealings. I am submitting my will more and more to His. I am tasting the powers of the world to come. I am apprehending His righteousness, peace, and joy. I am eating His flesh and drinking His blood. I am overcoming sins, weaknesses, unbelief, problems, fears, and obstacles of every kind. I am putting off the old man, and putting on the new man. Daily, continually, progressively, unceasingly, from glory to glory, I AM BEING CHANGED! No longer am I being reduced to a worse state and an inferior condition — I am now being transformed by the renewing of my mind into a better state, into a superior condition! I have escaped the irresistible downward plunge — I have thus escaped CORRUPTION! I am now incorruptible — on my way up instead of down! Is my soul fully resurrected, raised up into His perfection, standing up again in the full power of HIS LIFE? I cannot confess today that the work is complete, but there is no doubt about it, my soul is in the process of RESURRECTION!

This truth of incorruption is far too important to be passed over without earnest consideration. The wonderful truth is that incorruption leads to immortality. This corruptible (nature of the soul) must put on incorruption before this mortal can be empowered to put on immortality. This is the precise and significant order in the word of God. God's purpose in man's redemption is not just to deliver us from the power of the grave, but to recreate us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image of Him who created us. Having been molded and fashioned after the image of the first man, we have now begun to put off that

likeness and to put on the image and likeness of the second man, the Lord from heaven. We must put off the image of the earthy, and put on the image of the heavenly; we must be changed from the natural, earthly, living creatures we first were to be re-fashioned as spiritual, heavenly ones. This is not an option, it is a must; it is not discretionary, it is mandatory if we are to inherit the kingdom of God. *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption."* So the scripture declares, *"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."* My! what a purpose this is. It staggers the imagination to contemplate such a change; but change we must if we are to inherit the promises. And this work does not begin in our body — it begins in the soul! *"This is the first resurrection."*

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

Little wonder that the sublime statement follows John's declaration that the resurrection of the soul is the "first resurrection" as he proclaims, *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection"* (Rev. 20:6). BLESSED and HOLY! Indeed! Oh, my soul! Yes, my beloved, the first resurrection is the only resurrection that can make one both blessed and holy. The resurrection of the body can make you glorious, immortal, and powerful, but that alone can never make you holy. Interesting that John does not say, "Bright, beautiful, without sickness, weakness, pain, or fear of dying is he that hath part in the first resurrection." That is the kind of comment that should be given were the first resurrection a bodily resurrection. But he doesn't say that. No! Blessed and holy. Only the transformation, the incorruptibility, the standing up again in the image and likeness of God in your soul can make you HOLY! Isn't it wonderful! When we were first begotten of God we were not "changed" or made "immortal" at that time, but when that birthing of God's Spirit took place, the life of Christ began to be raised up in us. In that blessed moment the ego of old Adam laid down in us and died, while the new creation man was conceived in the womb of our flesh. Corruption began to put on incorruption! Truly the resurrection had dawned within our bosom. But our outer-man bodies saw no change. The soul within, which first died in that long ago Eden, centuries before Adam's body died, has been quickened by the spirit of life from God and caused to stand up from the realm of separation and death. We have had the life of God deep within in our spirit but have been dead to it, but now our soul has heard the voice of the Son of God and we are experiencing the awakening and rising up again of our minds, emotions, wills, and desires into the mind, emotion, will, and desire of the Christ. Through the process of incorruption all the spiritual faculties that were lost in the fall of Adam are being restored to the elect by the operation of God. All that was lost shall be regained! It is more than merely coming to life again, it is the orderly restoration of the totality of our original state of being including all the spiritual and soulful faculties, capacities, abilities, and all wisdom, knowledge, love, joy, peace, faith, power, righteousness, and virtue. Such awesome powers do not belong in a mortal body, nor would we want an immortal body apart from these powers! That is why God has arranged that the final, ultimate, crowning event of this restoration will shed itself in the REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY. At that blessed moment we shall have fully inherited the kingdom of God! *"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."*

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

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

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

This glorious realm of immortality that lies beyond the power of temptation, sickness, sorrow, and death belongs to the sons of God; but, blessed be God! it is likewise the hope of ALL CREATION. The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty and glory of the children of God! Oh, yes! Those are not empty words, but words of divine inspiration and eternal hope! Creation groans to be delivered — and creation is not groaning for another revival, nor for another evangelistic crusade, nor for another healing campaign, nor for more gifts of the Spirit, nor for more apostles, prophets, and teachers, nor for a more powerful global Christian television network. You see, beloved, for two milleniums we have had revival after revival, move after move, healing upon healing, signs, wonders, and miracles, crusade after crusade, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers and none of them has ever brought forth the fullness of the kingdom of God on earth, nor has even one of them or all of them together ever delivered the creation from the bondage of corruption! Who can contradict this? The creation continues to groan in its bondage and we ourselves, groan within ourselves, as we wait for the disclosing of our sonship — the redemption of our bodies! It is not another "patch-up" job we want, not another band-aid on sin and death, not a re-run of previous moves of God which have blessed the called-out, but a full and complete and eternal deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of limitation, imperfection, sorrow, and death!

Jesus is the first of the firstfruits of this glorious victory. The manifest sons of God are the firstfruits, redeemed from among men (Rev. 14:5). All creation is the great harvest that

follows! It was necessary that after having lived in the flesh and overcome all things, Jesus should be resurrected Himself by the power and glory of the Father, that He might be able then to minister even that resurrection life to a firstfruit company; that they, in turn, apprehending all that pertains to that life, might be able to minister it to the rest of creation. For this creation waits expectantly!

When a child I read in the Bible
Something about a judgment day;
I thought it meant we would stand before God
And be judged in a literal way —
But that's all passing away.

I see its meaning in spirit now,
And today is the judgment day.
His word is sharp and judges us all
By condemning or blessing our way —
And this will not pass away!

I believed when the great trumpet sounds
It would be a literal horn,
Piercing our ears with terrific scream,
Ushering in eternity's dawn —
But that's all passing away.

I see its meaning in spirit now:
That trumpet sound is a message new,
To awake the souls who are spiritually dead,
And with new life and power endue —
And this will not pass away!

I read how the dead would all come forth;
The tombs all bursting, I could see;
Releasing the dead of all ages
So they could then with the Saviour be —
But that's all passing away.

I see its meaning in spirit now:
Those dead ones are the souls of men
Who are raised by Christ in power here,
From graves of carnal corruption of sin —
And this will not pass away!

All this I saw through these eyes of flesh,
Supposed it of natural things spoke:
Forgetting His words are spirit and life,
As He clearly told us in the Book —
But that's all passing away.

I see its meaning in spirit now:
The vision to me has come clear;
He's opened my spiritual eyes to see
Truth in more grandeur and light appear —
but this will not pass away! -- Reba McMurry

Though few Christians and almost no preachers understand it, again and again, on numerous occasions, and in diverse manners, we read in God's word of two resurrections, or the dual aspects of the resurrection within our lives. There is an interesting passage in the ninth chapter of Mark's Gospel which throws divine light on this subject. The opening verses contain the record of Christ's transfiguration; and then we read, "As they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying within themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from (Greek: ek, from among) *the dead should mean.*" The disciples felt that there was something special, something entirely beyond the ordinary orthodox idea of the resurrection of the dead, and verily so there was, though they understood it not at the time. It lay beyond their range of vision at that moment.

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

A moment's just reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again! "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). In the Greek language of the New Testament the resurrection "of the dead" is nekron or ton nekron and is applied to all classes of people because all will be raised. The term merely establishes the fact that all men will be raised, but says nothing respecting either the time or the manner of their rising. But the term used by Paul in Philippians, chapter three, is ek nekron — literally, "out from among the dead," and is not once applied to the unjust or the ungodly, or even in any general sense of resurrection. This phrase is used altogether forty-nine times in the New Testament, to wit: thirty-four times, to express Christ's resurrection, whom we know was literally raised "out from among the dead." Then the term is used three times, to express John the Baptist's supposed resurrection, who, as Herod thought, had been raised "out from the dead." Then three times, to express the resurrection of Lazarus, who was also in a literal way raised "out from the dead." And finally, three times it is used to express spiritual life "out from among" those who are still dead in trespasses and in sins. In this connection Paul admonished the Roman believers, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those who *are alive from (among) the dead*" (Rom. 6:13). In Acts 4:1-2 the Sadducees were grieved because Peter and John "preached, through Jesus, THE RESURRECTION WHICH IS FROM AMONG THE DEAD." It was more than just the idea of resurrection they objected to, but specifically that some could even now experience, through Jesus, this resurrection "out from the dead."

The resurrection of which Paul spoke was certainly not just the general resurrection of either saints or sinners. Paul knew that he was a saved man, and as such knew there was positively no way he could escape the resurrection of the just. Now, if the resurrection was just one single, instantaneous event, for either saint or sinner, as the church systems teach, then all of Paul's strivings were altogether uncalled for and useless. Just being saved would unquestionably have secured it for him! Isn't that what the churches say?

But no — Paul was not striving in vain; and unto the saints at Philippi he penned these enlightening words, "But whatever former things I had that might have been gain to me, I have come to consider as one combined loss for Christ's sake. Yes, furthermore I count everything as

loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege — the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and supreme advantage — of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may win Christ, and that I may actually be found and known as in Him, not having any self-achieved righteousness that can be called my *own...but possessing that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ...for my determined purpose is that I may know Him — that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him...that I may in the same way come to know the power outflowing from HIS RESURRECTION; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed into the likeness of His death, in the hope that IF POSSIBLE I MAY ATTAIN TO THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL RESURRECTION THAT LIFTS ME OUT FROM AMONG THE DEAD EVEN WHILE IN THE BODY.* Not that I have already attained this ideal or am already made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of *me*" (Phil. 3:7-12, Amplified). What a word!

Oh! dearly beloved brethren, consider with me the ingredients contained in Paul's striving to be fully in that resurrection which is "out from among" the dead. Though he had been quickened by the Spirit of God, he said that he could not say that he had already attained. Then he associated this resurrection with being perfect, which he says he wasn't yet. Some of the qualifications for this resurrection were genuine righteousness of Christ inworked in his life; progressively knowing Christ in richer and deeper and fuller measures; and progressively experiencing the power outflowing from **CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**. Ah, this is a resurrection which is progressive, which perfects one, which enables one to put on the righteousness of Christ, which comes through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, and which can be experienced while still living in a mortal body! Does that not identify it as that resurrection of the soul which John witnessed on Patmos! There can be no doubt — THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION!

Yes, my friend, the resurrection "of" the dead is one thing, but the resurrection "out from the dead" is a mightily different thing. If all the people in a building leave it at the same time, it is the coming out "of" the company; but if only some of the people leave, their's is a coming out "from" the rest of the company. It was for this resurrection "out from" the dead, until all the soulical death of his life would be transformed, that Paul longed continually. This was the bright and blessed hope that shone upon his soul and cheered him amid the sorrows and trials, the toils and the difficulties, the buffetings and the conflicts. Every person who physically dies, both saint and sinner, must eventually experience the process of resurrection, thus being in that general classification of the resurrection "of" the dead, for as in Adam ALL die, so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. There is no possible way of avoiding it! God will pursue you to the deepest hell to call you forth! But to be a partaker in the resurrection "from among" the dead, that, Paul tells us, is a special blessing and distinction for those who follow on to know the Lord.

The resurrection "from among" the dead has already begun. It started two thousand years ago! Our Lord was the first of the firstfruits of this company. He was PERFECTED IN HIS SONSHIP. He said, "As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given the Son to have life in Himself." He already possessed that life, that perfection, that glory, before His death and bodily resurrection, so that He said, "No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down." He was the first of the firstfruits of the first resurrection! There has been a few, a little remnant all through the centuries who strove for and attained to this position. And there is a little remnant alive today who belong to this same company and who will now STAND UP AND COLLECT THEIR SPIRITUAL FACULTIES, transformed fully into the image and incorruptibleness of God by the power of the indwelling Christ. But mark: the way into this great privilege is through death: death to self and the world, beheaded, knowing Him in the fellowship of His sufferings, made conformable unto His death. Blessed be God! this process has already begun, and it is working mightily IN US!

Chapter 224

The First Resurrection (continued)

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and they lived and reigned with Christ...*this is the first resurrection*" (Rev. 20:4-5).

In our meditations concerning the first resurrection we have found that it is the resurrection of the soul. Let us consider now the resurrection of the body. John refers to this with this remarkable and cryptic statement: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the *thousand years were finished*" (Rev. 20:5). What does he mean by "the rest of the dead?" I could be mistaken, but it is my conviction that these inspired words point more to the completion of the work of resurrection within each of us than it does to the multitudes of dead men who were not raised with God's firstfruits. We are going to have to do more than accept dead doctrines and shallow deductions of the carnal mind. We are going to have to see the living Christ, and the magnitude and scope of His wonderful spiritual work of restoration in our lives. If there is a first resurrection and a second resurrection — and if we have been dead in both soul and body — and if resurrection means putting on incorruption in our soul as well as immortality in our body — then surely we can see that individually, once our soul is raised up to live in His sight, the "rest of the dead" would be our body which remains to be quickened and changed.

Yes — all men will be raised and made alive in Christ! Yes — all who are in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of God and live! Yes — there is a resurrection of both the just and the unjust! Yes — all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ! And God has an appointed time for every man! But it would be well worth our time to consider prayerfully the fact that each and every man who has ever lived on this planet, or ever shall live, must be quickened, processed, and made fully alive in the same way that both Christ and His firstfruits company were made alive — first in soul, and then in body. Can we not see by this that there is a first and a second resurrection for EVERY MAN OF ADAM'S RACE! That is the mystery.

And then comes the word: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand **years were finished.**" FINISHED — the Greek word means to complete, execute, conclude, discharge, accomplish. The signification is clear — the "rest of the dead" — that is, the outer body realm, will not live again, or put on immortality, until the thousand years — THE DAY OF THE LORD IN OUR LIVES — has finished, concluded, and accomplished its full work in us! It is not just a matter of the passing of time, reaching a date on the calendar. Oh, no! The "thousand years" is the code-word for "the day of the Lord." And the day of the Lord is not a literal time period, but a realm and work of God in our lives by the illumination and power of His Spirit and His Word. When the working of that "day" is finished, when it has fully accomplished its mighty work in us, then, and only then, will we appear, spirit, soul, and body WITH HIM IN HIS GLORY! Oh, the wonder of it!

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

The flesh which we inherited from Adam who was of the earth, earthy, is counted by God to be nothing more than a seed. "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain (seed), it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every **seed his own body**" (I Cor. 15:35-38). I wonder how many of those who read these lines have asked the same question posed by the apostle: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Ah, how often through many years did I ask myself those very questions! I am confident that you, too, have asked. We have pondered how God would reconstruct the atoms of this flesh body and fashion it again into the likeness we once knew. And yet — though it is our vile body that He will change, He never promised to fashion it again into the likeness we once knew. Oh, no! It is not about whether we will recognize Uncle Joe or Aunt Susie in the resurrection, because they look like they did in their earth life. The promise is just this: "*Who shall change (metamorphose) our vile body, that it may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY!*" Not made like you used to be, but made as HE IS! "*God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him.*" That is the mystery.

Consider for a moment the state of those who are dead. Some people suppose that those we lay away in their ornate coffins are to be taken up like those well preserved mummies of Egypt, but it is not so! This body speedily falls into dissolution — the first thing that goes is the brain and soon there is a large cavity between the ears; the heart soon follows. These are the two vital organs of man, and the rest of the body trails along not far behind. The bones are the last to disintegrate. And so man returns to the dust. Open any casket left long enough in the ground and you find but a bit of brown dust.

Consider where these people have gone. Many have been dissolved in lime pits, or burned in great fires, or buried in the depths of the sea. There are some who have been eaten by beasts. I think of Roger Williams, the Governor of one of our first colonies. He had an unseemly fate befall him. When his casket was taken up to give it a more noble burial, it was found that the roots of an apple tree had pried open the lid, reached in and sucked poor Roger out, tooth and nail, head and foot. The poor fellow was gone altogether! He is no exception, for this is what has happened to the vast majority of the people in the world. They have returned to the elements; they have been eaten by other creatures, especially worms; their particles are spread sometimes as far as from pole to pole.

What has happened to the ancient king Nebuchadnezzar? or Alexander the Great? or the mighty Caesars? One part may be in the desert sands of the great Sahara and another part floating in the waters of the great Pacific Ocean. Are these to rise again? Can these live again? Is that not indeed a thing to be thought incredible? Where indeed are the remains of man? Or perhaps we should more accurately ask, "Where are they not?" Blows there any wind down any street that does not contain within its swirl some portion of that which was once the son of Adam? Breaks there a wave upon any shore that contains not in solution some relic of that which once was called man? He is found under every tree, in every crevice and in every corner, under every meadow, perhaps in almost every flower. Shall these live again? Is that not a thing incredible?

Who among us has never questioned whether in the resurrection we will recognize our friends and loved ones, whether they will look as they did at age twenty, or thirty, or seventy-five? We have debated whether in our glorified bodies we will be visible or invisible to the inhabitants of the earth realm, whether we shall eat and drink, wear clothes, travel in an automobile or at the speed of light, and with hundreds of other such notions we have repeatedly asked the very questions the apostle declared we would ask! "But some man will say, HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP? AND WITH WHAT BODY DO THEY COME?" Paul had a word for all who raise such questions: "Thou FOOL!" The Phillips translation says, "Now that is a silly

question!" The Wuest translation says, "Stupid one!" The Amplified Bible reads, "You foolish man!" And another version renders it, "You unreasonable person!" Why are these questions foolish, stupid, silly, and unreasonable? Because, the apostle explains, appealing to nature, "In your own experience you know that a seed does not germinate without itself dying. When you sow a seed you do not sow the 'body' that will eventually be produced in the harvest, but just a seed, of wheat, for example, or one of the other seeds. God gives the seed a new 'body' according to His laws — a different 'body' to each kind of seed." Paul tells us plainly that the "body" of the harvest is not the same "body" that was planted, and calls the man a fool for even questioning whether the corn of the harvest is the same grains of corn that were planted. Let the farmer answer this! The corn you harvest from the stalk is not the same grains of corn you planted in the spring. And yet — in some divine and mysterious way it is of, from and out of the grains you planted! It came from that seed! It didn't derive itself from some other seed, or from the soil, or from a chicken, or a cow, nor did it float down out of the skies and stand itself up in your corn field! It is a paradox, an enigma, a divine mystery! It is not the same seed, yet it is from the same seed! Our hearts respond with reverence and a fervent Amen to such truth as this. Now consider the caterpillar and the butterfly. Would you say the butterfly is the caterpillar? I think not. Yet, did the caterpillar not lay down his life, and did not the mysterious and marvelous power of metamorphosis do its work, there would be no butterfly! The butterfly is not the caterpillar, but he is certainly of, from, and out of the caterpillar. That is the law of planting and harvest. It is life out of death. Great is the mystery!

"That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be" (I Cor. 15:37). The apostle Paul here makes a wonderfully significant spiritual use of an analogy derived from his observation of what takes place in the natural world when a seed is sown in the ground and springs up and grows. He is talking about the resurrection of the dead, and compares the burial of a human body to the covering up of a vegetable seed in the earth in expectation of the bursting forth of new life. This is hardly an appropriate comparison if taken too literally, or applied to the wrong sense of burial. It takes more than carnal reasoning to comprehend the mystery. Only the spirit of wisdom and revelation can unfold the truth within our hearts. A literal dead body does not behave like a vegetable seed; it does not sprout and go on to produce new and more glorious bodies, the exact replicas of the old. When it is laid in the grave it is done with; it putrefies and disintegrates. Paul knew this well enough — just as well as we know it. His language here and elsewhere implies that he believed in a resurrection of the whole man, and that the resurrection body would be transformed into a spiritual, immortal, glorious body which would never again have to know decay or corruption. But the only sense in which this illustration of his about the sowing of a seed holds good is that the disintegration of a seed in the ground and the death of a human body are in each case the breaking up of a form in order that the LIFE WITHIN may reclothe itself in other and ampler forms — the development and maturity of the life of the spirit and soul that pertain to that body raising it up into a body that corresponds to the power and perfection of the spirit and soul! Thus it is that the soul must be fully redeemed before it is able with the spirit to transform the body!

When we really know life, when we understand our own environment and the dynamics of the biological forces within it, we will surely have a clearer understanding of the laws and processes of the higher spiritual realm of the kingdom of God. When you sow a kernel of corn in the earth of your garden, you sow it out of sight, to decay and disintegrate, that the life within the seed may spring forth producing a new plant. In this process it is not the visible seed that produces the new plant, but the inner life of that seed springs forth and the corn of the harvest is the product of that inner life contained in the original seed. The seed's whole purpose is to die, that there may be a release of whatever quality of life dwells within TO CREATE A NEW BODY. The principle is clear — by the power of the first resurrection a new, divine, heavenly life has been impregnated into the soul-womb of our life so that the mortal body of the believer is now a NEW KIND OF SEED CONTAINING A NEW AND HIGHER FORM OF LIFE! Thus it is that as our outer man perishes, as the old man with his works are put off, this outer-man body is

sown, Paul says, in corruption; it is raised (harvested) in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised (harvested) in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:35-44).

Can we not see by this that the spiritual body is not the natural body reconstructed at all, but a brand new, totally different body, the product of the Christ life contained within your mortal body — the seed. Surely, if no other instruction were given in scripture but these few verses, we would have a sound foundation upon which to fasten our firm understanding that the natural body does not of itself become the spiritual body, but the spiritual body is the product of the indwelling life of the resurrected, glorified Son of God! With the Christ life raised up in your life you have become a new, higher, and transcendent kind of seed! There is a higher quality of life in your seed than exists in the natural man, or even in the carnal Christian, for that matter. The power of your life to produce a new and glorified body depends entirely upon the quality of the life within the seed! Corn life produces corn, chicken life produces chickens, and the fully developed Christ life produces glorified RESURRECTION BODIES! It's all about the quality of life in the seed! If we would heed the voice of inspiration and revelation as it speaks through these words of the apostle, we would at once see and acknowledge that the "embryo" of our spiritual body ALREADY EXISTS AS A PRESENT REALITY WITHIN OUR QUICKENED SPIRIT AND PERFECTED SOUL! It is, as a friend has said, "a life within a life, a MAN WITHIN A MAN, and a B-O-D-Y W-I-T-H-I-N A B-O-D-Y!"

Let us UNDERSTAND! Every man will be resurrected. I do not say all will be resurrected at once, for the times are in our Father's hands. Yet Paul plainly tells us, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*" (I Cor. 15:22). And then he adds this significant statement: "...but every man *in his own order.*" By this we understand that there are various "orders," "ranks," "classes," "levels," and "arrangements" of resurrection. Not all will be raised up initially to the same plane of life. How can we know this? BECAUSE OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THEIR SEED! Do you suppose that Nero, Hitler, and Billy the Kid will be raised up in the same glorious body as those who have here and now experienced the first resurrection? Paul explains this principle more fully when he says, "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to *every seed his own body*" (I Cor. 15:38). Surely that can only mean that men are raised up with a body that corresponds to the quality of life in the seed!

Paul goes on with his analogy: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. SO ALSO IS THE **RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**" (I Cor. 15:38-42). So many "glories" in resurrection! So many "orders" in resurrection! I don't profess to understand all the implications and outworkings of so great a mystery, but it is my conviction that all men will, in God's due time, be raised up into a body that corresponds to the quality of the life in their seed. Multitudes, no doubt, will be raised up in low, dense bodies not so different from our present bodies. But it will be God's appointed time for the dealings of God, by His judgments and His salvation, to come upon them to cause and enable them to begin to pass through the same process of resurrection that the Lord's elect is now passing through until the process is complete and they are thoroughly changed and transformed INTO HIS LIKENESS! All must not only be raised — they must be FULLY RAISED! That will be the full and complete salvation, restoration, and transformation of ALL MANKIND! What a plan!

A dear friend in California shared the following experience which beautifully expresses a further aspect of the truth of which I now speak. "Several months ago, as I walked about performing my daily tasks — as I lay upon my bed at night — in times of prayer and meditation before the Lord — or caught up in feverish activity — there began to break upon me the vision of a heavenly man. There in my mind's eye, I was beholding with unbelievable realness, the form of a man — gigantic in size — silhouetted against the dark heavenly background. The sky around him was extremely dark, and it was as though I could see through him, for the dark sky

could also be seen behind him. But there, etched against the sky, outlined with a brilliant light, was that form, daily impressed upon me, constantly with me, and I began to cry out with much depth of feeling, 'Oh, God. What is it?' Somehow, I was made to know that in some measure I was beholding the resurrected Christ!

"I am certain that it was only a glimpse of that which is later to be revealed to all those of us who wait for His appearing, but it was a glimpse that lifted my sights to look beyond that which we see in the immediate earth-realm. As that vision was daily presented to me, I began to know within the very depths of my being that that was a resurrection body — and that it was, in fact, the body of Christ which arose from the grave in a glorious victory over death. More than that, I was made to know by the Spirit that somehow, someway, in some mysterious manner, that it is THAT BODY — that very same body that arose from the grave and ascended to the Father — that we are being fitted into!

"How earthy we have been, for we have looked at the divided, carnal, worldly, un-unified camp of believers on the earth and have said, 'Behold, the body of Christ.' Never have I been more convinced of anything than this: that verily we are the body of Christ in that we are the materials that will be fitted into that glorious body! But THAT MAN — that GLORIFIED MAN in the heavenlies — is the body of Christ, and it is as we are fitted into that Man that it can truly be said, 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' 'Let not your heart be troubled,' Jesus said, 'ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house (BODY) are many mansions (MEMBERS). If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and RECEIVE YOU...' WHERE??? 'UNTO MYSELF!' That place that He has gone to prepare is the place IN HIMSELF — in that glorified, resurrected body. Herein lies the great mystery! The writer of the book of Hebrews has said, 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil WHICH IS H-I-S FLESH...let us draw near with a true heart...' (Heb. 10:19-22). How we have thought to enter in through the rent veil of OUR FLESH — but the Holy Spirit tells us plainly that we enter through the veil of H-I-S F-L-E-S-H" — end quote.

In the glory of the morning
from the sea to shining sea,
Comes the herald of the dawning
of the risen you and me.

Far away from all the people
right before their very eyes,
Birthed a Nation Strong and holy
from the wearied prayers and sighs.

Come a running all ye peoples
gather at the birthing womb,
See the manchild like his Brother
rise triumphant from his tomb.

Lo this comp'ny of believers
are the overcoming Saints,
From the mortal to immortal
where no earthly flesh can taint.

In the glory of the morning
shall a people's praises give.
To the One who comes to free them
and cause them all to live!

— Preston E. Courtney

Unknown millenniums ago Job uttered an inspired statement as he sat among the dust and ashes of his desolation and affliction. "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (Job 14:14-15). Never did Job utter a word which bears out the absolute faithfulness of God to His creatures than in this passage. He says, So what? If a man comes to the point where he goes by way of the grave — shall he live again? Is that the end? Shall he appear on earth again in a body? And then he answers his own question. He made reference to an appointed time of waiting, through which we must pass until our change comes. We will not be left in this "unfinished state." We will not be forgotten in this low realm of the earthy, this side of the Land of the Interface where heaven and earth are joined in a SPIRITUAL BODY. There is much more work to be wrought in us before we are fully changed. But even physical death will not deny us that fulfillment, because, Job says, sooner or later HE WILL CALL, and we will answer, because it is not dependent upon our state or condition, but upon HIS CALLING AND PURPOSE, and He has a desire to the work of His hands; the end is secure in the FAITHFUL CREATOR'S DESIRE to finish the work of His hands; His desire is towards us and that is the guarantee of our full redemption along with that of every man!

"Till my change come..." "All the days of my appointed time will I wait..." "All the days..." The message is clear — it takes time, there is a process. Do you know why sometimes we look at another person and say, "There's no way that person is ever going to change!" Do you know what the root of that is? It's unbelief. What does love do? Love, the apostle tells us, "Believes all things," that is, love is so powerful and filled with such wisdom that it has faith for everything, including the seemingly impossible. God is love, and that is why with Him ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE! If you read that whole passage in Job there is a verse that speaks of the hope of trees. What do trees signify in scripture? They are people. Of the righteous man the Psalmist declares, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:3). "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad...then shall all the trees of the forest rejoice before the Lord, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth" (Ps. 96:11-13). "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to...appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified" (Isa. 61:1,3). Now here is what Job says about the hope of trees. "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down (die), that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease" (Job 14:7). There is hope for a tree, even if it is cut down, because there is an indwelling life that will cause it to live again! This hope is rooted in change. This thought is a preface to Job's declaration that through all the dark days of his appointed time he would wait — until his change came! Can we not see by this that God has appointed a time of change for every man. If we say, "There's no way that person is ever going to change," we are very short-sighted. WAIT! God has a time, a place, and a way! Love believes this! Wisdom proclaims it! And faith waits for it!

Every one of us must change — and that's a word of hope! There's change for you, precious friend of mine, so don't ever say, "I just can't change." Put it up on your refrigerator — "My Change." If you have one ounce of heart toward the Lord, and even if you don't — guess what? You are going to change! In areas you thought you could never overcome — guess what? You're going to change! There is no excuse for you to talk down to yourself and tell yourself, "I've always been like this, everybody in my family has always been like this, and there's no way I can change." God has changed harder cases than you! And He will again. If God can handle old Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Judas Iscariot, and a million more wicked despots, do you suppose your case is hopeless? Love believes all things! As you let the Lord

change you, you will be transformed, metamorphosed, into all that He is in the power of His resurrection! Aren't you glad!

The body of Christ, in the process of its growth and development into the image of God, passes from processing to processing, from change to change, and from glory to glory. God's purpose in redemption is not to just deliver us from the power of sin and death, but to re-create us, to make a new creature of us, a new kind of man in the image and after the likeness of God. This marvelous change involves the whole man, spirit, soul, and body. We are being changed from the earthly into the heavenly, from the natural into the spiritual. There are two realms and there are two bodies. Paul tells us, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44). Many seem to think that a spiritual body is not a literal body. In other words, that it is not a real body, or not actually a body at all, but a consciousness or a spiritual state of being. "Literal," says Webster, means real; not figurative or metaphorical. "There is a natural body, and there is a **spiritual body**," saith the Lord! Does anyone suppose the apostle here teaches that there is a "real" body, and there is a "figurative" or "metaphorical" body; and as we have borne the image of the "real," we shall also bear the image of the "figurative"? One would suppose they so read, from their exceeding blindness in not recognizing any but the animal body as the "true" or "literal" body. The thing we want to keep in mind is that **BOTH ARE BODIES!** A "spiritual body" is not a spirit — it is a body, a spiritual body. It is therefore not something figurative, metaphorical, nor necessarily even ethereal. It is a body. And it is **REAL!**

Now will someone inform me why it is unscriptural, or fanatical to believe that Jesus Christ has a **SPIRITUAL BODY**; and, as the saints are to be like Him, that they are raised **SPIRITUAL BODIES**. I hear some talking about coming into immortality in their present body, the natural body, living for a thousand years, or forever, in a body that eats, drinks, sleeps, bathes, and goes to the bathroom. It will never happen. Because some seem to think that a spiritual body is not a real body, but only a spirit or a metaphorical body, and that nothing is either real or a body unless it be "of the earth, earthy," is no reason why those who can discern spiritual things, which the natural man cannot, should remain in darkness. The realm of the spiritual is a realm which, to those who touch it, is ten thousand times more real than the transitory, corruptible realm of the natural world! Man has been excluded from this heavenly realm ever since that calamitous hour when he stretched forth his inquisitive hand to discover by his natural senses that which is good and that which is evil. On that unhappy day his eyes were closed to the celestial world to discover the physical and the natural and to be instructed in this barren realm of death. And yet that heavenly realm is as close to us today as it was then, the only difference being that our darkened vision cannot see it! It is like a blind man standing before a majestic sunset — the sunset is in the same place every day of his life, but he never sees, understands, nor appreciates it. It never changes, but to him it is as though it doesn't exist.

By His resurrection from the dead Jesus opened up to man again the spiritual-physical realm — the Land of the Interface. "The same day, at evening, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst" (Jn. 20:19). "And after eight days, again His disciples were within, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (Jn. 20:20). "And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight" (Lk. 24:31). Such language was never applied to the movements of Jesus before His crucifixion, and is used only in speaking of spiritual beings. The spiritual body of Jesus, and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, did not go out the door, but simply disappeared or dematerialized before their eyes. He was able to appear in a form, with substance, to be seen, heard, touched, and felt. He even ate with them! He was present with them, not as a spirit, but in a spiritual body, which was both spiritual and a body! **THAT IS THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION!**

Jesus only demonstrated **TWO BODIES WHILE HE WAS ON EARTH** — the natural body and the spiritual body. There were no others. The first was a body of limitation that grew

hungry, thirsty, weary, and died. The second was the body of resurrection, still a body, but a body of glory — unlimited, spiritual, supernatural, and deathless. He never demonstrated a physical body that put on immortality but remained the same. Many brethren today are expecting physical immortality; they look in the mirror to see if the aging process has slowed or stopped; they count the wrinkles to determine whether there may be fewer today than before; they are expecting immortality in an unspiritual body! But you see, beloved, the very term "physical immortality" is an oxymoron! It is a contradiction of terms! The things which are seen (of this natural creation) are temporal! Again I say, it will never happen! You will be CHANGED or you will DIE! No man can be physically immortal who still has to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe in order to sustain his life. No man is immortal as long as he can drown in a lake, burn in a fire, be mangled beyond recognition under the wheels of an eighteen-wheeler, have his head severed by a sword, choke on a piece of meat, bleed from a cut, or be buried in the earth. Hear it! There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. Those are the only two options you have, my friend!

It follows of necessity that man's being, under the curse of sin and death, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. Paul sets forth the majesty of that supernal glory that now appears like a beckoning beacon before the anointed vision of the sons of God: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49). We are to bear both — made one! "We shall **also bear**" signifies the adding of the one to the other, making an entirely new thing, just as the two gases — hydrogen and oxygen — compounded, make one new substance called water. Otherwise it should read, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall instead bear the image of the heavenly." That is also the meaning of the term "spiritual body" — the union of spirit and body — so that it is neither, yet mysteriously and wondrously it is both! Can you not see the mystery? He also explains exactly how this ineffable change is to take place within the Lord's elect. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour...who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Literally Paul says that we are being metamorphosed into the image of the heavenly, and that God will metamorphose even our vile bodies. The Greek word metamorphoo means simply "to change into another form." It is not getting rid of one thing and replacing it with another. Oh, no! It comes from two words: meta — which means "beyond," and morphe — meaning "form." "Beyond form" — or changed into another form. From this Greek root comes our English word "metamorphosis," meaning to change from one form, shape, or substance to another. Our Lord through death and resurrection was changed or transformed — metamorphosed — from the lowly Jesus of Nazareth they had known to the glorified Christ of the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. And this is just the word that is used with reference to believers who are to come into the same image of Christ Jesus. The metamorphosed body is not a body that looks like our present body infused with life while it continues to eat, drink, sleep, sweat, and do all the other things natural men do. IT IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF BODY, IN A DIFFERENT FORM, IT IS A SPIRITUAL BODY, FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS BODY OF GLORY AND POWER!

Metamorphosis is that change which takes place from within. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that **dwelleth in you**" (Rom. 8:11). It is not Gabriel blowing a horn and suddenly the Spirit of God swoops down from out of the heavens and seizes upon your dead body, raising it up. Oh, no! It is by the spirit DWELLING IN YOU. We are not transformed in either soul or body by external forces acting upon us, but by the breaking forth of a new energizing from within, the very life of the indwelling Christ! Let us carefully consider the wonder of this thing, because it is certain that metamorphosis has already begun in us and

will continue until the complete transformation has taken place. Too many of the Lord's people sit with folded hands, waiting for a change in some sweet bye and bye, when God's word clearly shows that this process of change has already begun. This is what must take place within us: we must be changed from what we started out to be, into a creature vastly different in form and nature. But do not look first for the change in the outward. Look not at the skin tone, the wrinkles, the physical strength, healing of the body, as signs of metamorphosis. The change begins within, in the soulical nature, character, disposition, and powers, in mind and understanding, in consciousness, attitudes, motivation, and manifestation. This is the power of the **FIRST RESURRECTION!**

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

When Paul speaks, then, of being strengthened with might in the inner man, he is speaking of substance within us. When Peter speaks of the hidden man of the heart, he is speaking of glorified flesh that has been born into the believer but is hidden beneath the veil of Adamic flesh. A man is not a spirit. A man is a composite being — spirit, soul, and body. The first man was of the earth, earthy. The second man is the Lord from heaven! The first man was of the earth, imbued with the wind of heaven. The second man was from heaven in the totality of His being — hence the virgin birth. It is this second man who has come into us in His life. Jesus never said, "Except you receive my spirit, you have no life in you." Rather, He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." As we feed that man within with the flesh substance and the spirit life of the resurrected and glorified man, this infant spiritual body begins to grow and when he is fully formed he will swallow up even this vile body into Himself and stand forth in splendor and majesty as the **NEW CREATION MAN** — spirit, soul, and body! It will be **CHRIST** and yet it will be **US!** This man will then live fully in the Land of the Interface!

We will close our meditations on the body of resurrection with these confirming words from brother Bob Torango.

"We will not slack in our race for victory over the grave and all corruptible states and conditions. Our heart is fixed upon the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord, as we press into His substance and nature with total trust in His ability to raise us up in Him. Both sides of the river are rejoicing, as together we progress towards that mark set before us. Jesus is the Pattern Son for this victory over corruption and mortal existence and as He has risen from the dead, we shall be raised also; some of us from that side of the river, some of us from this side of the river, at the last trump, as the sound of resurrection breaks forth from both the visible and the invisible realms, we will have Life as He has Life. It is a glorious morning, as the Light of God surrounds us and darkness flees from His brilliance. I see the Lord, high and lifted up, His train filling the temple. Look up, saints, our redemption draws nigh, the time is at hand and the Day of the Lord is in our midst. We will see our loved ones again, as Christ will bring each child home to Father's house and, oh, what a homecoming that is! Not up in the sky somewhere, but

in the living Christ, we will all cross over into Life. May God be with you all as you run this race. Be strong and courageous in the Lord and be not dismayed as some are, but contend for the faith, make sure your steps, and step out in God with the walk of the Overcomer. We are closer to the full salvation experience of Christ than we have ever been before!"

Chapter 225

The First Resurrection (continued)

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a *thousand years*...and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years...this is the first *resurrection*” (Rev. 20:4-5).

“*I saw thrones.*” With a single stroke of the pen the apostle John sets before us a contrast which is sharp and strong in the extreme. There is Satan, bound and cast into the noiseless depths of the bottomless pit, shut up and sealed securely for a thousand years — and here are the thrones of those who now sit in judgment! This is not an outward, natural scene, but a glorious spiritual reality. The message is really quite simple and yet mysteriously profound — when Satan is bound in our lives — we are reigning! We have seen previously that the term “a thousand years” is the code-word for the DAY OF THE LORD. Satan is bound in and by the arising of the day of the Lord in our lives. Satan is bound a thousand years and the overcomers live and reign with Christ a thousand years. To the degree that Satan is bound, to the same degree the overcomers live and reign! The measure of the one is the measure of the other. These two one thousand year terms are like the North and South Poles — the distance of the North Pole from the equator is also the distance of the South Pole from the equator.

A literal interpretation of that time expression would greatly reduce the spiritual meaning, power, and impact of the overcomer’s victory. It is quantity, quality, and degree, and not time, that is signified by the symbolic term of a thousand years. Time-wise, a literal thousand years would be a most inadequate measurement of the overcomer’s life and reign with Christ over Satan, sin, and death. In chapter 22:5 of the Revelation the length of their reign is said to be “*for the ages of the ages.*” If a thousand years in our text must be taken literally, then they not only cease to reign at the end of the thousand years — they also cease to live! A thousand years is not a very long time to live in view of the countless ages and eternity that lie before us — I have already lived almost one hundred years in this one very brief life-time! But when we understand that our living and reigning is of the quality and completeness and fullness of the accomplishment of the illumination, power, glory of the day of the Lord in our lives, we can appreciate its blessedness! When Satan is bound within us he is bound or restrained by the authority, power, and victory of the day of Christ within our lives. Therefore we are reigning for a thousand years — reigning IN THE DAY OF THE LORD! That is the mystery.

“*And judgment was given unto them.*” This expression is not a common one. John sees thrones and the “souls” sat upon them, and they did what all men do on a throne — they reigned as kings. But here the reigning kings are also judges! Ordinarily the offices of kingship, priesthood, and judgeship are three distinct positions executed by different people. But in the kingdom of God, and in the Person of God’s Christ, all three offices are combined into one. Jesus is the “King of kings.” He is also “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek,” indeed, our High Priest of that order. And He tells us that the Father judges no one, for “all judgment is committed unto the Son.” So our Lord is the King, the Priest, and the Judge! And of the overcomers it is written, “Thou has made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth.” And now we find them reigning upon thrones and “judgment is given unto them.” Thus, the sons of God are also God’s kings, priests, and judges! There seems to be a direct reference to the words of the prophet Daniel, “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever...and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Dan. 7:18,22).

The word “judgment” carries negative connotations in most people’s minds only because we have viewed judgment through the law of Moses, we have filtered it through the fleshly judicial systems of natural men, and through the old paradigm of the carnal mind. Judgment is a wonderful thing when

viewed from the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! To judge is to discern, to understand the true nature of a thing, to evaluate, assess, appraise, render a decision, think, conclude, determine, resolve, mediate, or arbitrate. When God raises up judgment in one's life He enables that person by the spirit of wisdom and revelation to discern between heavenly thoughts and earthly thoughts, between flesh and spirit, between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness. When you are given spiritual discernment then you know what it truly means for judgment to be given unto you!

The thing God is after in this hour is the total and complete revelation of Jesus Christ in and through the many-membered Christ of God. God is preparing something to be loosed in the earth that men will be unable to control, manipulate, orchestrate, or in any way usurp and use to their own carnal ends. This isn't about us setting ourselves up as kings and judges in the earth, ruling by fleshly means and methods. Many years ago in the days of the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit that began in 1948, there were in certain places men who rose up in a carnal spirit and put their hand of flesh to the thing God was doing. Great power in signs, wonders, miracles, and divers gifts of the Holy Ghost was being manifested through various ministries throughout the land, and some began to prophesy themselves into positions as the "rulers" of particular regions of the earth. Literally they were exalting themselves as the prophetic and spiritual rulers over Tulsa, Oklahoma, Cincinnati, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, or any number of other cities and places. It became almost like a land grab as they competed to see which city or area they would be given spiritual authority and power to reign over! Looking at the conditions in our country today I would conclude that their "reign" was a colossal failure!

As we approach the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God, the Father has purged all such vain and fleshly imaginations from the minds and hearts of all who have followed on to know the Lord. The carnal movements of "shepherding" and "discipleship" fell into similar delusions, where men felt God had set them up as shepherds and coverings and rulerships over other men's lives, and it got so carnal and ridiculous that one could not buy a car, get married, have children, get a job, take a vacation, or a hundred other personal decisions apart from the spiritual approval or prophetic word from their "shepherd." Later the twisted teaching of the "set man" in different cities across the country asserted that God is setting up a certain and specific ministry in each city as the divine voice and authority for that city. If God is going to do anything in that city it must come through that "set man."

While all this is just the same old Babylonish hybrid of flesh and spirit it is actually called "KINGDOM" by many! This is nothing more than an evidence, an open display to us that carnality and flesh are alive and well, still lurking in the hearts of some who profess to be in this word of sonship and the kingdom of God. There is still ego and the desire to rule over men in a lesser realm than true spiritual authority and power! They would make themselves kings and judges before the time and without a perfected soul and the mantle of sonship anointing. The rule of the sons of God is not the rule of dictating to people what car or house they should buy, or any other of the mundane decisions of men's lives. How that trivializes the kingship of the sons of God! We are not paying the price and suffering with Christ in the deep dealings, strippings, purgings, and refinings of our Father just to do that kind of petty "reigning." That's the lowest form of reigning. The great truth is that that is the type of reigning that the authority of Christ is coming to tear down! It is all wood, hay, and stubble to be consumed by the Holy Ghost fire of God! Those are the heavens that are going to burn up and pass away with a great noise! There is a new heaven and a new earth — a new order of divine government, in the spirit and by the spirit, that shall be established in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost! And it is truly only as our souls are "made alive" and our old carnal soulical life is "beheaded" with Christ that we are able to reign in life by One, even Jesus Christ!

THE SOULS OF THE BEHEADED

"And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

This is awesome! After Satan has been bound in the bottomless pit, and the seal is set upon him, then the overcomers appear as "souls" who "live" and "reign" as kings and judges, but — they have been BEHEADED! All the garbage that the church systems have taught are a stench in the nostrils of God, and in my nostrils as well. They tell us that if you miss the "rapture" you can be saved, but you're going to

have to be beheaded. It never ceases to amaze me how shallow and spiritually stupid so-called teachers of the Word can be! In all their carnal-minded literalism they completely miss the truth! You see, if missing the “rapture” means you must face beheading, and if being beheaded then uniquely qualifies you to sit on the throne and reign with Christ for a thousand years, then being so carnal that you miss the “rapture” actually ends up exalting you to a higher position in the kingdom of Christ than those spiritual saints who were translated! Not very sound reasoning, is it?

Furthermore, it is not losing your physical head that qualifies you to reign — if that were the case, most of the Lord’s people, including many of the Lord’s original apostles, don’t even stand a chance of sitting on the throne! The first physical martyr for Christ was Stephen who was stoned to death, not beheaded. So I guess he can’t reign with Christ! History records that Peter, when he was about to be executed, requested to be crucified up-side-down, not feeling worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord. A shame, isn’t it, that he failed to ask to be beheaded — then he, too, could have reigned with Christ! In the early days of the church untold thousands of people gave their lives rather than renounce their faith in Christ, but only a few were beheaded — some were crucified, and many were burned at the stake, while vast numbers were fed to the hungry lions in the arena in Rome. In our day Russia and China, especially, have much blood on their hands from the many thousands of believers martyred under the communist regimes. We would not for one moment depreciate or make light of any of these sacrifices offered up to the Lord in this way. I’m sure that their reward is great! Yet, the truth is that to gain our deliverance from the old Adamic mind and nature, the old man of sin, we have to lose our head! We present our bodies a living sacrifice, we make up our spiritual minds that we’re not going to live our life for Self any more, that our Father shall now live in and through us and that His mind shall be established within us.

In Jesus we see the incarnation of God dwelling in and expressing life through one man. We never knew what it was to be a man before Jesus. But now God still doesn’t know what it is to fully express Himself in me and through me, so I must yield my body as a living sacrifice. What is a LIVING SACRIFICE? John tells us plainly, “And I saw the souls of them that were *beheaded...* and they lived and *reigned...*” Beheaded and living, all at the same time — that is a “living sacrifice!” So here I am Father, walk around and live your life in me, do the things you want to do in me, touch the things you want to touch, see the things you want to see, live and experience your life in me and through me. We have to be beheaded, our own mind cut off, which means, “...be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The renovation of your mind, is how the Greek says it. That means your old mind-set, your old way of thinking, your carnal understanding, your own ego and self, the old paradigm has to be removed. We have to stop thinking with Adam’s mind, we stop judging by Adam’s standards, we stop acting out of Adam’s head, we put on the mind of Christ, and begin thinking, judging, and acting out of HIS head! This happens again and again in our experience until Christ is fully formed in us!

Those who reign in life with Christ are those who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, that is, so they can be witnesses of HIM; and those who have gotten the victory over the beast of the Adamic nature, and over his image— those imaginations and characteristics raised up in our lives which display the Adamic likeness — and over the carnal mark that that nature stamps upon our forehead (mind) and upon our hand (actions). Unfortunately, the Greek word rendered “beheaded” in the King James Bible is not fully understood. It appears nowhere else in the scriptures except here. But one fact stands out plainly: It cannot allude to only those who physically died as martyrs. This, too, is a symbol! The beloved John who penned these words of inspiration did not himself die a martyr’s death. However John intimately knew Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings and the fact is, he suffered more by living than if he had actually been beheaded! Legend tells us that he was once boiled in oil in an effort to kill him. He was exiled to the isle of Patmos there to die as a slave, where he was given the Revelation. When you read church history you find that a martyr’s grave was very often but a blessed relief from terrible persecution, an easy way out. So martyrdom does not necessarily mean an untimely death.

As I searched the mind of the Spirit about this, it came to me so powerfully. You remember that Jesus said that he who would lose his life for His sake and the gospel’s, would keep it unto life age-enduring. The head of every man, to begin with, is that old Self, the mind and consciousness of Adam, the

man of flesh. When I was in school I was taught that self-preservation is the first law of nature. And how we do try to take care of, and preserve, this outer flesh man! We live for him, for his needs, his wants. These are the things most men, and even the vast majority of believers, are concerned about — what Self thinks, wishes, and desires. If we are to truly become manifest sons of God, this old head, the Adamic mind and consciousness, must be chopped off and a new head take his place! That is the mystery. This old Self must be put to death, with his will, desires, concepts, and values, and the mind of Christ have complete Lordship over our beings.

Merely believing on Him does not produce this, it requires complete and absolute surrender and consecration to Jesus Christ, the putting off of the old man, and putting on the new; forsaking the old mind and image of the flesh, and putting on the new mind and nature which, in the image of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. The Lord Jesus must become the new head if we are to sit upon the throne with Him! That is what it means to be “beheaded” for our testimony and the word of God! But notice, these are beheaded in soul. John didn’t see any bodies either possessing heads or not possessing heads. Only souls! John the Baptist and others were beheaded physically, but here the beheading takes place in the soul. Literally speaking, the soul does not have a head, but as the seat of man’s personality it embraces our will, intellect, emotions, and desires. To be beheaded in soul is to experience death to the self-life, death to the flesh, death to the world, death to the carnal mind, death to the ego, death to our own way and will, death to the religious spirit — living the crucified life! Death to self is imperative upon all who shall have the revelation of Jesus Christ out of their lives!

Those who take up their cross daily and follow Jesus, who lay down all claims to their own lives, to know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, always bearing about in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, are those who are “beheaded” for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God! Those blessed ones lose their own heads that they might put on the mind of Christ, thus making the Lord Jesus Christ their Head. If we have not died to self, my friend, we cannot reign in life with Christ! That is what John saw in vision and that is what John is telling us. And when you begin to live and reign with Him, you live and reign with Christ IN THE SURPASSING GLORY OF THE DAY OF THE LORD — the thousand years. This is not the “letter” of the Word that I now share with you, my beloved, but this is the spiritual meaning of the vision!

KINGS, JUDGES, AND PRIESTS

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and *judgment was given unto them*...and they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4,6).

Many outstanding things are noticeable in this majestic scene of the “living souls” John saw seated upon thrones, but I would now draw your attention again to the three-fold nature of their administration. John beheld them endowed with judgeship. He pronounces them kings and priests. They are judges! They are kings! And they are priests! They reign with Christ. It is the “salvation of the soul” or the total transformation of their nature, character, thought processes, desires, ambitions, emotions, and the uniting of their wills with the will and purpose of God that has prepared, equipped, and qualified them for such a calling. These are not mere names or empty titles. No meaningless ceremonials or hollow designations find a place in the kingdom of God. The children of the first resurrection are no sham kings, no mock judges, no pretend priests, but everything which these high titles and offices imply. They are not co-regents and co-shepherdizers with Christ, without being and doing what such words import and express. The dignity is transcendently exalted, but it is all very real. As kings they are to do the work of kings by exercising authority and dominion. This they have first done within themselves by binding the dragon in the pit. As judges they are to judge and administer judgments. As priests they are moved with compassion, and with mercy and truth reconcile men to God. They not only have the name and place of sovereigns, but they reign. The end of their salvation is not to sit on clouds and sing psalms or spend their days dancing merrily over the hillsides of glory. They are redeemed and transformed and made one in Christ for sublime work in the universal kingdom of the Father! Kingdom life is an intensely busy and productive life! And it is powerful on behalf of all humanity!

The scriptures reveal that the church is the body of Christ, and God’s blessed Christ must include both the Head and the body. All true saints must be aware of this sacred secret — that the body is the

body of ALL THAT THE HEAD IS. If Christ the Head is Saviour, then the body of Christ the Head is the body of the Saviour — a body of SAVIOURS. If Christ the Head is King, it follows that the body of the Head is the body of the King — a body of KINGS. If Christ the Head is the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order, then we understand that the body is the body of the High Priest — a body of PRIESTS. And armed with the knowledge that Christ the Head is the great and universal Judge, it should be perfectly clear that the body of the Head is the body of the Judge — a body of JUDGES! The purpose of the firstfruits being judged is that they in turn may be qualified to judge. The judgments of God shall be executed upon the human family and the ages to come by this glorious CORPORATE CHRIST, Jesus Christ the Head and all the sons and daughters of God, His body, the completeness of His Throne which shall smite the dark kingdoms of this world, and the saints shall take the kingdom and reign with Christ in power, authority, glory, and blessing.

God is preparing a mighty company of judges whose responsibility it shall be to judge the world in righteousness! The prophet Daniel sheds much light upon this subject. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7:21-22). Again, "And he that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27). The apostle Paul adds, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life" (I Cor. 6:2-3). Jesus spoke of this same beautiful truth when He said to His disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations (testings). And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and *sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Lk. 22:28-30).

Most of the Christian world is waiting for Jesus to come at "any minute" and bring judgment upon the earth. In the greater light of present truth we now understand that the judgment which HE IS, and which is now wrought out in the lives of His saints, the firstfruits of His redemption, will ultimately be manifested to creation in and through the sons of God. The judges for this day are even now in preparation for their awesome task! Yes, YOU shall judge the world, precious elect of God...but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love! The judges are also priests! The priests are also kings! Authority to act as judges...authority to reconcile, restore, and redeem. That is the mystery!

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

There are several points of interest in the passage just quoted. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten *thousands of His saints.*" The original would be better expressed, "The Lord cometh *IN* holy myriads of *Himself.*" He comes in that people who are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, mind of His mind; the extension and projection of all HE IS — HIMSELF CREATURES. "To execute judgment upon all." To execute means to carry out, to fulfill, to pursue to the end. Holy myriads of Himself shall carry out judgment upon all, and pursue it unto the end, until the full fruit and effect of that judgment shall be manifested in all. "And to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds..." To convince means to convict, reprove, and fully persuade all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against the Lord. This is conviction, my friend, HOLY GHOST CONVICTION that must be

ministered into the minds and hearts of men before they will submit so that the cleansing process can begin in them. I have seen it many times, when Holy Ghost conviction came upon men and women with the hardest of hearts and the most wicked life-styles, they were utterly broken before the Lord, weeping as it were buckets of tears, repenting, and being washed and cleansed from all their rebellion and sinfulness. Hallelujah! What a judgment! And it is no longer upon one here and there, a few who encounter the Lord in His movings, but now Jude says when the Lord comes in those holy myriads of Himself the judgment shall be UPON ALL! Thus the Lord comes in His holy ones to bring an ending to the long reign of sin, darkness, and death, praise His wonderful name!

Day by day we are learning the ways of the Lord. Only God can teach us these things and equip us to judge with righteous judgment. It would be well here for us to take particular notice of a divine principle set forth by the apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. All who earnestly desire to acquire the wisdom and attributes of THE JUDGE and possess the nature which dispenses RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT should give prayerful consideration to these words. "For I know nothing by myself...but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come...*" (1 Cor. 4:4-5). Judge nothing before the time, UNTIL THE LORD COME. What is that? In the blindness of church tradition someone's mind will immediately jump to the conclusion that Paul is talking about waiting to judge until the so-called "second coming of Christ." But that is by no means the meaning here! Hear it! "Judge nothing before the time...until the Lord come, who (when He comes into the situation) both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God."

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

No man has a right to judge anything until this Light has shined into his intellect. Otherwise he is judging in darkness and will do just as Paul says, "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1). No one has any right to judge anyone else when he is himself in darkness and doing the same things he is judging in another. But when the entrance of the Lord occurs, then our whole being will be filled with light and we can know surely that the first one judged will be ourselves. The faults and failings of others will fade as the darkness before the shining orb of the morning sun when God begins to reveal ourselves to ourselves!

There is a great purpose in judgment, and it is always a purpose of love. Our dear brother Vern Goss explains just why the earth and all people should rejoice and be glad in the face of God's determined judgment. He writes, "But doesn't God hate sin? Yes, but not for the reason that many would suppose — that He is aloof, holy, and wants to pound on any that do not measure up to His standard. Simply put, God hates sin because sin brings death, the antithesis of life. Anything that is the enemy of life is the enemy of God! But doesn't God bring judgment on sin and sinners? God brings judgment not for destructive purposes, but for constructive and corrective purposes. If you want to see destruction, death, chaos, lawlessness, mayhem, and murder, allow man to go his merry way *without intervention*" — end quote.

Again, there is great purpose in judgment, and it is always a purpose of love. There is a deep, clear purpose in everything that God does! And His love for us, deep and tender, is the fire burning under that purpose. The character of God must be kept ever in mind. The leading trait in His character is expressed, not by the word "purity," nor "righteousness," nor "justice," but by the word "love." Though if we knew

the real meaning of “love” we would find it includes these others, and more. The purpose in judgment is two-fold. It is a purpose toward sin, to get rid of it. And God’s attitude here is relentlessly uncompromising. No exceptions are ever noted. And there is a purpose toward men. Now regarding the purpose toward men, it is corrective and redemptive. The whole thought is to change the man. It is love working, love for the man. The purpose is the same as the surgeon’s. He thrusts in his keen-edged blade, not to destroy life, but to save it. He is driving hard against the disease. The knife that cuts and hurts is held steady by the kindly purpose in the heart.

So it is in regard to the coming of Christ in judgment. Strangers to the grace of God and His ways are always alarmed by the portents of divine judgment. But those who have drawn close enough to the heavenly Father to know His mind and heart understand that all His judgments are corrective and redemptive, and therefore altogether desirable, beneficial, and glorious! The ecstatic exclamation of joy and gladness at the prospects of the coming of God’s righteous judgment into the earth is found all through the psalms and the prophets. If you are truly destined to stand among the company of the sons of God, the long-awaited liberators of creation, you will most assuredly thrill at the heavenly vibration of David’s inspired song: “Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: HE SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUSLY. Let the heavens rejoice, and LET THE EARTH BE GLAD; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees (people) of the forest REJOICE before the Lord: for He cometh, for He COMETH TO JUDGE THE EARTH: HE SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THE PEOPLE WITH HIS TRUTH” (Ps. 96:10-13).

“Make a JOYFUL noise unto the Lord, ALL THE EARTH: make a loud noise, and REJOICE, and SING PRAISE, Let the sea (raging, surging multitudes of humanity) roar, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods (armies) CLAP THEIR HANDS, let the hills (small kingdoms, institutions) BE JOYFUL TOGETHER before the Lord; for HE COMETH TO JUDGE THE EARTH: WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL HE JUDGE THE WORLD, AND THE PEOPLE WITH HIS EQUITY” (Ps. 98:4,8-9).

We are living in an hour when God is moving mightily in the hearts of His called and chosen people preparing them to bring forth righteous judgment in the earth. “For the time is come that judgment *must begin at the house of God*” (I Pet. 4:17). Judgment begins at the house of God, saith the Lord! Oh, how that message has been butchered by the ministers of Babylon! Do you know what most folk believe it means? They think it’s saying that God is going to bring the hammer down on His people. To them it speaks of severity or an awful day of accountability and reckoning. That’s not what the inspired apostle is saying at all! First of all, as we have noted, “judgment” is not a negative, it’s a positive. It translates the Greek word *krisis* from which comes our English words *crisis*, *critical*, and *criteria*. A *krisis*, a crisis or critical time, is a turning point. Very sick people often reach the point of crisis where they reach and then pass through their most critical point following which their fever breaks, or they regain consciousness; it is the turning point in their illness, the crisis where their condition begins to improve. God’s judgments do not themselves save us, but they condition and prepare us for HIM who IS our salvation. They cause us to turn to the Lord in repentance and we find that He has been drawing us to Himself through it all.

People quote the scripture, “Judgment must begin at the house of God,” and their first thought is, “Oh, my, Ananias and Sapphira are going to fall over dead any minute now!” But that’s not what this passage is saying. The King James translation is faulty. “Judgment must begin *at...*” “At” is the Greek preposition *apo* meaning “away from.” It is not a picture of God bringing wrath down upon the people of God, but it’s a picture of His righteous, redemptive judgments flowing like a river out from or away from the house of God! It is not the house of God receiving the judgment, but it is the house of God dispensing the judgment! Young’s Literal translation reads, “It is the time of the beginning of the judgment from the house of God.” The Concordant New Testament says, “It is the era for the judgment to begin from the house of God.” The Emphatic Diaglott renders, “Because the season is coming for the judgment to begin from the house of God.” The message is clear — contrary to what we have been taught and have believed — God is not moving us toward the time when His judgment must begin upon the house of God, even though we have certainly been experiencing His judgments in our lives; rather, all He is doing now within

us is moving us towards that time when His judgments can begin to PROCEED FROM, FLOW OUT FROM THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD!

As the prophet has said, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain (kingdom, government) of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains (above, over all the strong kingdoms), and it shall be exalted above the hills (weaker kingdoms, institutions); and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the Lord, and to the house (people, body of Christ) of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And HE SHALL JUDGE among many people..." (Micah 4:1-3).

Can we not see by the passage above that the house of God, the mount Zion of God, which is the sons of God, and the holy city Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb, are the source of the law of God, the word of God, and the judgment of God! Oh, yes, the judgment does indeed begin or start with each one of us as He does His wonderful work within; then as our own house has been thoroughly judged and made right, and the sons and the bride are perfected and made ready, this judgment goes from or out from the household of God to bring correction and blessing to the nations. It cannot flow out until it has first been wrought within! It is within God's own people that the judgment of God first does its perfect work. Therefore do we stand upon the glassy sea singing with all our hearts, "All nations shall come and worship before Thee; FOR THY JUDGMENTS ARE MADE MANIFEST!" Where are God's judgments — their reality, power, purpose, and accomplishment — made manifest, made apparent, visible, plain, clear, discernable, perceptible? IN THE LIVES OF GOD'S ELECT!

Ah, here is a people that knows the ways of His judgments, a people in whom and through whom the righteous judgments of God can be executed! The scriptures are continually revealing this grand and glorious truth. The Lord Jesus Himself explained it on this wise: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son...and hath given Him authority to execute judgment...because He is the Son of man" (Jn. 5:22,27). To the faithful in Christ Jesus we now proclaim this message — that judgment which is committed to the Head Son is executed through His body, His many brethren, just as John saw in vision: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...and they reigned with Christ" (Rev. 20:4).

Many people hesitate to believe that the saints will judge the world (and even angels) because of the words of Jesus wherein He said, "Judge not that ye be not judged..." (Mat. 7:1). But Jesus wasn't telling us not to judge! He went on to say, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mat. 7:2). If you consider with reverent honesty these words of the Lord, who Himself is the righteous Judge, you will see that Jesus was not telling us not to judge; rather, He is showing us HOW to judge! At another time Jesus said, "WHEN ye judge, judge *righteous judgment*." Ah, that is the crux of the whole matter! DO NOT JUDGE UNLESS YOU CAN JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT, because you will be judged by the same standard by which you judge! That is why the judgment is given only to the saints, to the overcoming sons, to the purified and perfected house of God, to the holy city Jerusalem, and to the mount Zion company! It should be plain to every understanding heart that divine judgment will not be given into the hands of the immature, irresponsible, or hypocrites. That is the point the Lord is making!

If we are not judging by the nature of Jesus, if we are not judging in the same spirit He does, if we are not the personification of His goodness, forbearance, mercy, long-suffering, and redemptive power, then we are not the manifestation of HIS JUDGMENTS and are worthy of being censured and removed from the throne of judgment. Judgment doesn't flow out of what you know. Judgment doesn't flow out of a title, position, or office. Judgment flows out of the life and nature of the Son of God! "...for *THY judgments are made manifest*." Ah, my dear brother, my precious sister, do you desire a part in the glorious ministry by which the world shall be judged? Then my prayerful recommendation to you is that you draw very close to the heart of Jesus, sit at His feet, tarry long in His presence, fall intensely in love with Him, learn His ways, be filled with His Spirit, be joined in one mind, life, and nature with Him and He will create within you the heart of a redemptive sonship judge! His judgments will be made manifest IN YOU. The wonderful result will be that all nations will come and worship before Him! That is the mystery.

It is the uncovering of that people in whom God has inwrought and birthed His righteous judgments to deal with the sin, ignorance, and rebellion of men, bringing deliverance, producing a mighty change unto salvation and righteousness. He will deal with every man according to the measures needed to correct and make right what is wrong in him. Is that not how He has dealt with us, His firstfruit company? If you yet entertain the carnal notion that by judgment God will sentence every man according to what he deserves, then Jesus would have to apologize to those men who crucified Him, because He didn't give them what they deserved! Rather He prayed for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Do you believe God answered that prayer? The lovely One from whose gracious lips these redemptive words fell also said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I know that *Thou hearest me always...*" If I were to say, "I am sincerely convinced and truly hope that I shall see every reader of these lines get exactly what they deserve," would it not strike terror in your soul? Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact: **BECAUSE OF CALVARY** you deserve the best God has to give and all men deserve the best of God through you! "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments *are made manifest.*"

Chapter 226

The First Resurrection (continued)

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6).

Like all people, the ancient Greeks mused about the “best possible government.” Known as the originators of democracy, their great philosopher Plato believed the best possible government would be led by a philosopher-king. Plato wrote that if an ideal city-state was to ever come into being, “philosophers must become kings...or those now called kings must truly philosophize.” In our text above, however, God does not agree! God does not unite in His kingdom philosophy with kingship. Oh, no! Rather, He unites kingship with priesthood. God does not govern His kingdom through philosopher-kings but through king-priests. When the people of Israel met God at mount Sinai He spoke to them these words of counsel and promise: “Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6).

The subject of the Royal Priesthood, like many of the themes of scripture, is inexhaustible. It sparkles as the twinkling stars of the heavens with glories which many have not yet beheld. Let us put our eye to the telescope of the Holy Spirit, and allow this grand subject to be brought nearer to our spiritual vision for, in so doing, we shall behold more of the grandeur and ineffableness of the “High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus,” and of the purpose and majesty of our oneness in Him. This makes it mandatory upon us to remove the shoes from off our feet and tread carefully upon this holy and mysterious ground. But at the same time it also holds out the promise to us that we shall here gain an insight into some of the most marvelous and glorious things in God’s whole mighty work of creation and redemption.

And just what is God’s purpose? He declares, “Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.” Since kingship was virtually the only type of government or state known in the ancient world, “kingdom” could well be translated today as a “government” or “state.” A GOVERNMENT OF PRIESTS! A PRIESTLY STATE! A HOLY NATION OF PRIESTS! A HOLY PRIESTHOOD! Can you not hear what John is saying in our text above? “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first resurrection*...they shall be priests of *God*...” Certainly this confirms the great truth that the first resurrection is something different from a resurrection of bodies, for it does two things — it makes men HOLY and it makes men PRIESTS. This deals with the soul, the very nature, character, and disposition of man! God offered to Israel this glory of being a “kingdom of priests.” It had nothing to do with the state of their bodies, but was conditioned upon them walking in the covenant and law of the Lord. Great was the power and ministry offered to them, for ALL the tribes were to be priests! Because of their failure by unbelief to enter the promised land at Kadesh-barnea, and because they made and worshipped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving God’s law, only one tribe was chosen to be a priestly tribe — and that not on behalf of the world as God had said, but only on behalf of the unbelieving, rebellious people of Israel! God’s purpose remains, however, to have an entire nation of priests in the fullness of what priesthood means. Israel collectively was to be a royal and priestly race, a dynasty of kings and priests, each member uniting in himself the attributes of king and priest. Every man a king! Every man a priest! A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS! A GOVERNMENT OF PRIESTS OVER THE WHOLE WORLD, “for all the earth is mine.”

As one has pointed out, there is a strong and instinctive need in this world of sinful men for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and going between them both to bring the two together into unification. A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace and at-one-ment.

Webster's dictionary defines priest as: a mediatory agent between God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word *cohen*, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister." And the priest always draws nigh and ministers in two directions — drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God. The priest, on the one hand, stands and ministers unto the Lord on behalf of the people while, on the other hand, he ministers unto the people on behalf of the Lord. Both of these ministries must be effectually fulfilled or there can be no reconciliation. The ministry of the priest is thus an intermediary or go-between ministry. He reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and brings the two together by virtue of his priestly ministration. Both aspects of the priestly ministry are alluded to in the Revelation. "Priests of God and of Christ" in our text is different from "priests to His God and Father" in chapter one, verse six, and "thou hast made us unto our God priests" in chapter five, verse ten. Priests to God signifies priestly ministry Godward, but priests of God denotes priestly activity towards men.

You, precious saint of God, are being prepared to rule and reign with Christ! We need to grasp the full implication and reality of what we are called to. Long centuries ago amidst blazing fire and quaking mountains God revealed His purpose for His elect. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) states it this way: "...ye shall be unto me a PRIESTHOOD OF KINGS." It was intended to be the way of life, the office, the nature, the ministry of all Israel on behalf of the whole earth, not just a selected few. Israel's would be a priestly way of life, with priestly dignity, priestly power, priestly authority, priestly holiness, priestly character, and priestly ministry. God's kingdom people were to be a priesthood set at the crossroads of the world to minister to all tribes and nations the things of God. They would become the holy people, the mediating nation for all the other nations. And beloved, there is a realm of living and ministry that goes beyond just being a Christian, or attending church, or going through the motions of so many religious activities. God has always wanted a Kingdom of Priests! Priests and Kings — just like Jesus! One of the chief reasons for the weakness and immaturity of the popular church is the mistaken idea that the saint's happiness and blessing is the main object of God's grace and salvation. A fatal error! God's aim is far holier and far higher. He chooses out of the nations a people, inworks into them all the triumph of HIS REDEMPTION, all the victory of HIS LIFE, that they in turn shall carry out His redemptive purposes on behalf of the whole creation. A Royal Priesthood! Ah, that is God's aim, His purpose.

Ah, my brother, my sister, is it your heart's desire to be a blessing? God is creating within us the insatiable desire to be a blessing, not only to our precious brethren, our children, our family, our friends, our neighbors, our city, state, and country — but to be a blessing to the whole earth and to all creation. I want that. Oh, how I desire it! Now here is God's promise: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS..." I have often characterized this scripture as the GREAT DIVINE SANDWICH. A sandwich is two slices of bread between which is placed meat, fish, cheese, or the like. Three items are necessary to make a sandwich, the two outer items — two identical pieces of bread — and in between another, different item, the filling of meat or something else. Such is the structure of the scripture passage just quoted. There are two statements of like nature surrounding and enclosing another and different kind of statement. Notice the two outer statements: (1) ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people (2) ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. Then, "sandwiched" in between these two wonderful promises is this remarkable word: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE.

In the light of this inspired scripture I would like to reaffirm something which the world at large, and many believers, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD'S WORLD! "Every beast of the field is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and all the wild beasts are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 50:10-12). Moses said, "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is" (Deut. 10:14). God said to Job, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine" (Job 41:11). And David said, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1).

I will be the first to admit, however, that this world doesn't look much like something that is owned by the great and good God! I look out over the world today and see demons stalking through the lands, with literally billions of people held in the prison houses of the dense darkness of false religions, worshipping idols, and devils, and false prophets, and the gods of superstition, tradition, and fear. I look out over the world today and I see the spirit of strife and hatred and war, thousands dying daily at the hands of terrorists and at the hands of those fighting the terrorists, and in bloody revolutions on earth's battlefields. I look out over the world today and I see nearly two billion people still enslaved under the iron heel of godless, atheistic communism, in spite of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. I look out over the world today and I see poverty and squalor and ignorance on an incomprehensible scale, millions of people starving to death, pitiful little children with protruding eyes and stomachs bloated from malnutrition, without hope in the world. I look out over the world today and I see untold millions of people in the industrialized nations bowing before the gods of humanism, secularism, and worshipping before the shrines of the gods of pleasure, sex, perversion, and debauchery. I look out over the world today and I see millions of our children spaced out on drugs, angry at the world, hostile to parents and all authority, and out-of-joint with society. And time fails me to speak of sin, sickness, sorrow, crime, corruption in government, and other ills of many kinds.

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

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 when 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 the responsibility for it? The man who buys 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. If the dog gets ill it is his responsibility to take it to the vet and also to pay the bill. 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?

You see, my beloved, not one of us is in this life because we willed to be here in this world. The whole human race is not here because of its own will. Johnny came home with a bad report card and put all the blame on teacher who had it in for him. That was not the end of the world, but it was almost the end of the world when, unleashing the tragic holocaust, Adolph Hitler blamed the Jews for all the woes of the world in his day. "Scapegoatism" is old, Adam put the blame for his sin on Eve, and Eve shifted the blame to the serpent, but God, the great Proprietor of all does not place the blame on others — HE HIMSELF TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY for all that has happened to His creation. "For the creation was subjected to frailty — to futility, condemned to frustration — not willingly, not because of some intentional fault on its part, but BY THE WILL OF HIM WHO SO SUBJECTED IT. Yet with the hope that creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption and gain an entrance INTO THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF GOD'S CHILDREN" (Rom., 8:20-21, Amplified).

God is responsible for our existence here in the flesh, lowered into the realm of vanity, sin, and corruption. Adam was not responsible for his existence, for God by His will brought him into being. All

scripture testifies to that fact! In fact the whole race of humanity is God's responsibility! We are here because of His plans, His desires, His purposes, His will, and God is a God of principle. He having begun a work, will finish it and not throw it aside because it was marred by sin, which itself was the result of an event which He Himself created, arranged, and orchestrated. Ah, 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 basis of the whole scheme of creation and redemption.

God has a plan! Indeed, God has a wonderful plan for this world! It is a plan of which the architectural drawings were made in eternity. It encompasses the minutest detail of all creation. I assure you that when time has run its course, and when the last trump has sounded and the veil is dropped upon the final scene of the drama, we shall discover that the plan has been worked out to its very tiniest detail, just as God planned it before the world began — that His will has been done! I cannot believe, as some naively assume, that God could ever be satisfied with a world gone awry and a people gone astray, such as we see in evidence today. Just as sure as many years ago, Lorain and I restored our demolished home because it was ours, so certain is it that God will save and restore a lost world! "Because all the earth is mine, *ye shall be unto me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.*" God has provided redemption for every man who has lived or ever shall live, and now raises up a Royal Priesthood, a many-membered Priest in union with the great and compassionate and faithful High Priest in the heavens, our Lord Jesus the Christ, to minister the claims, and power, and blessings, and benefits of His redemption unto men until all have been restored into His image!

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

If we are to reign the question of competency is raised. How many cities could you rule over for Christ? You say, "I'm just a simple person, I am not highly educated, I have little position or recognition in the world, I'm just a farmer, or a housewife, or a single mom flipping burgers, how could I reign in such a ministry of wisdom and power?" Ah, let me ask you — What have you learned in the school of God that you could bring to bear on others as a divine influence? It is that little bit that has cost you something that is really effective; what you have suffered for and learned from by experience, you can minister to others. The administration of the world to come will not depend on your natural status in the world today, but on your spiritual status in the development of Christ within you as life. No person will take any part in it without being qualified to do so! Whatever place God puts you in, whatever role you are to perform, you are being qualified for today by the lessons you are learning in spiritual life. When the time comes, the Spirit of the Lord will raise that up in power within you and send you forth to communicate it wherever it is needed. The Lord does not send incompetent servants, even today. He gives them the spiritual competency for the service He intends them to render — a competency which is not of themselves but of God. Paul's three years in Arabia, Peter's trance on the housetop, are illustrations of how men, when the hour comes, are equipped to fulfill their ministry. The incidents in chapter eight of Luke's Gospel, were wonderful preparation for the sending forth of the twelve in the next chapter. It was a course of education to teach the disciples the ability of Christ to deal with the most difficult and hopeless cases, so that they might go forth in understanding and faith. They were qualified by what they had learned of Him! That's

where it is, my friend; it has nothing to do with how simple, unlearned, or unaccomplished you may seem to be in this natural world. In this connection it is important to notice that these priests in Revelation 20 lived as well as reigned "with the Christ." They are people who are in association with Christ IN SPIRITUAL LIFE, and those who live and walk with Him are qualified to exert influence of the same character as He — they can reign with Him! Aren't you glad!

I must emphasize with all solemnity, beloved, that when God chooses men to be priests He means for them to BE PRIESTS. Priesthood is not an honorary title, a gift, a reward, or some emotional blessing to be worn like a merit badge for show. Priesthood is real. Priesthood is ministry, to God and to men. Priesthood is work. Priesthood is caring, loving, touching, interceding, forgiving, healing, changing, transforming, teaching, and doing all necessary to bring lost and dying, sick and sorrowing, tormented and hostile men back to God. Priesthood is praise and worship and consecration and holiness unto the Lord. The priesthood of Aaron was set apart, sanctified unto the Lord, that they might serve in holy things. There was to be no life of luxurious idleness, of worldly ease and comfort. They were, it is true, to lack nothing, for we find that full provision was made for all their needs; but their life was to be a life of service, and that service in the very presence of God.

I am convinced that great numbers of people today think that sonship is a matter of the head; that it is believing intellectually and theoretically certain "end-time" or "kingdom" truths. These kind of folk want a constant diet of exotic "revelations," but little inworking or outworking of HIS LIFE. "What is your latest revelation, Eby?" "Give us something rich, come on, pour it on, we can take it," is their cry. But they are not the least bit interested in BECOMING THE REVELATION. You can believe all the "Kingdom Message," and be on the highway of the devil, just as in the churches today a man can be a first-class theologian and be the bondsman of a first-class devil. You can know all the points of Calvinism and never know God. You can know all the answers in the Catechism and never touch God. And you can know intellectually all the "deeper teaching" of this hour and be spiritually bankrupt. You can understand theoretically the whole thing, holding it as a doctrine, and never possess anything. You are like a man who has a beautiful picture of a magnificent estate, and all the title deeds to that estate, but they are not in his name. He has no rights of property there at all.

There are multitudes of people today who describe, and truthfully describe, many great and wonderful things concerning the kingdom of God, but they do not possess any of them. What is the use of talking about a thing unless you possess at least something of it? What is the use of talking about a religion that does not possess you? Why talk about a God and a realm that is afar off, and does not possess you here and now? What is the use of talking about a calling and a ministry that is mere theological theories? That may do something for a moment, but a theory never did anything until it was put into some practical form. You may have a very fine theory, and it may, if properly applied, become a very powerful thing; but as long as it remains mere theorem, what is it? Of no use at all!

There can be no priesthood without first a thorough change. That is why the souls who sit on thrones and reign as priests with Christ are those who are of THE FIRST RESURRECTION. Their soul life has been quickened, made alive, purified, purged, perfected, made one in union with the spirit! Sin, self, ego, greed, prejudice, hatred, bigotry, criticism, retaliation, unconcern, insensitivity, immaturity, pettiness, unrighteousness — all must be dealt with! "Blessed and HOLY is he that hath part in the first resurrection...and they shall be priests of God." Oh, yes, that's it! Thus, we are not seeking just a salvation experience, sins forgiven, covering over the past, and hoping for the best in the future, but we desire that the Holy Spirit of God, working mightily within our soul, shall bring a change in us, until every word, will, attitude, desire, emotion, action, and reaction shall flow from HIS HEART to all about us. You can be a believer and die and go to heaven without such a thorough change, but you can never BE A PRIEST WITHOUT IT! You can speak in tongues, prophesy, see visions, fall out under the power, and be a deacon, pastor, or perhaps even an apostle without such a thorough change, but you can never BE A PRIEST WITHOUT IT!

I do not hesitate to tell you that there are no arm-chair priests in the kingdom of God! There are no country-club elite priests. There are no playboy priests. There are no honorary priests. There are no theoretical, self-styled priests. If you have received the call to the Royal Priesthood then God is very practically inworking into your life something of the priestly nature, life, and heart. It is real! It works! It

works right here and now in the nitty-gritty of everyday living. More and more you have the disposition of a priest in all your associations and dealings. Priesthood is mercy. Priesthood is compassion. Priesthood is forgiveness. Priesthood is blessing. Priesthood is sacrifice. Priesthood is love. Priesthood is reconciliation. Priesthood is healing. Priesthood is tenderness and empathy and the power of His life to change things. Ah, even your dog will know it if you are of a priestly spirit! I do not need to ask God, my brother, my sister, whether you are a priest; I need only to ask your spouse, your children, your neighbor, your boss, your employees, your associates, yes, and your enemies!

COMPASSIONATE PRIESTS

Priesthood is the Spirit of the High Priest. Jesus lives, and Jesus loves us, and has Himself cleansed us in His own blood. He bestows upon us the disposition of priesthood by His indwelling life. His indwelling is but the first step, then follows the inworking by which we become that which He is. The spirit of priesthood is love. Love is the queen of all the graces of the Christ life. Love is the passion of self-giving. It never stops to ask what it can afford, or what it may expect to receive in return; but it is ever shedding its heart's blood. It will pine to death if it cannot give. The love of Christ which went out so tenderly to those who walked and talked with Him when He was upon earth, is no less far-reaching and all-powerful to usward. It is this fathomless love of Christ which conquers; and His all-conquering, boundless love, is the banner unfurled in the lives of His Kingdom Priests. O precious love divine, higher than the heavens, deeper than the abyss, broader than all the ages of time! O mighty love that reached through countless ages and brought Christ down from the bosom of the Father to redeem creation; which brought Him to the cross; which brought Him to the tomb; which brought Him forth and raised Him up to the right hand of God, as the High Priest of the heavens who ever liveth to make intercession for us; which is come again in us and is now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost!

Surely Paul was speaking of the priestly spirit when he admonished the saints in Colosse, "*Clothe yourselves with compassion...*" (Col. 3:12). Examine today's popular books on how to be successful, or look over one of the many lists of what it takes to be a leader, and you don't often find the character trait of compassion. But compassion is the first item on Paul's list here of character traits for those who are made one in Christ! Compassion can be defined as "tender affections one person has towards another, resulting in acts of goodwill and mercy." Such a definition is helpful, but to grasp the depth of it, you have to see compassion in action. The father of compassion is Love. Throughout the scriptures God is portrayed as a God of compassion. "But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86:15). "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and *full of compassion*" (Ps. 111:4). "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous" (Ps. 112:4). "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy" (Ps. 145:8). "The Lord will not cast off for ever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion, according to the multitude of His mercies" (Lam. 3:31-32).

Each of us surely needs God's compassion, because we do not deserve it! As human beings, we sin against God, offending Him in our actions against Him and against our fellowman. Sin has brought disharmony, pain, and destruction into the beautiful world God has made. Who would blame God if He lashed out in anger because of the mess we have made in His world? And that is just the kind of God most Christians suppose that we have! He is a God with thunderbolts flashing from His fingertips, ready to judge and destroy men with storms, tsunamis, earthquakes, fires, and plagues, and finally banish them to the everlasting fires of hell and damnation because of their sins and rebellion. But instead God responds with compassion! "*For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust*" (Ps. 103:14). Our continuing existence is evidence of God's compassion. Jesus' ministry was driven by compassion for the multitudes of sinning, sick, tormented, and dying. Having received God's compassion every member of His Royal Priesthood is a person whose heart is filled with concern for all people in their many needs. Compassion does more than feel pity; it searches for a way to minister God's remedy and manifest His glory!

The wonderful book of Hebrews is literally packed full of mysteries, types, shadows, and allegories, all pointing to the ministry of the manifest sons of God who are God's Royal Priesthood. These are only unfolded by the Holy Spirit as we are able to bear it. Hebrews chapter five sets forth the

qualifications that the typical High Priest under the law, and therefore Christ Jesus, the anti-typical High Priest of the new order of the kingdom of God, must possess. All the members of the Royal Priesthood, the kings and priests of the kingdom who are, with Him, "partakers of the heavenly calling," must also have the same qualifications, for they are the body of the High Priest.

"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, for that *he himself is compassed with infirmity*" (Heb. 5:1-2). Here we have defined the intrinsic nature of the priestly office. First, he must be "taken from among men," that is, he must partake of both the nature and the circumstances of those on whose behalf he acts. Second, he acts not as a private individual, but as a public official: "is ordained for men." Third, he came not empty-handed before God, but furnished with "gifts and sacrifices for sins." Finally, he himself must not be exempt from infirmity, so that he might the more readily identify with man's weakness and need and therefore be able to succor the distressed and distraught.

All this is important for it points to Jesus' qualifications to be our great High Priest. A High Priest must know and experientially understand the problems and limitations of those he represents. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is **compassed with infirmity.**" On three different occasions Matthew tells us that our Lord was "moved with compassion" on the multitudes. Frankly, when you read the Gospels you read of Jesus doing miracles, healings, signs and wonders; but Jesus never went around looking for a miracle to perform. HE WENT ABOUT DOING THE FATHER'S WILL. The Father brought Him to a place where His heart could be moved with compassion. It was not a gift of compassion that came to Him by the Holy Spirit; it was the compassion wrought out in His life by His many sorrows, sufferings, and testings. He had suffered loss, He had suffered pain, He had suffered reproach. Coming to a town He sees a funeral procession and as a Son, having suffered the loss of Joseph and friends and family members, and shared in the sorrow of His mother at the loss, thereby developing the nature of a priest, He is filled with compassion when He sees the widow and her dead son. There was no Social Security in those days, and the boy was the only person to look after the widow, so He stops the procession, raises the boy, hands him over to the mother, and goes about the Father's business. I find that the basis of the sonship ministry of Jesus was not power — IT WAS COMPASSION!

When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion. They were hungry, and He had known gnawing hunger, so He said, "Let us feed them." When He met the leper He was moved with compassion, for He had experienced pain and shame, and He laid His hands upon him and healed him. He could have spoken a word to heal him, but that man needed the touch of somebody's hand on him, he had been separated from people so long, he needed more than to be healed from his leprosy, he needed the sense of the hand of God upon him. When Jesus looked upon the careworn faces of the toiling, tax-ridden multitudes — taxed by cruel priests; taxed by Herod; taxed by Pilate; taxed by their own sins and sorrows; wearily burdened, wounded at heart, and heavy laden — He was not looking for a chance to show off His power — He was moved with compassion.

"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED ABOUT WITH INFIRMITY." The condition which develops compassion in us, is that we ourselves get compassed — surrounded, hedged in — by the problems, the difficulties, the needs that are going to be represented in the people to whom we minister. So many of us are intolerant in certain areas of our lives because we have not gone through the pressure, we have not been compassed by that particular infirmity, weakness, sorrow or need. Priesthood demands suffering, trial, testing, tribulation, and pressure. Sonship demands relationship with God. He sends the Spirit of the Son into our hearts and we cry, "Abba, Father!" Now God intends that all of us who have been called should be sons of God, and that all of us should be a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God. But you may be a son and still not be a priest!

John the Revelator said, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4-6). Here you see that it is not the sons who are reigning — it is the PRIESTS! What about the sons? "He that overcometh shall inherit all things and I will be his God, and he shall be *my son*" (Rev. 21:7). The

sons inherit, for they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Who, then, is destined to reign? **THE SONS WHO ARE PRIESTS!** Christ was a Son before He was a Priest. He was not a Priest during His years in the flesh, although He was qualifying to be one, but He was a Son. Christ in His ministry from the heavens today is not merely the Son of God. As a Son He is "heir of all things;" but to become the great High Priest and provide the priestly ministry on our behalf the Son had, as a Son, to go through the experience that was necessary to perfect Him for the understanding heart of the Priesthood. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; **BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE,** yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became...**AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK**" (Heb. 5:8-10). "Every High Priest...must be compassed with infirmity."

Ah, Jesus could have been a son without being so totally compassed with infirmity, **BUT HE COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN A PRIEST WITHOUT IT.** He might have been perfect in character, noble in motive, and desirous to help us; 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 those who are tempted? If He had never known pain, how could He have compassion on the sick and sorrowing multitudes then and now? 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 grief, how could He be 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. If we would sit with Him upon that blessed throne of mercy we must not shrink from the problems and troubles and perplexities of this life, for this is the stuff priests are made of!

There have been those precious folk who have said to me, "Brother Eby, I don't understand. Since I came into this Kingdom message things have gotten worse — all hell has broken loose." That is just what you need — **IF YOU WOULD BE A PRIEST!** Have you not known some beautiful saints to whom you naturally betake yourself in time of trial and sorrow? They always seem to speak the right word, to give the very counsel you are longing for; you do not realize, however, the cost they had to pay ere they became so skillful in binding up gaping wounds and drying tears. But if you were to investigate their past you would find that they have suffered more than most. They have watched the slow untwisting of some silver cord on which the lamp of life hung. They have seen the golden bowl of joy dashed at their feet, and its contents spilt. They have stood by ebbing tides, and drooping flowers, and darkened skies; but all this has been necessary to make them comforters and healers, the priests of men.

The only persons on earth who really understand our sorrow are the persons who have traveled the same valley of despair. Only those who have been bereaved know what bereavement really is. They alone can shed the sympathizing tear and intercede in power with God, for they alone truly understand. Others may kindly and with feeling offer their condolence, but they can do little more than that, for they have not experienced the pain and loneliness of our loss. The reason our blessed Lord is touched with the feelings of our infirmities is that He knoweth our frame, not because He is God, but because He was a man. He remembereth that we are dust. He knows this not by revelation or by divine omniscience, but He Himself was a "man of sorrows and *acquainted with grief.*" He knew what it was to be despised, afflicted, and rejected of men. He knows what it is to be misunderstood, to be dragged from prison and judgment with no man to declare His generation. He knows what it is to be tested in all points as we are tested, and the sympathizing tears flow from His eyes as He extends His nail-pierced hand to lift us from the shades of our gloomy night to the ineffable light of the plane on which He dwells.

If you are going to be a manifested son you must first get bound because God wants His sons to be Priests, kingly Priests who show forth both authority and redemption. You must not only have the authority of Kingship, but also the compassion of Priesthood. Let me say now, **I DO NOT RECOMMEND PRIESTHOOD — I RECOMMEND SONSHIP!** When you are a son you have an inheritance, great wealth, blessings from the Father's hands, and freedom. As a son you have power to do things, but the moment you become a priest, they put you in chains: compassed, surrounded, hedged in, pressed on every side by infirmity. Infirmity is weakness. I pray that as God deals with His sons in these

days that we will not despise our limitations, our infirmities, and our sufferings, but look unto Jesus who has pioneered the way of Royal Priesthood before us.

Christ was tempted as a Son, but after that there came a temptation in testings that had nothing to do with Him, but were preparing Him for the perfection of the Priesthood. As sons of God, with full inheritance, we should be blessed beyond measure, we should have no problems, by rights we should be in perfect health, have good jobs, money in the bank, and everything coming to us. And we can demand our rights! Vast numbers of Christians today choose to walk only in their kingdom privileges of blessing, health and prosperity. And they do not know it, but they **SHALL NOT REIGN WITH CHRIST**. It is the priests that reign! "And they shall be priests of God...and they shall reign." To the priests God says, "No, I am going to limit you here, put you through pressure there, subject you to suffering, hedge you in and compass you about with infirmity, not because you have no rights, but that it will work a compassion, an understanding, a mercy, a grace, work something in you so that out of you will flow a river of love, forgiveness, tenderness, redemption — and then a flow of power, enabling and ability.

What the church world in general cannot understand is that the Christ does not rule alone but through a many-membered body. Man in God's image, man in Christ at the right hand of God, is God's government in the kingdom of God. I have met men who professed that they have no desire, no ambition whatever to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. They would be happy to make it just inside the gate and possess but a "cabin in the corner" of Gloryland. In fact, I have been greatly criticized and abused by some for my hope of inheriting the kingdom of God and sitting with Christ upon the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers my hope is vain, self-righteous, presumptuous, heretical, and I am power mad, suffering delusions of grandeur because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the kingdom of God. But I have no hesitation in telling you that it is Christ Himself who has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him His authority over the nations and all things! He would both be King **IN US** and exercise His regal power **THROUGH US**. He would both be Priest **IN US** and reconcile, deliver, and bless all humanity **THROUGH US**. Someone has truly said, **HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE**. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood...and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall *reign on the earth*" (Rev. 5:9-10). It was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees — "The glory that cometh only from God **YE SEEK NOT**" (Jn. 4:44).

As one has written, "God is exceedingly rich. He is like a successful business man who has an enormous amount of capital. God has a business interest in this universe, and His vast wealth is His capital. We do not realize how many billions, countless billions, He has! All of this capital is simply **HIMSELF**, and with it He intends to 'manufacture' **HIMSELF** in mass production. God **HIMSELF** is the Business Man, the Capital, and the Product. His intention is to dispense Himself to many people in mass production. Therefore, God requires such a divine arrangement, a divine management, a divine dispensation in order to bring Himself into humanity." Praise His name! As His Kings and Priests upon His throne the elect sons of God are His governmental arrangement by which and through which God dispenses Himself into His creation. For that reason the whole creation continues to groan and travail for the manifestation of the sons of God. What an opportunity to change things! What an occasion to bless and heal and lift and transform the world! What power for doing good and accomplishing great and mighty things for the kingdom of God! Yet, the little fellow, the small-minded man sitting on the front porch of his cabin in the corner of Gloryland, content that he has escaped hell and made it in to the City of God, possesses no such vision and no such power. It would be a crime against humanity, my beloved brethren, to carelessly neglect and thus despise, as Esau despised his birthright, the position of responsibility and opportunity to be the instrument in the mighty hand of God to bless and restore creation proffered to us by the illustrious King of kings, Lord of lords, and High Priest of the priesthood! It would be a mean and despicable crime against humanity as well as God Himself to settle for a cabin in the corner of Gloryland!

Throneship involves far more than mere power over men's lives and events. **IT IS A MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY TO BLESS!** I might add that it is the greatest ministry available with the largest capacity to bless. The purpose and scope of this king-priest ministry is stated by the apostle Paul in these

words, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him" (Eph. 1:10). 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 prisons are overflowing with erring souls and depraved natures, the hospitals are crowded with sick, suffering, and dying, the cemeteries are being filled, even nature itself is groaning under the burden of sin, bondage, and darkness. 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, yearning, crying 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. Now, don't misunderstand me. I am not opposed to any of those things, and we praise God for every one of them. But all together, for two long millenniums, have not delivered creation from the bondage of corruption nor subjected all people and all nations to the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God. 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. Oh, how my heart cries for it! 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!

About The Author

J. Preston Eby was born into a Mennonite family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. While still a toddler his parents received the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the witness of some Pentecostal brethren in the area. They were led of the Lord to sell their business and move to Alabama to do missionary work. In his twelfth year Preston was filled with the Spirit – and in that same year the Holy Spirit sovereignly unfolded to his understanding the wonderful truth of the reconciliation of all things and all men unto God. No one else around him – in family or church associations – embraced this revelation. Through those early years he kept this truth to himself and pondered it in his heart. Later he came into contact with, and was touched by, a mighty move of the Spirit known as the "Latter Rain", with emphasis on the body of Christ, gifts of the Spirit, laying on of hands, impartation, five-fold ministry, prophetic ministry, spiritual worship, the kingdom of God, and going on to perfection, unto fullness of sonship to God.

The Lord pressed him into a deeper walk with Him, intensifying within his heart the truths of sonship and the kingdom of God, already planted within as seed through the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain. Along the way he became associated with brother Gerald Derstine and The Gospel Crusade in Sarasota, Florida, serving as an associate minister with him for eight years, first co-pastoring and later pastoring the Revival Tabernacle in that city. His wife Lorain and he, with their family, were on the mission field in Latin America for a total of five years, with ministry in several other areas as well. For seven years, following this, he was an elder in a fellowship of believers in El Paso, Texas where they witnessed a precious move of the Spirit and a body of saints flowing together in the liberty and life of the Spirit.

Eventually the Lord changed even that order, and in 1976 led him into a full-time writing ministry directed to those who are called and chosen as elect of God to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ as sons of God. The writing ministry includes a monthly message titled KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES as well as a number of booklets on various subjects. This ministry is greatly expanding throughout the world and our sincere hope and earnest prayer is that this course shall redound to HIS GLORY in encouragement, strengthening, edification and blessing to unnumbered thousands of God's elect sons everywhere – that creation may at last witness the true manifestation of the sons of God, setting all creation free from the bondage of corruption, restoring all things to God, and bringing to pass the glory of the kingdom of God throughout the whole earth and unto the unbounded heavens.

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES are sent free to anyone upon request. God's Word is always free to all. God's way is, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Mat. 10:8).