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FROM THE CANDLESTICK

TO THE THRONE

Book Thirteen

From The Loosing of Satan

To All Things New

By J. Preston Eby

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Chapter 227

The Loosing Of Satan

“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...which is Satan, and bound him a thousand years...that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: *and after that he must be loosed a little season...*and shall go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle...and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and *fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them*” (Rev. 20:1-9).

According to the general consensus of interpretation by the theologians, preachers, and teachers of the popular church systems, Satan is so powerful and such a formidable foe that he has only to be set free for a “little season” from his prison of restraint, for the entire glory of a thousand years of the personal reign of Christ on a restored and paradisiacal earth, to collapse into universal apostasy and rebellion, with nothing left to show for that Golden Age Reign but a small “camp of the saints” surrounded by multitudes of revived paganism and atheism, “Gog and Magog,” arisen from the four quarters of the earthly paradise. Our friends who hold this theory have a hard task before them. They have sought to prove that Christ and His kingdom are no match for the almighty Satan, and that Satan’s unloosing even for a brief season is enough to totally upset the kingdom of Christ and procure universal revolt.

The Holy Spirit, however, has given us this picture to *understand* — in the Spirit and by the Spirit. If we will look within the scriptures themselves and discern God’s method of dealing with Satan in all generations and circumstances, rather than expecting some new, mysterious, and bizarre act of God, we will find the true revelation of “the loosing of Satan” to be as clear as crystal. Let us, therefore, present ourselves prayerfully and reverently before the spirit of truth, and avail ourselves of what He would teach through the very words of the Lord Himself, that we may profit from them, and know how to look for the complete fulfillment of the vision John shows to us.

The first thing we need to remember in order to understand this mystery is that Satan is not a physical being. Therefore, neither his binding nor his loosing are brought about by any physical means. Satan is bound for a thousand years, signifying that he is bound by and in the DAY OF THE LORD — the spiritual kingdom of light, illumination, power and glory. Here the perimeter is set, the limit of our overcoming in Christ. So long as we abide in the consciousness of the Day of the Lord, and yieldedness thereto, the serpent is sealed in the abyss of our flesh man. Yet the moment we step outside the consciousness of the Day of the Lord, and yieldedness thereto, the serpent is released. John says that he is released for only a short season. What does this mean to you, my brother, my sister? Can you not see that once we relax our guard, and the serpent raises his ugly head after we have known the overcoming glory of God in our life, it takes only a *short season* for us to get the message that we’re living in the wrong realm! Once having tasted of the heavenly life and the power of His resurrection we have no desire or inclination to return as a dog to his vomit. The heavenly life is our origin, our home, where we came from! After we have renounced the unfruitful works of darkness, after we have experienced HIS DAY — His rest, His peace, joy, righteousness, wisdom, power, and glory — when we find ourselves descending, and suddenly the tormentors return, it takes only a short season for us to realize we must flee back into the arms of our Saviour.

“*And after that he must be loosed a little season.*” So many, thinking only with the natural mind, have let this phraseology confuse the interpretation. The thing of significance to which I would point you is the little word “*after*.” This word in the Greek is *meta*, which is a very interesting word. It does not mean clearly or exclusively “later on in time,” “subsequently,” or “successively,” as does our

English word “after.” The clearest and primary meaning of the word (see Strong’s Concordance or Lexicon) is “*accompaniment*” or “*amid*.” All John is saying is that *accompanying, amid, or in conjunction with* the thousand years, or the Day of the Lord, Satan is allowed a little season of testing. A similar scenario was shown us in chapter twelve of the Revelation wherein we read, “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a SHORT TIME*” (Rev. 12:12). Twice in that chapter we have the “short time” or “little season” associated with the working of Satan just as we have also in our present text.

Let us prayerfully consider what is meant by the statement, “...*he knoweth that he hath but a short time,*” because it addresses the same “little season” we meet in chapter twenty. Unfortunately, tradition says he knows that he has but a short time because Jesus is coming back and the millennium is about to begin. Hogwash! That’s not at all what the Holy Spirit is indicating. The adversary knows that you have identified with the truth as it is in Christ, you now *know* who you are, what your true identity is, and the word and spirit of Christ have been raised up within you as the power of your life. He knows that you have been given an entrance into the Day of the Lord in your life and you have laid hold upon the power of the ascended Lord who reigns over all things and now *nothing shall be impossible to you!* He knows that you have no desire any longer to dwell in the dust realm of the unconverted soul, for your soul has been purified and raised up to reign with Him in heavenly places. Neither do you have any desire to walk any more in the passions and lusts of the flesh where he dwells. He knows that his time is short because you will no longer tolerate his lies and deceptions in any department of your being, in any vestibule of your house, or in any street of your city — the city of God which you are! That’s what he knows — and he fears that his ability to operate in any way or do anything in either your soul or your body — the dust realm he was consigned to from the beginning — is now drawing to a close!

Considering all the glorious, divine, and august things written in chapter twelve of the Revelation about the victory of the sons of God over the dragon — nothing can be more certain than the fact that Satan’s perception that his time is short has nothing whatever to do with a “second coming” or “the end of the world,” or a “thousand year reign of Christ,” for none of those things are even alluded to in chapter twelve. It’s all about the *birth of the manchild, the manifest sons of God,* and Satan being cast out of the “heavens” where they dwell, that is, their *spiritual life*. It means that when Satan is cast out of our “heavens,” the high realm of our spiritual life, he then seeks to stir things up in our “earth,” or our soulical realm, and in our “sea,” our body or fleshly realm. Can we not see by this that in chapter twenty God is now dealing with Satan in these lower realms of our life, and by the Day of the Lord he is “bound” or “restrained” in the abyss of our fleshly life. Isn’t it wonderful! And now, only for a *little season* — just as it was with the firstborn Son of God in His *brief* wilderness testing — can Satan ascend from the abyss to briefly but powerfully *test us* also to the uttermost!

Do I believe in a real devil? Sure I do. Not the one the preachers describe with the red suit, forked tail, horns, and pitchfork — but the devil is very real. Let me say that his playground is in our thinking, in our mind, emotions, desires, and will. That’s where he wreaks havoc, that’s where he has his heyday, that’s where he has his sadistic fun. When God moves to bring us into the image of Christ, Satan is first cast out of our religious realm, our spiritual life. The heavens of our spiritual life are cleansed, his power broken. Only then can the Lord begin to move upon our “earth” and “sea,” our soulical life and our fleshly man. Satan is bound there by the presence and glory of Christ in the Day of the Lord. This “day,” like all days, begins with a dawning, growing brighter and brighter as the sun of righteousness arises upon our land. We have all experienced the fact that in those times and seasons when the presence and glory of Christ shine bright and overflow and overwhelm us we are caught up into the exalted mind of Christ and no dragon can operate there. Sin in all its constituents and manifestations is neutralized, rendered inoperative, made of no effect by the power of His presence and life! There is only one thing that matters during that high time — God! When the Spirit is moving mightily in our lives no anger, no lust, no evil thoughts, no fleshly desires, no earthly concerns bedevil us at all! We are free! Nothing of the world has a hold on us. Our whole consciousness is permeated and controlled by the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost! That is when Satan is bound in the abyss!

Thus the “angel” — the message out of the heavens of God’s Spirit takes hold of your mind, your emotions, your passions, and your will and locks them away, restraining and sealing up their ability to function on any level, subjected to the mind of Christ. Yet — there is also a season when Satan is released to come out of his prison and test us again. Thank God, he is not released *forever*, he is not *permanently* paroled, he is only released for a “little season.” You see, my beloved, as we learn to walk in the spirit and live in the heavens of the presence of the Lord and the mind of Christ, our “lapses” back into the old mindset, into natural ways of thinking, into fleshly actions, reactions, and desires, and even our soulical religious inclinations become less and less — oh, yes, just a *little season!* We have no desire to live on that level, so we focus on Christ and ascend back onto the higher plane of life and victory.

It matters not what I say — many who read these lines have been there, have experienced precisely what I am talking about, have walked in the light of that most holy place in God, have heard the voice of the messenger that bound within them the hiss of the serpent, where they knew only peace, purity, power, and glory. In the blessedness of that moment your Father provoked you with an everlasting provocation — you will never again be comfortable or content to dwell in the lowlands of the flesh! As long as we walk in the Day of the Lord Satan is bound. When he is fully bound we arrive at the experience of verse four to *live and reign* with Christ upon His throne! As I meet and know by the spirit those precious elect ones of God who have passed through the dealings, purgings, refinements, and triumph of the Christ-life within I can testify that *I see thrones, and I see them that sit upon them!* Just as John saw them, I see them! These have passed from death unto life, from carnality to spirituality, from the earthlies to the heavenlies, and *in Christ they live and have their being* and even now they are *reigning with Him* in the light of the Day of the Lord! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

Yet — there is a truth beyond this. The beautiful truth being revealed here by the Holy Spirit is of extraordinary importance to everyone who has received the call to sonship. You see, my beloved, it is *not enough to have the serpent restrained within us*. The Day of the Lord will do that! Even though he is bound, this is not sufficient. A beautiful picture of this is given us in the experience of king Solomon. Solomon said, “*Now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster*” (I Kings 5:4). In the Hebrew text this reads as, “*there is no satan.*” Later, after Solomon turned away from the Lord to worship other gods, we read, “*...the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary*” (I Kings 11:14). Again, the Hebrew text reads that the Lord raised up against Solomon “*a satan.*” For Solomon Satan was bound and then set free — depending upon *how he was walking!* So long as Satan is only “bound” or “restrained” by the Lord he can also be freed. Notice — he does not *escape*; he is *released!* (Rev. 20:3,7). The same word of the Christ that imprisoned him also releases him. As long as he has not been dealt with, as long as there is a carnal mind and a flesh nature for him to be bound and imprisoned in, he poses a danger. HE MUST HIMSELF BE DEALT WITH! When he is bound that is God’s work *in us* with respect to Satan and his activity. Indisputable as is that blessed fact, the truth of the *destruction of the serpent* is greater by far! We must eventually and ultimately deal with that relentless enemy of life that has *deceived all that dwell upon the earth*. He will for a little time be loosed to fester up any remaining ungodliness within us so that God’s Fire can devour any remaining unrighteousness yet in our land. This is the true “entire sanctification” some speak of! Finally Satan himself will be destroyed by the *Great and Wonderful Fire of God — the Lake of Fire!*

Volumes could be written if we were to explore every aspect of this significant truth, but the important thing here is that Satan is bound in the Day of the Lord in the depths of our being, so far down he can neither speak nor manifest. But when the thousand years are finished — when the Day of the Lord in our lives has accomplished its full work in our soul and flesh life — he is loosed for our testing, as Jesus was tested in the wilderness — to prove our sonship. There is also a loosing in another class of people, but we will consider that further on. Have you not 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*” (Mat. 4:1; Mk. 1:2). What a strange statement! Jesus had 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. Then immediately the Holy Spirit of God drives the blameless Son of God into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and a liar and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary that the Son of God be **proven**, be made **strong**, to **overcome** in these realms before proceeding on into His glorious sonship ministry and His death and resurrection.

When Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, it was not to see whether or not He would sin. That wasn't it at all! The Father witnessed that He was *pleased* with *everything* in Jesus. With what was the Father pleased? What had Jesus done that pleased the Father? The fact is, He had not yet performed even one miracle. He had never healed any sick, raised any dead, cast out any devils, nor done any signs. He had never preached a sermon, and He certainly had not prayed and sweat blood in dark Gethsemane or gone to the cross. Before one gracious word of teaching had ever fallen from His holy lips, before He had saved a soul or performed even one act of ministry the Father testified, "This is my beloved Son IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED." The Father was pleased — for thirty long years this Son had walked with Him, learned His ways, revered His name, grown in His nature, and walked in His mind. The purpose of the wilderness was not to determine whether or not He was perfect, but to demonstrate to the flesh realm, to principalities and powers, and to all realms from the lowest to the highest that indeed HE WAS THE PERFECT MAN! As such, He was able to say, "*The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.*" There was nothing in the Son that pertained to Satan, nothing that belonged to Satan, nothing that corresponded to Satan, nothing that responded to Satan. NOTHING! Satan was completely obliterated from the life of Jesus!

But you see, beloved, *all* the powers of His flesh, *all* the powers of His natural mind, *all* the powers of His soul and body, and *all* the powers of the human religious inclinations rose up, marshalling every weapon, every force, the soldiers of all the energies of the natural man (Gog and Magog), and came up against the holy city, that is, the government of God by the spirit within the firstborn Son of God — and they, making their last stand, compassed His city about; but the *Fire of God's Word* came down out of the heavens of the Spirit of God within Him and *devoured* all the adversaries. Can you not see the mystery? After passing the test His real ministry began! So with us, His younger brethren — when our Gog and Magog, all the powers of our earth man, have assailed us and have been consumed by the Fire of God's Living Word within us, our sonship will be proven and complete. The glory of the New Jerusalem will then be revealed, and the throne of God's sons within the city, and all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and the nations will walk in the light of the city. It is indeed wonderful!

GOG AND MAGOG

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be *loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.* And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: *and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them*" (Rev. 20:7-9).

The only other reference in the Bible to Gog and Magog is found in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel. This use of the term by John is rooted in the Old Testament passage. One will have to admit that this is a rather strange battle which Ezekiel described in his vision. Israel is pictured at peace and dwelling in security in her land, with no attempt made to defend herself against the enemy which suddenly and powerfully sweeps down upon her. Without a struggle, as soon as the enemy marches into the land, he is smitten with a catastrophic judgment directly from God. The rest of the vision tells of a glorious celebration of victory on the part of the people of Israel. We must keep in mind that in both passages the language is highly figurative and symbolic, and it can only be interpreted in that light. The fact is, history records no battle in the history of Israel that answers to the one described in Ezekiel's vision. Nor can we conceive of it as taking place in a literal way in our day or at some future time, for, you see, all the invading army comes riding upon horses, a great company having bucklers and

shields, bows and arrows, and all of them handling swords. In addition to this all their weapons are made of *wood*, and there are so many of them that no man of Israel needs to cut any fire wood for seven years while they use these weapons for fire wood! It certainly doesn't sound like *modern warfare*, does it?

If John's vision is symbolic, then so also is Ezekiel's. The only difference is that John's version is a little more complete and is given to us in the fuller light of New Testament revelation. In both instances most of our struggles of the Lord's people are already over, and they are dwelling in a sense of peace and security. There is no struggle at all. In John's vision this is due to the fact that they have already overcome the beast, the false prophet, Mystery Babylon, and now Satan himself has been bound in the abyss. Ah, *there* is peace and security! But suddenly the old devil is brought out of his pit where he has been placed. He is turned loose in their midst and there is unleashed upon them an awful attack of the adversary! He gathers all his forces and rants and raves against the redeemed of God. But before he is able to harm a hair on the head of one saint, at once the fiery judgment of God falls upon all the enemies and the devil who leads them. This, my beloved, is no literal warfare fought with conventional weapons — this is *the final battle of our spiritual warfare*; this is the climax of the most magnificent celebration of victory!

Some years ago a brother by the name of Charles Robinson wrote the following: "This month marks the 95th anniversary of my birth. One thing that impresses me as I look back over the years is the way world events have recycled themselves, giving me a sense of having 'been there, and done that.' Whoever said, You only go around once in life, probably had not lived his life out at the time. Although it is true as a certain poet has put it, 'There's only one life, 'twill soon be past,' it is often true that we senior citizens feel a sense of *déjà vu*, a strange feeling of having been here before.

"It is this very feeling that comes over me when I read current dispensational literature or listen to prophetic (pathetic?) preachers on radio and TV. As a member of what journalist Tom Brokaw called 'The Greatest Generation,' I sometimes feel that I am back again in the 'good old days' of the great depression and the ensuing era of World War II. Before the days of television and in radio's heyday, the airways were burdened with the same premillennialist predictions that are still being heard today. Apparently the ancient preacher had it right: *The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is nothing new under the sun* (Eccl. 1:9). Many big-name prophecy preachers then, but virtually unsung today, were touting the same *literal predictions* that make some folk slack-jawed today. One fellow I remember, with the unusual name of Smith, had a daily radio broadcast called 'God's News Behind the News.' Well, I have news for him! He often said that the Bible reads like tomorrow's headlines. Prophecy preachers today are still repeating the same pat phrases and they are no more true now than they were then. Literalists of that day sought to apply the Bible prophecies to current world events as if to try to confirm the accuracy and infallibility of the Word of God. If that were so, I am afraid we are all in trouble, because the predictions they made then never developed, so they would disprove rather than prove the Bible.

"In pre-war Europe the stage was being set, as it were, for the inevitable second world war. Adolph Hitler, as the dictator of Nazi Germany, invaded virtually all of western continental Europe except Italy, where his ally Benito Mussolini, ruled with despotic power. Together they controlled all of Europe, as Japan and China did much of Asia. Oddly, Soviet Russia, the dreaded 'Gog' of premillennial frenzy, remained uncommitted, but often sided with the allies, not with the side they were supposed to be on! Prophecy preachers then loaded the airways with dire warnings of a revived Roman Empire controlling the world and determined to annihilate Israel. They based all of this on literalistic interpretations of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. All of this was purported to introduce the 'anti-Christ' and the dreaded 'great tribulation.' Some preachers then fingered Hitler as the most probable anti-Christ, but at least one that I remember captivated audiences, saying, 'Don't watch Hitler, watch Mussolini!' I wonder if some are still watching! As dictator of Italy, Mussolini seemed most qualitative to head up a revived Roman Empire, since he was already in power in Rome. Again these assertions and allegations were backed up with 'proof texts' right out of the Bible!

“Well, now everyone knows the outcome of those spurious interpretations of scripture. Hitler, defeated and ruined, most likely died by his own hand in an underground bunker. No one knows for sure. Mussolini was assassinated and strung up by his heels from a street-light pole in Milan. The world situation did not turn out at all the way the dispensationalist preachers said the Bible said it would. They thought they were so right, but they were so wrong. I do not know what became of the pre-war prophets, but they seem to have ‘folded their tents like the Arabs, and as silently stolen away.’ For years things were pretty quiet on the literalistic prophecy front; but today we are hearing it all once more: Gog and Magog (Russia and China), the king of the north, the anti-Christ, the rapture, the great tribulation, etc., etc., and I am saying to myself, This is where I came in! It did not happen before, and it is not going to happen (like that) in our present time. I still sit here day after day, and hear preachers rant and rave about the Bible being tomorrow’s newspaper, and how the entire dispensationalist and literalist agenda must come about because that is what the Bible teaches! These dear brethren — and I do love them — need to read news of world events in the light of the Bible, not give forced interpretation to the Bible in the light of world events” — end quote.

For many years my prayer has been that God would put *His* thoughts, *His* understanding, and *His* wisdom into *my* mind, and into the minds of all His precious people. Bear with me for a moment while I reiterate once more that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book* addressed and sent to a *spiritual people*. In these desperately trying and difficult days through which we are now passing at the conjunction of the ages, it pleases the Father in heaven to open the eyes of His called and separated elect to many wonderful and glorious *spiritual truths* not seen or understood by men who read the scriptures with carnal minds and human understanding. A light brighter than the noonday sun, even the *light of life*, is shining into the hearts of those who are separated unto Him, giving them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If you ask God for His understanding, you will now be able to discern between the carnal understanding of the natural mind and the spiritual understanding of the thoughts of God.

I believe that I have the mind of the Lord when I say and assure you that you don’t need to be concerned about the events unfolding in the outer world of natural men. You need not worry about the things you hear on the news, the changing world conditions, economic troubles, wars and rumors of wars, terrorism, tyranny, and the rise and fall of nations. You don’t have to worry about Europe, Russia, China, or the Moslem nations. All of these things certainly affect our lives, but very little of it, if any, fulfills any specific prophetic scripture of God’s word. Russia is not Gog and Russia or China are neither one the Magog of the Revelation. Russia is not going to go down and attack the state of Israel. That’s all hogwash, just carnal-minded speculations and delusions of men void of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. It’s not going to happen! That’s not what either Ezekiel or the Revelation is telling us about at all. Hear it! When we read about Gog and Magog we must understand by the Spirit what the symbol stands for. In our text you will see that Gog and Magog compass the *camp of the saints on the breadth of the whole earth*. Now, let me ask you, is Russia compassing the whole earth, has even communism swallowed up the whole world, is the kingdom of Russia even united within itself? NO! Its former empire has fallen apart and it is now weakened among the nations. It never did, nor does it now, have a worldwide domain.

But Gog and Magog compass the “camp of the saints.” What is meant by “the camp of the saints”? The expression, rightly understood, is full of interest. When Israel was moving out of Egypt under God’s guidance, into the land of promise, it became the Lord’s *host* (Ex. 12:17,41,51). When its tents were pitched it became the Lord’s *camp* (Ex. 15:19; 16:13). God was in its midst, and therefore the camp was holy. The unclean were to be put outside (Num. 5:3-4; Josh. 6:18). Now, under the guidance of the greater Joshua, Jesus, the called and chosen elect of the Lord are following Him to their promised land — the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! They are the *camp* of heaven on earth now, or the true people of God, and the camp of the saints is the *body of Christ*, and the glorious body of Christ is indeed OVER THE WHOLE WORLD! Gog and Magog assault also “the beloved city,” the heavenly Jerusalem. The saints are at first the tent-pitchers in this heavenly walk. Thus, the camp of the saints is

distinct from the city; but it bespeaks all those separated ones of the Lord's people who have come out of the Egypt of this world and have made the journey from the camp in the wilderness to the glorious city of God — a strong people, a mature people, a perfected people, a compacted people, a peaceful people. So therefore it is impossible for Russia to be Gog and Magog, or for any other world power of the past or future to fulfill the prophecy, for our great and eternal Father is not warning us about the petty kingdoms of men, but speaks to us of *spiritual realities*, both positive and negative, that touch our lives as we *go on to perfection in Christ!* God is not concerning himself with either Russia or the nation called Israel — He's concerning Himself with *you!*

The literalistic teachers of prophecy fail to seriously think through many of their speculations and assertions. The common teaching among fundamentalists and evangelicals is that the thousand years in chapter twenty of the Revelation is a literal period of one thousand years, preceded by a seven-year 'great tribulation' with the reign of 'anti-Christ.' Somewhere in connection with the great tribulation and the second coming of Christ Gog and Magog, most often identified as Russia, will invade the land of Israel and there be defeated by the Lord raining great hailstones, fire, and brimstone upon them out of heaven (Eze. 38:21-22; Rev. 20:7-9). There is a very serious problem, however, with this hypothesis if indeed it is all *literal*. The preachers are all expecting this prophecy to be fulfilled, perhaps in our generation, when the fact is that according to Revelation 20 the war of Gog and Magog takes place **at the end of the millennium!** These prophecy preachers are sneaking Gog and Magog all the way back to a point *before* the millennium even begins! Therefore, if it is literal, it certainly has nothing to do with the Russia of our day because it is *at least* another thousand years in the future! The truth is, of course, that the expression "Gog and Magog" does not, and never did, refer to Russia. That has been entirely made up from whole cloth, and simply repeated so many times that many have assumed it to be the unadulterated word of God!

To understand the imagery of Gog and Magog it will be helpful to note that in Jewish writings 'Gog and Magog' was a frequent expression used for the rebellious nations of Psalm 2, which gather together against the Lord and against His anointed. As time went on, in Jewish thought Gog and Magog came to stand for *everything* that is against God. The idea was that in the end God would be the victor, gathering to battle and destroying completely all of Israel's enemies! In its spiritual meaning, it signifies the **whole flesh realm**, within and without — the world, the flesh, and the devil — all the amassed powers of the Adamic life. It is Satan loosed out of his prison, together with all his agents and instruments, to assail our spiritual life in an effort to deceive and ruin us just before our finest hour. It is as Jesus in the wilderness, tempted by the devil in his most cunning and insidious assault, immediately prior to His manifestation as the Son of God with power!

Gog and Magog comes from "...the four quarters of the earth" (Rev. 20:8). The four "quarters" of the earth signify the four parts, regions, or directions. In scripture the number four takes whatever is happening, positive or negative, and expands it in every direction — north, south, east, and west. If you're traveling north, south, east, and west you're going in every direction! It denotes that which is world-wide or universal. It encompasses everything in whatever realm it is applied to. In relation to Gog and Magog and the four quarters of the *earth* it bespeaks all the powers of the earth-realm *within us*. When you look at your *soul*, the earthiness of your life, you will find four quarters! You will find the *intellect*, the *will*, the *emotions*, and the *desires*. There are four aspects, sides, corners, or quarters of the soulical life! It includes within it the *soulical religious realm* in all its carnal characteristics. This is where our real enemies lie!

The "nations" that are deceived so completely are "in the four quarters of the earth." These "nations" are called Gog and Magog. The RSV translates correctly, "the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog." So the "nations" are not something different from Gog and Magog, Gog and Magog do not *gather* the "nations," (Satan does that!) but the "nations" **are** Gog and Magog, and they fill the whole *earth-realm!* As we have pointed out earlier, attempts to associate these names with one specific nation or group of nations have given rise to the theories according to

which Gog and Magog are Russia, or England, or China, or some other power. In view of the particularly vicious anti-Christian character of the Turks in his day, Martin Luther called them Gog and Magog. But the fact that Gog and Magog are the "nations," and the "nations" are "in the four quarters of the earth," eliminates entirely the thought of any one nation alone, or any two nations together, being "Gog and Magog."

Their number is "as the sand of the sea." Notice! They are identified with both the "sea" and the "earth," that is, with the *body* realm and the *soul* realm. It bespeaks *mankind* — the flesh. They gather for battle. Oh, yes, the natural man, with the passions and lusts of the body, and the carnal mind of the soul, *always* gathers to battle against the spirit! "*The flesh wareth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.*" What an imposing array they present! "They went up on the breadth of the earth." They "marched up" and covered the whole expanse of the earth to the horizon in all directions from "the camp of the saints." The spiritual life is portrayed as completely surrounded and outnumbered! "The beloved city," the elect of the Lord, is left without a single apparent avenue of retreat or escape.

It also speaks to the soulful realm, the inherent religious nature of man. This points to deceptive teachings of apostasy everywhere "surrounding the saints" which is "the beloved city." It does not mean soldiers, armies, tanks, and missiles arrayed to inflict physical harm or destruction on the Lord's people. Though that has happened, and is still happening to believers today in various part of the world, the vision would not be given in *signs* and *symbols* if it were fulfilled in such a literal way. It is the Father's *fiery word of truth* (Jer. 23:29) that devours and burns up all the adversaries of deception and false doctrines in the heart of every saint. Oh, how the whole church world is full of false doctrines and deceptions which surround all the elect of the Lord! We can hardly buy a book from a Christian bookstore because they are all so laced with the errors and falsities of Babylon!

What a picture! And what does it tell us? It speaks to us that man's flesh, when not restrained, will always stand up in opposition to the Christ life. And it tells us that this is true for *every man*. All men in coming to Christ and entering into His kingdom must come the same way. God does not have one way for His elect and another way for the rest of mankind. We are the "firstfruits" of His redemption and as the firstfruits are harvested unto Him so shall the whole field — the entire crop be harvested unto Him. Surely the apostle Peter spoke of this great truth when he wrote: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith: knowing that the same afflictions are *accomplished in your brethren that are in the world*" (I Pet. 5:8-9). You see, my beloved, if the great religious city of Babylon must be destroyed in the lives of God's elect, it must also be destroyed in the life of every man who experiences the redemption of Christ. If the bestial nature must be purged from the lives of God's sons, then the bestial nature must likewise be purged from the life of every man for whom Christ died. If the voice of the false prophet is silenced in the lives of God's firstfruits, his voice must be silenced too in every living soul of man everywhere. And if the serpent is to be eradicated once and for all from God's apprehended ones, it follows that he must be eradicated finally from the life of all mankind. God is now swallowing up the death in *us*, in spirit, soul, *and* body — and the blessed day will surely come when in all the earth and throughout all God's vast universe there shall be no more death in any creature anywhere. Because the people of God are scattered throughout the whole earth, and because all the people of the entire earth must also, in due time, experience these very same dealings of God, reveals the meaning of the scene: "*Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*" Oh, yes, it happens to *all* — *everywhere!*

Let me give you an illustration. History records many great and bloody battles that have been fought between tribes, ethnic groups, religious entities, nations, and empires. Most wars were fought due to the ambition of some power-hungry leaders in order to bring others, along with their lands and wealth, under their control, causing the untimely death of millions of young men in their prime of life as well as the destruction of entire societies, religions, cultures, and civilizations. During the past one hundred or

so years, mankind has experienced two World Wars, and countless others in Korea, Vietnam, China, Ireland, many African nations, Central and South America, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the list goes on and on even to our present day.

Ah, in order to understand and grasp this great mystery of the *final battle* in the *spiritual realm*, we must first discern and clearly comprehend the true *causes* of all *carnal warfare*, for the one typifies the other. I do not hesitate to tell you that the underlying cause — the energizing principle and power — of all carnal warfare is the *flesh* and the *devil*! James put it so succinctly when by inspiration he wrote, “From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of *your lust that war in your members*? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not...” (James 4:1-2). That is carnal warfare! But the apostle Paul speaks also of spiritual warfare, and declares, “This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh wareth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: for these are contrary the one to the other...” (Gal. 5:16-17). James and Paul both point their fingers at the *flesh*, whereas John tells us, “*Satan* shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to *gather them together to battle*...and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and *compassed the camp of the saints about*...” (Rev. 20:7-9). The question follows — How do you suppose warfare could be abolished? Why, bless your heart, by dealing with both the flesh and the devil — *getting rid of them*! Remove the *instigators* and you eliminate the problem! Get rid of the scheming agitators and peace will ensue! My beloved, it’s just as simple as that. And *that* is exactly what this twentieth chapter of the Revelation is all about!

So what do we see in Gog and Magog, the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, the number of whom is as the sands of the sea? I find words and phrases totally inadequate to portray the height and depth and length and breadth of the sublime scene John beholds in transfixed wonder. Yet I know within my spirit that it pictures the *final battle* within each of us — where all the powers of the flesh, energized by the spirit of the dragon, stand up in opposition to God’s truth, God’s redemption, God’s will, God’s purpose, and God’s kingdom. It is not time now for Satan to just be *restrained* within us any longer, it is time for the serpent to be dealt with, once and forever to be *done away* with! “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: *and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*” (Rev. 20:9-10). Man’s flesh and the serpent that crawls therein is here visited by the all-consuming Holy Ghost Fire of God!

Punishment by fire is a beneficent one. “Our GOD is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). The basic purpose of this divine fire of God is to cleanse, purify, purge, temper, and change. It is to rid of impurities, of filth, of undesirable elements and states of being. There is no better way to deal with filth than to deal with it by fire! The dealing of God by penal fire leads back to the beginning of things. The final work of God in this world will be the destruction of the world order and system by penal fire. That will change all things! That will melt all the elements, so that no man can tell you where his original grab was. It will burn up the governments, institutions, systems, and fruitage of the carnal mind. It will melt all the customs, cultures, traditions, and practices of society and make of this earth a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Every man’s work will eventually be tested by this fire. The fire will try every man’s work of what sort it is. If you and I build into the walls of our lives wood, hay, and stubble, that fire will find it out, and the wall will come tumbling down. When God turns on the HEAT, the BLAZING LIGHT OF HIS SPIRIT AND HIS WORD — some things begin to change! The fire is never sent to destroy the **person**, but to purify the nature, to purge out all that hinders and separates him from his God, to consume the pride, arrogance, hostility, defiance, and rebellion of the flesh and the carnal mind, that he might then be wooed and drawn by the Holy Spirit unto the Father of spirits and live.

The simple truth of the matter is this. The *lake of fire and brimstone* signifies a fire burning with brimstone. The word “brimstone” is simply another word for “sulphur” and defines the character of the fire. The Greek word *theon* translated “brimstone” is exactly the same word *theon* which means

“divine.” The reason this is true in the original Greek language of the New Testament is that sulphur was sacred to the deity among the ancient Greeks; and was used to fumigate, to purify, and to cleanse and consecrate to the deity; for this purpose they burned it in their incense. In Homer’s *Iliad* (16:228), one is spoken of as purifying a goblet with fire and brimstone. The verb derived from *theion* is *theioo*, which means to hallow, to make divine, or to consecrate to a god. Thus, a “lake of fire and brimstone” would mean a “lake of divine purification.” Divine purification and divine consecration are the plain meaning in ancient Greek.

More than three centuries ago when the Black Plague swept through London, England, more than 68,000 men, women, and children were sickened with the putrid fever, suffered nameless agonies, passed into delirium, sometimes with convulsions, and then died. Before the end of the terrible nightmare of anguish and death, what was thought to be an even greater tragedy occurred. The city caught fire, the whole heavens were ablaze as the Great Fire destroyed more than 13,200 homes and 89 churches. Most of the city, which was built largely of wood, lay in ashes. Wonder of wonders! As soon as the last dying embers cooled and the smoke cleared, the inhabitants of the city discovered that the Plague had been stayed! Not another person died of the epidemic. The Plague never returned. The fire had killed the bacteria-carrying fleas and rats that caused the Plague. It took a fire to do it! Fire is a great cleanser, purifier, and changer. Thank God for His Fire! All that is within us that bears the nature of the serpent nature will be devoured. When the work is complete in us, the one who has been thrusting us through, our adversary, will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone and thus be transformed and caused to become a vessel of honor rather than dishonor (Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16-20). By His brimstone God will test the transformation of the devil, as well as our beast nature, and the false prophet which speaks within us, using the touchstone until it tests out as pure gold. Aren’t you glad!

Chapter 228

The Lake Of Fire

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the *lake of fire and brimstone*, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And death and hell were cast into the *lake of fire*. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the *lake of fire*” (Rev. 20:10,14,15).

As we approach this subject of the lake of fire and brimstone I wish to preface our study of scripture with the testimony of a dear sister, Mildred Garner, with which I am certain many of my readers will be able to relate. She writes:

“I grew up in rural Arkansas during the great-depression years. Those were very stressful days for our parents, but at the same time they were good times, especially for the children. I well remember how the whole community gathered in a one room school house to worship on Sunday morning and night. Well, I really can't say everyone gathered into the church house, a few of our good neighbors, my parents, and those awful heretics down the road, which belonged to some strange denomination, were usually absent. Otherwise, everyone seemed to be in perfect harmony. I was a very serious youngster, and tried to believe everything the preacher and teachers said. But I was having a secret problem. I found out early on that God was very angry at me over Adam and Eve eating an apple. I really did not understand why He was so mad over them stealing one little apple, since He owned the cows on a thousand hills. But, I knew that I was in danger of being burned forever.

“I gathered from what I perceived that there was only one way to keep God from putting me in His huge lake of fire to burn forever with Adam and Eve and everyone else that stole apples. This escape operation entailed getting His Son, Jesus, to leave heaven and come and get inside of me. Now, from where I stood, that was going to be a major problem; I could not understand how a grown man could do that, since I was so small. Besides, I was not sure how Jesus felt about the stolen apple, since His Father was so upset. I worried about hell continuously. In those days we heard a lot more about hell than we ever heard about heaven. We heard a lot more about judgment than we heard about grace and redemption. We certainly heard more about the devil than we heard about the Holy Spirit. In fact, I did not hear about the Holy Spirit.

“Sometimes I felt like the minister would pick me up and shake me over a bottomless hole. I gathered that there was fire connected with this hole, but I had no idea what kept the fire from falling through, since it did not have a bottom. Maybe we would just fall with the fire and burn while we were falling. Most ministers gave us a very explicit picture of miles and miles of flames leaping and dancing around the heads of millions of screaming people who were pleading for mercy, while a few saints who had barely made it in to heaven by the skin of their teeth looked on the sad state of their former loved ones. In my dreams I was never fortunate enough to be an onlooker. Not only was I confused about the lake of fire idea, I could never get the story straight about where most of the dead were. Sometimes the minister said they were in hell burning, and then he would tell us about judgment day when the graves would be opened and the people would get out; then we all had to be judged. I wondered how we would get from our grave into hell or heaven, since Lazarus, in the allegory of the rich man and Lazarus, never went to the grave at all. It was also an unsolvable mystery how we could get out of hell and back into the grave to be resurrected and judged, and sent back to hell. I was troubled about how we could wash our garments in the Lamb's blood and get them as white as snow.

“I had a very poor image of the object of my adoration; I always pictured God as having one eye and being a bit pudgy. He was always sitting in a big chair with an arm missing; this accounted for Him having the ability of ‘leaning on the everlasting arm.’ This constant leaning position gave Him a very clear view of the earth at all times. He grew a bit when they sang, ‘There's an All-Seeing Eye Watching You.’ It was well known that if you had only one good eye, you would wear a patch over the other one. I sensed that one useable eye following me everywhere I went, even to the old board out-house. Perhaps this comprehension sounds funny to an adult, but it was everything but funny to a child who was

somewhere between three and ten years of age. I wonder how many children suffered the same nightmares that I suffered in those days. I do not condemn the scriptural truths that some of these old-time favorites represent, but I do condemn this manner of presentation of the wonderful story of creation and redemption to little children. How could any child love a god that was presented in such a manner?

"I do not condemn our forefathers for their lack. The conflicts they faced back there slowed the progress of the civilized world; besides it has taken some difficult suffering and a lengthy time to emerge from the Dark Ages. Every generation of Christians must struggle for more light while they try to escape the wrath of blind religion. Now that we have all the wonderful Bible helps — words of spiritual wisdom of the ages — made available to us, we need to use them to expand our spirit's horizon. If the atonement of Christ *reconciled the world* to Yahweh, why are we yet teaching an angry God theory? Is it not time to preach the *Good News*? People are in bondage to their nature. They need a solution to the entrapment; they need a way out. They need a Savior!

"If you are a Christian, you have experienced the unmerited mercy of a loving God, as I did. After being confused by religious people for over twenty years, I finally accepted the unconditional love of a merciful Father. No works, no mighty deeds, no change, no cleaning up; I had nothing but a plea for mercy. And, bang-go! It happened instantly. I had a divine experience — my heart of stone could, and did, love the unlovable. My burdened soul could laugh again. The tears all dissipated, and as the cross was lifted from my shoulders old Self-pity and his army packed up and moved out of my temple. I came alive, vibrant, excited. I had hope. Halleluyah! I was still ignorant about everything except one thing: I was no longer ignorant about a living, loving God. God was alive, I could live again. In 1953, my afflicted lungs did not prevent the *breath of life* from entering into my body and soul. Hey! I had a spiritual experience that day that lifted me above my old nature and got my foot out of the grave. I became a member of the new creation, and I felt it. The sky took on a deeper blue; the trees were much greener than they had ever been. The birds sang louder and more beautifully, and best of all I lost all sight of hell with its ghastly flames. All of a sudden the All-Seeing-Eye became my constant Keeper. He was not a spiteful pirate with a bandaged eye any more. He was my all-wise Keeper! I still marvel that Yahweh was able to penetrate my head — it was so padded with religious concepts that had built a wall too high for me to hurdle in order to make any sense out of my life. Yahweh, or the world. He alone bridged the gap! I was surprised to learn that He had never been angry at me. He had not been angry at Adam and Eve. He clothed them..." — end quote.

Before proceeding with our study it will be instructive to note just *who* and *what* is put into the lake of fire, and *when* they are put there.

1. **The dragon**, that ancient serpent, which is the Devil (accuser), and Satan (adversary), is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10).
2. **The beast** and the **false prophet** are ALREADY in the lake of fire when the devil is cast there. "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). They were judged and cast into the lake of fire at the fall of Babylon (Rev. 19:20).
3. **Death** and **hell** are cast into the lake of fire *after* Satan is put there — the process to end both death and hell in all men begins (Rev. 20:14).
4. **Those whose names are not written in the book of life** are cast into the lake of fire — to be purified by the Holy Ghost fire of God, thus paving the way for HIS LIFE to be raised up in them (Rev. 20:15).

One thing many of God's people have failed to realize is that not only is Satan a great *deceiver*, but he himself is totally *deceived*! To my mind, this is a self-evident truth. He would not be trying to overthrow God and His kingdom if he did not somehow believe that he could. He is deceived by the very lies which he tells, by the very deception which he propagates. Christ is the creator of the world, of the whole vast universe, and is its present ruler. The scriptures make this very plain. The inspired apostle Paul tells us that all world rulers are "God's ministers," and that there is "NO POWER **but of God**" (Rom. 13:1-6). The great prophet Daniel declared, "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and **giveth it to whomsoever He will**, and **setteth up over it the basest of men**" (Dan. 4:17,25). And Satan also serves. The only power Satan has is that measure of power which God has appointed to him. I'm sure it is with him as it was with the wicked men who crucified the Lord — "they know *not* what they do." That is deception!

Being deceived, Satan believes that the power is really his own and that he can ultimately wrest the whole creation from God's control. He works on that premise. And God has allowed it. In fact, God ordained it so! Satan is like a dog on a leash. He can go only as far as the master permits or purposes. I have no time for people who seem to be serving a puny little God who is so weak and timid that He must run to get out of Satan's way every time he makes his appearance, lest He be devoured. Satan never slips up on God's blind side and pulls anything over on Him! Neither is God busily *trying* to do things while the devil comes and hinders or upsets God's apple cart. Oh, no! God is, and always has been, and always shall be, the supreme ruler of the universe. Satan is the prince of demons and has power only by special concession, in order to bring about what God has decreed shall be. Christ is king. He rules. Before His ascension He proclaimed, "ALL POWER is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18). "ALL power" means **all power**. What a marvelous truth!

Satan, by God's permission, has been the delegated ruler of man's dark world. Jesus spoke of him as "the prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31; 14:30). John said that this present evil world "lieth in (is under the control of) the *wicked one*" (I Jn. 5:19). Paul said, "For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood...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. 6:12, Amplified). And in this realm of dark power Satan himself is deceived. Have you not noticed among cult leaders, corrupt politicians, and scores of other such figures, that those who are **great deceivers** are first of all themselves **greatly deceived**? Satan actually believes that the power is of himself, just as all tyrants do, and he designs to gather all things together into one *in himself*! And this is the underlying principle behind all of his workings in and through the carnal mind and fleshly nature of man!

There are two realms of government. The realm of God (almighty power) and the realm of Satan (ceded, limited power). We were formerly aligned with the realm of Satan's government. Paul says, "Who hath delivered us from the *power* (governmental authority) of darkness, and hath translated us into the *kingdom* of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). That is governmental terminology! The Amplified Bible reads, "...hath delivered us...out of the *control and dominion* of darkness and has transferred us into the *kingdom* (government) of the Son of His love."

God's kingdom is a body politic. And there are two parties: God's righteous government and the opposition. The opposition, *deceived and deluded* by its own character of darkness and rebellion, and by its illusions of grandeur, has been trying for six long millenniums, by any and every means, to gain control of the government. But it has been a disheartening battle. The prophet Isaiah spoke God's divine truth when he declared, "The government shall be upon HIS (Christ's) shoulders, and of the increase of His government...THERE SHALL BE NO END...to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever" (Isa. 9:6-7). Because this rule can never *cease*, and must throughout all ages *increase*, every apparent victory of the enemy, in the end, has turned out to be a defeat. Oh, the mystery of it! The human race fell to the deception of the opposition at the very beginning. But instead of that being a victory for the enemy, it turned out to be a blessing for the human family. For now, through Christ, not only will men be restored to what was lost by the fall, but because of Christ's resurrection, ascension, and enthronement in the highest heaven at the right hand of our eternal Father, all men redeemed by Christ are translated in Christ to the celestial realm, to that GLORY WHICH HE HAD (and we had) WITH THE FATHER BEFORE THE WORLD WAS — a position and eminence as far removed from the perfect Edenic state as the east is from the west!

The opposition even went so far as to crucify the King, the Prince of Peace, bury Him in a tomb, and set the official seal of the mighty Roman Empire upon it. But that seeming defeat for the Christ's cause was a signal victory, for on the third day the crucified One arose from the tomb, broke the seal, rolled back the stone, and stalked forth in a glorious deathless body, thus breaking the sway of death and delivering all who were in bondage from its clutches. Because He arose, so shall every son of Adam arise! "The hour is coming, in the which A-L-L that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth" (Jn. 5:28-29). "As in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*" (I Cor. 15:22). The whole creation is awaiting the ultimate triumph of this wonderful victory! "All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of God's sons. For the creation was made subject to futility, not of its own choice, but by the will of Him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set free from the thralldom of decay to enjoy the liberty (from sin and death) that comes with the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19-20).

The kingdom of the righteous One has not been established in fullness and perfection over the earth. As history reveals, there is a *process* for the unfolding and establishment of all things. We are yet passing through a period of preparation in which those who prove themselves faithful to the rightful King, are being called, separated, prepared, and sealed, awaiting the hour when, upon the full manifestation of the kingdom, they will be raised to great honor and power and majesty, to reign as heavenly kings over the earth and all things, to bring life and light and glory to all peoples everywhere. The revelation given to John on far-away Patmos is the “manual” setting forth the principles and the processes by which this kingdom shall triumph over all!

While the Lord has permitted Satan, the great adversary, to rule in the hearts of “the children of disobedience,” He has never ceased to be interested in the ultimate blessing of mankind. In fact, throughout all the thousands of years during which He has refrained from interfering on any large scale with the reign of sin, darkness, and death, God has been laying the groundwork, as it were, for a glorious day of deliverance. God does have a strategy! And He is the Master Strategist! Up until this time His plan of redemption and restoration has progressed silently and unobserved by the world. Just as the firstborn Son of God was raised up during His silent and hidden years in the village of Nazareth and none knew the power and glory of His appearing until the day of His emergence upon the stage of history, so God has been quietly dealing with Christ’s “many brethren,” His apprehended ones, processing, purging, purifying, perfecting, teaching, training, maturing, equipping, and preparing them for the day of battle and the overthrow of Satan’s kingdom. There was no fanfare in the village of Nazareth during those first thirty years of Jesus’ life, and there is no fanfare in our own little “Nazareth” today as our Father reveals His sonship purpose in our lives. Even as Jesus was prepared in His Nazareth, the “place of no good thing,” so today the Lord has a remnant, unseen, unknown, unheralded, unobserved, hidden away from all the activities of the world and of popular religion, in the secret place of the most High, learning the ways of the Father, discovering the principles of the kingdom, coming under the Lordship of their glorious Head, in preparation for the day when the great Commander “arises to the prey.” As we follow on in these closing chapters of the Revelation we now come to the unfolding drama of the final triumph of the kingdom of God in the earth. Oh, the wonder of it!

The truth I will try to unfold in this message, though exceedingly glorious, could never in a million years be grasped by the natural mind, and because it concerns the ultimate destiny of *all* of God’s great and infinite creation, runs contrary to the perverted creeds of the church systems of man. These sects and denominations of the Babylonian system have taken away the key of knowledge. They turn our God of love and grace and wisdom into either a despot, an idiot, or a sadistic maniac and thereby control the masses of Christians with tactics of fear and bondage. Once the key is lost, then the doors of truth and redemption and restoration are locked and remain locked to their understanding and the Christian is barred from the distant peaks sublime.

The question before us is just this: WHY is Satan first *bound* in the bottomless pit, then *loosed* from his prison, and finally *cast* into the lake of fire? WHY these precise steps — seemingly in rapid succession to one another. The traditions of the past have so dimmed our understanding that every truth is side-tracked to be made to conform to the doctrine and teachings of a Babylonish church. My heart leaps within me for joy as I contemplate this wonderful truth and seek to reveal to you a great mystery of God’s glorious purpose of the ages.

In response to the questions asked above, let us consider this. A man who keeps his bulldog tied to a fence has no right to brag that the dog has never bitten the mailman. How *could* the dog bite the mailman? If the owner wants to brag about his dog, let him set the dog free; then everyone (including the mailman) will know the dog’s true nature. There you have the difference between Satan *restrained* in the pit, and Satan (or men or anyone or anything else) purged, purified, and transformed in the *all-consuming Fire of God!* Evil of any kind can only be dealt with in one of two ways — it must be *restrained*, or it must be *remedied*. You can either *jail* the criminal, or you can *rehabilitate* him! It is for this very reason that wicked men are shut up in hell, reserved under chains of darkness, awaiting a day of release and deliverance. God restrains wicked men until according to His purpose He can save them. The blind interpretations of religion are what caused all the confusion in the mind of Mildred Garner according to her testimony which we shared at the beginning of this message. She confused “hell” with the “lake of fire,” and understood nothing of the difference. She didn’t realize as a child that hell is *not* the place of fire, but hell is *cast into* the lake of fire. You see, my beloved, hell

is a *holding place*, a *prison house* — but the lake of fire is the mighty and divine work of *purification, purging, refining, and transformation!*

With the release of the mystery of iniquity into the Adamic race, the wickedness of man soon became great in the earth, and by Noah's day we find that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" and "the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:5,11). God allowed man's sin and violence to go a particular course for a certain length of time, knowing full well just how far He could allow man to express these evil inclinations, and just where to draw the line. At the appropriate moment the spirits of these wicked men were put in prison, as society today puts a criminal in prison; the flood swept them away into hell and hell restrained the Antediluvians from committing more wrath upon the earth.

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

Despite the crafty and deceptive efforts of some to twist and explain away the plain meaning of this passage, it reveals that Jesus, after His death and resurrection, went and preached, not to men in the flesh, but to SPIRITS in prison; not to angels, not to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob nor any of the other Old Testament saints, but to those wicked men who had been willfully *disobedient* to the preaching of Noah in the days preceding the flood! And what did He preach to these long-departed spirits who had been held in confinement in God's great prison-house for two thousand years? Well, I Peter 4:6 unequivocally answers this question! The passage is only a few verses further on from the one under consideration, and as Peter continues speaking on the same subject we are informed, "For this cause was *the Gospel* preached also *to them that are dead*, **THAT THEY MIGHT BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO (JUST LIKE) MEN IN THE FLESH, BUT LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD IN THE SPIRIT...**" The message is clear — though these were dead so far as their flesh bodies were concerned, and lived only in the realm of spirit, but not in the flesh, *the gospel was preached unto them* that they might be judged, or dealt with by God, the same as men who were alive in the flesh. So when the time had come for the apostles to go forth preaching the gospel to the nations to lead multitudes to salvation in Christ, Jesus Himself went down into hell and preached salvation to the spirits in prison for the same purpose and unto the very same end! Oh, yes! Please notice, precious friend of mine, it was not doom and gloom and judgment and eternal damnation that was preached to the wicked men in hell, but THE GOSPEL, the GOOD NEWS WHICH IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION!

Now I will share with you another mystery which is exceedingly great. This mystery is revealed in the verse just preceding the one quoted above. Peter is on this wonderful theme of God's dealings with those who are dead and held in the prison-house of spirits. Speaking of the living wicked, the Gentiles of his day who walked in lasciviousness, lusts, drunkenness, idolatries, and wickedness of all kinds, he points out that they think it strange that the saints don't run around with them in all their evil deeds, and they speak evil of them. He then adds, "Who shall give account to Him that is *ready to judge the living AND THE DEAD*" (I Pet. 4:5). I know no words, be they many or few, that could more plainly open to our understanding the fact that a great, important, and wonderful *change* in God's dealing with mankind is couched in the statement of this inspired passage. Until Christ came, God had not dealt with the nations of earth, nor had He brought judgment to the masses of dead who had departed this life. That the day would come when the *judgments* of God would be revealed to all men was a promise repeated again and again throughout the Psalms and the Prophets. And it was to be a most glorious time! Now Peter announces that that day has come, and after the spirits of the dead had been held in confinement in the spirit realm for thousands of years, without a visitor, without a word, without even one glimmer of light or ray of hope, held in chains of darkness, awaiting the day of judgment —

Peter declares that now God is "READY." The Greek word in its root means "*adjusted*," denoting a change. God wasn't "ready" to do this before, but now He is ready, prepared, all systems are go. Ready for what? "Who is ready to *judge the living AND the dead.*"

You see, my beloved, God had not done this before! What does Peter mean about God "judging the dead?" The very next verse explains it: "*For this cause was the gospel preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh.*" Can you not see the mystery? God is now, in this very age, judging *all men*, both the living and the dead! It is an on-going process, and God has a time for every man. Whether a man lives or dies, God will deal with him the same when the time is ripe. God can save men here in this life, and He is just as able to save men who have departed this life. He can save you on earth or He can save you in hell, it makes no difference to God. God is *now ready* to deal the same with both the living and the dead! That is the mystery. If your loved ones have passed on outside of Christ don't think it will necessarily take long eons of His unfolding purposes before they can be touched by the grace and power of God. Oh, no! Wherever they are, when it is their turn in God's gracious purpose, He will call them forth, and His judgments will unfold in their lives right there in that place. HE IS READY TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD! HE IS READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM THAT ARE DEAD! Isn't it wonderful!

It is written in the plainest of language. But there are some people who will not understand plain speech. They do not believe that the Christ went down into hell to preach the gospel to disembodied spirits of wicked and rebellious men; they think He went somewhere down in the heart of the earth to rescue Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the Old Testament righteous people out of a place called Paradise and take them up to heaven. He may have done that, but there is not one shred of evidence for it anywhere in the pages of God's wonderful Book. The Bible nowhere says that. He went down to the lowest hell, and He was there on business! Wherever He went He did business for God. He went there to begin His new age deliverance ministry among a group of spirits that had been imprisoned — restrained — there for two thousand years, but now it was time for them to REHABILITATED — SAVED! And blessed be God, it was the *gospel* that was preached to them, informing them of the death and resurrection of God's Son, who was given as a propitiation for them, that God had faith in the power of the blood of His Son to deliver them from the bondage of sin and death and hell into the glorious liberty of the children of God!

The twentieth chapter of Revelation gives us deeper and more comprehensive insight into the complete program of God in the restoration of creation, both the living and the dead. There is both hell and the abyss — places or conditions of restraint. There is also judgment. Then there is salvation. But there is also the lake of fire. Some men must be dealt with by the lake of fire before they are conditioned to receive of God's grace and salvation. Their selfhood and rebellion must be broken! The devil most certainly has to be dealt with severely by the fire of this divine lake. The great truth that we need to understand in order to comprehend the picture the Holy Spirit is painting for us is that everything and everyone that is cast into the lake of God's Holy Ghost Fire is placed there for the very same reason — purification unto redemption! Matters not whether they be men or devils or systems or the great dragon himself — the fire will accomplish its intended work and that man, that system, or that devil, will come forth refined, purged of all error, selfhood, and rebellion!

The following words by brother Elwin Roach are beautifully instructive. "Legalistic people of religion think like the legal system of our nation. They believe that more and bigger prisons is the answer to all crime. Lock them up and forget about them, is their mind-set. But that is not God's mind-set! He does not look at things as men look at them. His ways are not man's ways. You see, even though the powers of darkness would be held captive (restrained), there would still *be* darkness, sin, and death, the very things that must eventually be destroyed, forever. "*There shall be no more death.*" Holding Satan captive is only one phase of the victory. The next phase is casting him into the lake of fire. The answer to opposition is not to lock it in a prison and throw away the key. The answer is to destroy, consume, and/or transform it, and this is by *the Great Fire of God — the Lake of fire!*"

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...and shall be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages" (Rev. 20:10, Lit.). The Greek word used here for "tormented" is *basanizo* which is derived from *basanos*. *Basanos* is what is commonly known in English as the "touchstone." Its proper usage in olden times was to test the genuineness of gold and

other high grade metals after they had been melted down and separated all the dross. The metal is then cooled down and the touchstone rubbed on it. Pure gold rubbed on the stone would leave a peculiar mark, different to that of other metals or alloys. Therefore the touchstone acquired a symbolic significance: *a test or criterion for determining the quality or the genuineness of a thing; to test for purity or truth.* The Revelation tells us that both men and the devil are “tormented” in the lake of fire. That is, as they are dealt with in the blazing fire of God’s holiness they will be revealed to themselves, and as the fire continues to do its work the touchstone will be applied again and again, day and night, as it were, from age to age, from dealing to dealing, from experience to experience, until iniquity is found in them no more. The very terms *day and night* and *ages of ages* show beyond question that we are dealing with the limited realm of *time*. There is no *day* nor *night*, neither are there any *ages* in *eternity!* All three are creatures of time.

There is no way of knowing how long a time this will be, but since it unquestionably speaks of day and night and ages, it does therefore belong to time and no endeavor must be made to equate it with eternity. Ages can be long dispensations covering centuries of millenniums, or ages can transpire within ourselves as we move from one dealing of God to another in our experience. I know brethren who have lived under the age of the law, the age of grace, and the age of the kingdom within their own experience during the short span of a few years. I have passed through a number of “ages” within the scope of my experience with God, and I have become a different person, and been related to God in a different way, in each of those ages! When the process is complete in the serpent’s experience — **THAT WILL BE THE END OF THE DEVIL!** Why turn the devil loose out of the abyss? Ah, God doesn’t want the serpent to hibernate in the pit, that is not His objective at all. He wants the serpent to be *destroyed* in the refining and transforming fire of God. What a wonder! What a mighty God we serve!

We will understand the grand purpose of God’s dealings through all these “ages” once we see how the highest glories of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, are revealed to us in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians. From the beginning He was “...the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for *by Him* were *all things* created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things* were created *by Him* and *for Him*: and He is *before all things*, and *by Him all things* consist” (Col. 1:15-17). Can the UNIVERSALITY of Christ’s creation be more graphically expressed? In every case the word ALL is used WITHOUT ANY LIMITATION whatsoever. The heavens and the earth with **ALL that is in them**, visible and invisible, include **all** creation — every created thing!

The verses that follow continue to express the UNIVERSALITY of Christ’s glories in the present and the future. “And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in *all things* He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should *all fullness* dwell: and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be *things in earth*, or *things in heaven*.” The supremacy of God’s Son depends on the UNIVERSALITY or TOTALITY of His many honors. How extraordinary is the emphasis laid on this vital fact in this short passage! Within the compass of five verses we read no less than *eight* times that the glory given the Christ is all-inclusive and all-pervading. He is the firstborn of EVERY creature. ALL is created by and in Him, and ALL is created through Him and for Him. He is before ALL. ALL is bound together by Him. In ALL He is becoming first, exalted to preeminence. ALL fullness, or the fullness of ALL is gathered together in Him. He reconciles ALL through the blood of His cross. And on two occasions this is amplified and defined as ALL that is in the heavenly sphere and ALL that is in the earthly sphere. It is said to include both everything visible and everything invisible. What more could be said to impress upon us the absolute ALL-INCLUSIVENESS of both Christ’s creation *and* Christ’s redemption!

Oh, what a vast and all-inclusive statement that is! All the Principalities and Powers in both heaven and earth are included in the reconciliation effected by the blood of His cross. Oh, what a mighty redemption! Oh, what a universal reconciliation! Oh, church of the living God, unto you is the word given, “To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that NOW UNTO THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVENLY PLACES (SPIRITUAL REALMS) MIGHT BE KNOWN BY THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD, according to the purpose of the ages which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:9-11).

This word that we bear came to us by revelation of the Holy Spirit, though it is plainly written across the pages of God's Word, and completely sealed us to the knowledge that everything, and we do mean *everything, everyone, even all creatures* that God ever created, are to be brought into unification with God through the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit graciously granted us light to see that Jesus Christ is indeed the Saviour of all men, we did not immediately understand that all the rest of God's vast creation was included in redemption. We had no problem with people like the Pharaohs, Nero, Judas, Hitler, Stalin, or Castro ultimately being conquered by the love and power of God. They are just the kind that Jesus came to seek and to save, and really, ALL have sinned alike and stand in need of God's salvation. But there were other beings in the creation of God for whom we saw *no help*. To us, the angelic beings, the principalities and powers of the heavenly realms, whether good or evil, whether angels of glory or demons and devils of every stripe, were entirely different classes of creatures and their ultimate purpose and end an entirely different proposition. We used to say, in ignorance, that God never sent Jesus to die for demons and devils and wicked, foul spirits — He died only for the human race. In years past we sang a song, the words of which went something like this:

Holy, holy, is what the angels sing,
And I expect to help them make
The courts of heaven ring.
But when I sing REDEMPTION'S STORY
They will fold their wings;
For ANGELS NEVER KNEW THE JOY
That our salvation brings!

And while it is true that there are glorious beings that have not sinned or fallen from their exalted state, yet now we know that redemption is not for humanity alone, but for the whole creation. Thank God for this great ministry of reconciliation! How far does this ministry reach? Is it just for mankind, or is it more far reaching? Why should we limit God's love to mankind only? Why should we think that He loves us with an everlasting love, and has none at all for the rest of His creatures, the work of His hands? Are they not also His creation? Are they not included in the "all things" He created and in the "all things" He reconciles? Dare we really believe the words the beloved John penned while banished on the isle called Patmos? "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou has created *all things*, and FOR THY PLEASURE they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). Why should we think that God has gone to such great lengths to mold us into the kind of creatures that BRING PLEASURE to His heart, but does nothing on behalf of the wretched, filthy spirits in the kingdom of darkness who are also among the "all things" created *for His pleasure*? Does He derive some sadistic pleasure from their hideous, perverted natures? I think not! Why should we suppose that He has provided such a wonderful salvation for us, but has made no provision for them? They are as much a part of His creation as we are! And the sons of God are being prepared for the express purpose of delivering the *whole creation* from the bondage of corruption and *reconciling all things* back into Christ again!

God's great plan is not partial — it includes ALL. "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to *reconcile all things unto Himself*: by Him, I say, whether things in *earth*, or things in *heaven*" (Col. 1:20). It is not just the scope of "things on earth" being reconciled that startles us most, for it goes on to say, and "things in heaven." This indicates that the heavens also needed reconciling! But just what are those "things in heaven" that are reconciled? Have we not thought that everything in "heaven" is peace, joy, and holiness? One day the words struck me with such incredible force, and the effect was to stop me in my tracks. There I faced anew one of the old, well-known verses of the Bible, and when the profound truth of it broke in wonder and glory within my consciousness I had a completely new Bible, and an increasingly wonderful God. For the first time in my life I saw precisely and comprehensively what God had *created* in the beginning according to Colossians 1:16 — and precisely and comprehensively what is being *reconciled* by the blood of God's Son. I discovered at least sixteen different items or groups of items in that one short passage:

1. All things in heaven
2. All things in earth
3. Visible things

4. Invisible things
5. Visible things in heaven
6. Visible things in earth
7. Invisible things in heaven
8. Invisible things in earth
9. Thrones in heaven
10. Thrones in earth
11. Dominions in heaven
12. Dominions in earth
13. Principalities in heaven
14. Principalities in earth
15. Powers in heaven
16. Powers in earth

“By Him to reconcile PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN HEAVEN *and* in earth” (Col. 1:16,20). These are the words that stopped me in my tracks. “What is there *in heaven* that *needs to be reconciled?*” I queried. The thought had never crossed my mind! I had always assumed that all was at peace and that never a cloud had darkened any brow in heaven! Discord in heaven? Perish the thought! Sin in heaven? Impossible! Negative forces in heaven? It couldn’t be! Wickedness in heaven? No way! “But,” I thought, “not only does it plainly state that the Christ will reconcile things in heaven, but it furthermore specifically identifies some of those things as PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS! Principalities in heaven! Principalities in the heavens that are hostile to God! Principalities in heaven that *must be reconciled!* Powers in heaven! Powers in heaven that are adverse to God! Powers in the heavens that *must be reconciled!*”

If this scripture passage does not incontrovertibly establish these plain and simple facts then I plead ignorance of the English language. But are there, in fact, principalities and powers in the heavens which are enemies of God, alienated from God, haters of God, and hostile to the nature and ways of God, thus needing to be reconciled to Him? Indeed! If we have considered the matter as we ought, we have surely recognized that “heaven” is really THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT or the SPIRITUAL REALM in which God lives, moves, and has His being. “God is a *spirit.*” Heaven is the omnipresent realm of SPIRIT. All spirit entities inhabit that realm of “the heavens” on some level. Now consider this. “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). “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against *principalities and powers*, against the *rulers* of the darkness of this world, against *spiritual wickedness in high (heavenly) places*” (Eph. 6:12).

The full import of these words can be appreciated by reading a clearer translation. Kenneth Wuest translates thus, “Our wrestling is not against blood and flesh, but against the *principalities*, against the *authorities*, against the world rulers of this darkness, against *spirit forces of perniciousness in heavenly places.*” The Amplified Bible says, “For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood — contending only with physical opponents — but against the *despotisms*, against the *powers*, against the *master spirits* who are the world rulers of this present darkness, against the *spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly sphere.*” The New International Version reads, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the *rulers*, against the *authorities*, against the *powers* of this dark world and against the *spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*” Ferrar Fenton renders it, “Because our fight is not against blood and flesh; but against the *sovereignties*, against the *powers*, against the *commanders* of the darkness of this world, against the *spirits of wickedness in the heavens.*” Weymouth translates, “For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the *despotisms...the spiritual hosts of evil* arrayed against us in the *heavenly warfare.*” And finally, the Concordant New Testament says, “For it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the *sovereignties*, with the *authorities...with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials.*”

The message is clear — we now wrestle against wicked spirits, not only on earth, but in the heavenly sphere. That this conflict is real, none can deny. But what shall be the end of these wicked spirits, these principalities and powers in heavenly places? “Eternal torment in hell fire!” you say. That there is much hell and torment ahead for these wicked ones I have no doubt. But when the ages have run their course, when the sons of God have finished their ministry of delivering the *whole*

creation from the *bondage of corruption* and *reconciling all things in all realms unto God*, when all the redemptive purposes of God have been consummated, brought to their expected end, what then? Will there *still* be hatred of God and rebellion against Him on the part of some of His creation unendingly — *forever*? The testimony of God standeth sure: “For by Him were *all things* created, that are *in heaven*, and that are *in earth*, visible and *invisible*, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or *principalities*, or *powers*: *all things* were created by Him and *for Him*: and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to *reconcile all things* unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be *things in earth*, or *things in heaven*” (Col. 1:16,20).

You may say — “I do not believe it! I do not, I cannot believe that Jesus died to reconcile wicked, foul, hostile, filthy spirits in the heavenly realms unto God!” Tell it not to me, my brother, my sister, tell it to the Holy Spirit for it is He, and none other, who inspired these awesome words. All your letters of protestation addressed to me will be of no avail, for I possess no power to change even one jot or tittle of Holy Writ. When God declares that the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ avails to reconcile principalities and powers in the heavens and in the earth, I have absolutely no ability to do anything about it. God will do what He says He will do whether or not you or I like it, and whether or not we believe it. Your unbelief will not make the grace and power of God of none effect. God will finish His *universal reconciliation* either *through you*, precious friend of mine, or *in spite of you*. You may be either a spectator or a participator. But if you have no desire to see the foul, wicked, and unclean spirits of the universe conciliated to God, bowing the knee before Him, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, bringing the whole universe at last into harmonious unification in the Christ of Calvary, then please, PLEASE, P-L-E-A-S-E don't tell me about your call to sonship and how you are of that company which is destined to SET ALL CREATION FREE! If there is some portion of the creation that was created “by Him and for Him” that you don't want to be “for Him,” then please recluse yourself from the ministry of reconciliation, for God will have to bypass you in His great and glorious work of redeeming and restoring ALL unto Himself.

You say that the devil is too utterly wicked, too hopelessly vile, too incorrigibly hostile to be changed. Come now! Have not bad men the devil's nature in them? Are they not called “children (offspring) of the Wicked one?” Were not we ourselves “*by nature* the children of wrath,” and did we not walk “according to the course of this world, according to *the prince of the power of the air*?” Is not the same evil nature in all men, and is it not the devil's nature, till it is slain by His cross? Has not the Lord died for all, that through His death He might destroy that evil, satanic nature and deliver them? And if this nature can be dealt with and slain in us, so that we are reconciled, thoroughly changed from *enemies* of God to His beloved children, pray tell me why it cannot be changed in the one who fathered it? Shall the Jews be saved, whom our Lord called “serpents” and “vipers” and of whom He said, “Ye are of *your father the devil*...how can you escape the damnation of hell,” and yet it be impossible for God to have a salvation for those whose nature these wicked men have been made partakers of? Where in all of God's wonderful Book do we read that there can be no hope for such? Is it not rather distinctly written, that “the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones which are on high, and they shall be gathered in a pit and shut up in prison, *yet AFTER MANY DAYS THEY SHALL BE VISITED!*” And are not “the DRAGONS and the DEEPS” called upon to “praise the Lord”? And is it not also written, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, AND THINGS IN EARTH, AND THINGS UNDER THE EARTH; AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, **TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER**” (Isa. 24:21-22; Ps. 148:7; Phil. 2:9-11).

If such be not the end of God's great plan of the ages then Calvary is a failure and redemption a farce. Current so-called “orthodox” theology incorporates into its system belief in the superior power of Satan, the deathlessness of sin, the indestructibility of error, and the permanence of evil. The doctrines of the harlot church systems teach that since sin and death have entered upon the scene in God's universe, they have come never to go out again, for they are too strong and incorrigible for God to subdue, and therefore unconquerable, ineradicable, endless.

Charles Schmidt has asked the burning question: “Is God, who is sovereign Lord, destined to possess the ultimate allegiance and obedience of only about 3% of all the billions who have sprung from His creative hand? Shall the absolute majority of all these created beings perpetuate hate and blasphemy against their blessed Creator throughout an endless eternity? Is Jesus, who died, effecting

the death blow to all sin and to the works of Satan (I Jn. 3:8), destined to reign in a universe where sin shall exist in staggering proportions throughout eternity? The counsels of God, according to the sacred scripture, have declared an emphatic NO! Through the consuming fires of God's holy Love...God has deigned to cause all everywhere eventually to drop the sword of proud rebellion and willingly acclaim the Lordship of our Jesus, and that to the glory of God. Have we hereby done despite to the justice and holiness of God? No, unlike those who hold the opposing view, we have rather fully satisfied it against all sin and rebellion! Have we hereby maligned the sovereign mercy and love of God? No, we have rather upheld it in its infinite scope!" — end quote.

Ah, I long intently for that blessed day when even the devil himself shall put away his pitchfork, hang up his horns, and come humbly and brokenly to the Father's house! Does that startle you? How else could it be in that glad day when Christ has finally RECONCILED ALL THINGS IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH, including all the PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS OF THE HEAVENLY SPHERE! Hallelujah to the Lamb!

Chapter 229

The Great White Throne Judgment

“And I saw a *great white throne*, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Rev. 20:11).

When John first saw the throne of God, it was as a sunrise, flecked with crimson, as of a sardius, and in the midst was the Lamb, as it had been slain, showing us clearly that God is Love (Rev. 4:2-3; 5:6). He now sees this same throne, not as an altar of atonement, but *great* and *white* — the judgment seat of Him who, while He is Love, must be therefore also Truth and Righteousness. It is not a new or different throne, but the same, for God has only *one throne*; only men have become, as it were, color blind, unable to see in the heavens the Friend who died for them.

Men make a great mistake in viewing a great gap or separation between the “thrones” upon which the souls of the overcomers sit (Rev. 20:4), and the “great white throne” of our text. “And I saw *thrones*, and they sat upon them, and *judgment* was given unto them.” “And I saw a *great white throne*...and I saw the *dead stand before God*...and the *dead were judged*...” (Rev. 20:11-12). These are not literal thrones as men sit upon — these are word pictures teaching us great spiritual truths. Do you not recall that the Lord promised, “To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne*” (Rev. 3:21). There is no difference or separation between these “thrones,” for the plurality simply points to the various spheres, operations, and administrations of those sitting with Him in His throne. We see another symbolical representation when the great throne of God is encircled by *twenty-four other thrones* (Rev. 4:4). The symbolisms differ in minute details, but are essentially the same — revealing the great truth that God’s Royal Priesthood also reigns with Him upon His throne. It is “the regeneration” of which Jesus spoke to His twelve disciples, “Ye that have followed me in my trials, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon *twelve thrones, judging* the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mat. 19:28). One throne, twelve thrones, twenty-four thrones, a vast multitude of thrones — and what is the common denominator? **THEY ARE ALL THRONES OF JUDGMENT!** And all together, in all their meanings and expressions, they constitute the one **GREAT WHITE THRONE!**

In this instance John beholds the throne as a dazzling *white* throne. White bespeaks purity, righteousness. The wise man spoke of the very foundation or base of God’s throne when he wrote, “Thy throne is *established by righteousness*” (Prov. 16:12). The Psalmist reiterated this same truth, declaring, “*Justice and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne*” (Ps. 89:14). That is, God’s throne is unshakable, cannot be overthrown because it is based, established, on absolute righteousness — nothing contrary to the absolute perfection of divine holiness is permitted, where that throne is set up. Suppose then for a moment the possibility of this foundation being changed in its character, even to the smallest degree: suppose the slightest element of injustice, whether in punishing the innocent, or in refusing or neglecting to deal with the guilty, to be introduced; there can be no question but that the foundation would be destroyed — and the throne — even God’s throne could be shaken, for it has lost its base.

But now hear this! “Thy throne is *upholden by mercy*” (Prov. 20:28). Here the change of the word from “established” to “upholden” is not without its significance. The former speaks of the foundation, the latter of “support.” A building badly founded will surely fall; but a building simply constructed, even on a rock, if it has no support will also fall. The foundation is beneath the building whereas the support is within the building. The term “upholden” has within it the idea of “comfort.” “Comfort thine heart,” says the Levite’s father-in-law to him, using this same word in chapter nineteen of Judges; and the use of it here in Proverbs would suggest that if the king cannot exercise *mercy* his throne is practically of no use — his judgment is limited, restricted, confined, hindered, bound up, one-sided — he cannot judge in righteousness. Of what use is it to have a large fortune if we cannot spend it? Of what use to be rich in mercy if one cannot exercise it? Of what use to be a king upon a throne of judgment if one cannot show that quality of goodness and graciousness — *mercy*. “*Thy throne is upholden by mercy.*” Without question this reveals to us the great and eternal truth that mercy is a

significant ingredient of righteousness! So put the two passages in Proverbs together and we learn that righteousness is the only foundation for God's throne, whereas mercy is its only support!

There must therefore be no lack of either righteousness on the one hand, or mercy on the other, for the integrity and maintenance of the throne of God. Now we may see why the adversary ever seeks to drag his victims before the throne as criminals. Men *fear* the great white throne of God because the adversary sows into their minds the spirit of *condemnation*, magnifying man's sin, accentuating his unworthiness, and distorting the great Judge's character by amplifying and exaggerating God's *wrath* without counter-balancing his wrath with His *mercy*! Nowhere does scripture state that God's throne is upheld by wrath, harshness, exactitude, or implacableness — to the contrary, it is upheld only by *mercy*! If there is an inability to show *mercy* — I speak with all reverence — God's very throne is of no value to Him. If He is powerless to save those He loves, and wills to bless, of what good is His throne or His judgment? It lacks power — strength to carry out His will, and he is no longer supreme. Can you not see Satan's attack upon God's throne of judgment? He misrepresents it, distorts it, deforms it, perverts it, by robbing it of its MERCY!

But if He pardons convicted criminals — is that righteousness? Is not the foundation gone? If He cannot pardon, where is the mercy? If He does, where is the righteousness? It is ever Satan's subtle way to place in a dilemma; and this is a dilemma he loves to place even before God. Apparently there is no escape for, whichever horn of the dilemma be accepted, the throne is subverted. So what is the answer? **Redemption!** Show mercy until the poor sinner can be rehabilitated — *dealt with unto salvation!* God has processes to get men there — judgment, hell, the lake of fire, mingled with love, mercy, and power. God is not a God of eternal jails, penitentiaries, or eternal torture in fire. He is the God of all grace, the God of redemption, deliverance, salvation, restoration, and transformation! All hail His throne of judgment!

I love the story of the parrot who was trained to protect his master's home. One night he got his chance to put his training to the test. A burglar entered the home. He moved through the darkness stealthily when suddenly he heard parrot say, "Jesus will get you." The burglar stopped and thought, "I don't believe in Jesus." So he wasn't worried. He walked through the kitchen and again the parrot said, "Jesus will get you." Again the intruder ignored the warning and proceeded down the hallway into the library. All of a sudden the burglar found himself looking into the foaming, opened, bare-toothed mouth of a huge doberman. The dog was snarling just as the parrot cried, "Sic him, Jesus!" Oh, yes, that is just how millions of people think of Jesus sitting upon His throne of judgment! But I've got news for you, my friend, JESUS IS NOT OUT TO "GET" YOU! He is both your Judge *and* your Saviour. I have heard the preachers erroneously warning people, "Today Jesus is your Saviour, but tomorrow He will be your Judge," as though the choice is one *or* the other. That is Satan's subtleness again, attacking the throne of judgment. I have no hesitation in telling you that Jesus is your Judge today and He is your Saviour today; He will be your Judge tomorrow and He will be your Saviour tomorrow. He is always and eternally *both*. He would no longer *be* God should He cease being either Saviour or Judge. In the words of the old song, "You can't have one without the other!" The foundation of the throne is righteousness, but the throne is upheld by mercy. That is the mystery!

A brother shared the following experience. "Recently a young man who was very troubled came to see me. A number of years ago he had broken the law and had been placed on probation. Now that his probation was almost up he had done a minor infraction. However, it was a breaking of his probation and now he was called to appear in court in another city. He was particularly concerned because he was going before a judge known as the 'hanging judge.' This is his reputation. And, indeed, it is well deserved! He has sentenced more people to severe penalties than any other judge in the state. The 'hanging judge' — a man who considers himself to be living the very letter of the law. This young man was going before him and he felt that he may well face five or ten or more years in prison as a result. He was petrified as, indeed, any one of us might be. He said that he did not want me to try to get him out of it; he simply wanted me to give him something to take with him. I told him that I could do better than that, I could give him *someone* who would go with him! I told him about Jesus and he received Him into his life. It will be interesting to see what happens with the 'hanging judge'"

May I point out to you that Jesus Christ is in a very different sense the "hanging Judge." He is the Judge who was hanging upon a tree; the One who was hanged, Himself, for the criminals' crimes...the One who died for the sinners' guilt...the One who was hanged upon the accursed tree. Jesus, indeed, is

the “hanging Judge” — the Judge who came down from behind the bench, took off His robes of glory, and went to the execution on our behalf. That we may never expect a human judge to do!

The religious leaders brought a woman to Jesus, hoping that His response would give them something they could use to trap Him. “This woman is guilty of adultery — caught in the very act,” they said, “and the law says that she should be executed. What do you say, Jesus?” In Jesus’ day a judge would be seated as he heard a case. When it was time to give his verdict, he would stand to pronounce it. When the religious leaders brought this woman to Jesus, He was seated. Now they demanded that Jesus be a judge and pronounce a verdict. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with His finger. What did He write? We aren’t told. But the leaders kept questioning Him, so He “straightened up” (probably standing) and pronounced His verdict: “Let any of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Then Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground again. Perhaps the first time He wrote of *righteousness* and the second time He wrote of *mercy*. At any rate, everyone of those accusing the woman, being convicted in their own conscience, left. Jesus and the woman were now alone, and Jesus stood to pronounce His verdict on her. First He asked the question, “Woman where are your accusers? Who is accusing you?” She responded, “No man, Lord.” Jesus answered, “Neither do I condemn thee...go now and sin no more.” Amazing, isn’t it? Jesus, the only man who was without sin, the only man who could have righteously stoned her, did not condemn the woman.

But there is more to it than that! The scripture says that “Jesus *knew* what was in man.” By the wisdom of God He *knew* the true nature of all things. And *knowing* that, there was no vengeance in Him, no vindictiveness, no condemnation at all toward the woman caught in the act of adultery who, under the law, deserved to be stoned to death. He said, “There is no condemnation, I do not judge you in condemnation.” But that is not all He said! And there is mighty power in the words He next spoke to her. “Neither do I condemn thee, *go and sin no more.*” It wasn’t merely that He forgave her sin; yes, He did indeed forgive her, but I tell you that when He spoke those immortal words, “Go and sin no more,” there was something that transpired in the spirit that transcended *all* that the law of Moses handed down. Jesus had said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life.*” Oh, yes! As He spoke His word of power into the life of this sinful woman there was an *impartation* of righteousness! It was not a suggestion. It was not a commandment. It was an impartation of righteousness into her life! When she departed from the presence of the Son of God she was no longer adulterous. Not only was she forgiven, she was cleansed, she was purged, she was delivered, she was changed, she was transformed by that living, creative word of the Lord! “*Go and sin no more.*” WHAT A JUDGE! ALL HAIL HIS THRONE OF JUDGMENT!

THE JUDGMENT

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were *judged* out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were *judged* every man according to their works” (Rev. 20:12-13).

The dead were judged “according to their works,” — not exclusively those of their former lives now long in the past, but those works, or deeds, now manifesting out of their lives as they are brought to “stand before God.” The Jewish world of Jesus’ day had some knowledge, though imperfect, of this great “Judgment Day” that God has appointed for all men. Jesus spoke of it on various occasions throughout His ministry. At one time, while teaching in the cities of Galilee He indicted three Galilean cities for their impenitent unresponsiveness to the marvelous works He had performed in their midst. “Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable (bearable) for Tyre and Sidon at *the day of judgment*, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land (people) of Sodom in *the day of judgment*, than for thee” (Mat. 11:20-24).

Jesus declared, in effect, that if He had performed the same miracles in Tyre and Sidon (two ancient Mediterranean coastal cities of the wicked Canaanites), they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Since these two cities of antiquity would have repented had Jesus performed the same mighty miracles in their heyday, it logically follows that this *day of judgment* which will go easier on them than with that generation who dwelt in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum in Jesus' day, will afford their peoples an opportunity to repent of their evil deeds and enter the kingdom of God. Only that could be both *justice* and *mercy*! Otherwise God becomes a respecter of persons, judging men by different standards without cause, which the scripture affirms He is *not*!

Jesus then jumps back in time from Tyre and Sidon to Sodom and Gomorrah. It was during the days of Abraham that these two cities reached the depths of moral degradation. God destroyed them by raining fire and brimstone upon them. Their destruction was total and complete! The spirits of those wicked men were swept into God's prison house (hades) and the area of earth where they had lived became a desolate wilderness of drought and heat, salt and rock, to this day. The spiritual lesson is just this: If Jesus had come to even those two incredibly sin-filled cities as the humble preacher from Nazareth, but performing mighty works and miracles, the ancient inhabitants would have repented of their revolting perversions and the cities would have still been extant two thousand years later! That is what Jesus said. Again, it only makes spiritual sense that God will give even these ancient sinners the opportunity to enter into life and the kingdom of God. When He does, they will have an easier time of it under His dealings in the day of judgment than those during Jesus' ministry who witnessed the glory of God in their midst and refused to repent. Truly, as the Lord said to the religious types of His day, "...the tax collectors and the *harlots* go into the kingdom of God before you!"

For the third time Jesus returns to the same theme of "the day of judgment" in relation to the non-repentance of His generation. "The men of Nineveh (an ancient Gentile city — the capital of Assyria) shall *rise in judgment with this generation*, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (Mat. 12:41). Now let's ask a question: How much did those ancient Assyrians, who heard Jonah's preaching, know about Jesus' generation prior to their death? The answer is, of course, absolutely nothing! They lived hundreds of years prior to the coming of Christ. Perhaps they still don't know anything about Jesus' generation, although we don't know all of Father's times in relation to His judgments. Obviously they won't be able to condemn Jesus' generation until ALL stand before God's great judgment process in the full light of divine revelation of all things.

The story does not end with the Ninevites. Jesus caps off the subject with a final comparison. "The queen of the south (or, Sheba) shall *rise up in judgment with this generation*, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Mat. 12:42). Prior to this one, all the other examples in antiquity which Jesus gave did not center in an individual; the Lord had reference to large groups of people — citizens of Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, Gomorrah, Nineveh — cities whose ancient inhabitants' personal names have long since been forgotten. The queen of Sheba, on the other hand, was an individual Sabaean monarch who journeyed to Jerusalem in the tenth century B.C. to test King Solomon's wisdom. She went away very impressed, giving glory to the God of Israel. Oh, yes! She, too, will rise up in the day of judgment to condemn the people of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for their unbelief! The scene John beholds in our present text, people standing before God and before His throne of judgment, and the books being opened, and also the book of life, speaks powerfully to us of God's wonderful processes of judgment. Yes, God must deal with every man! He will also deal with groups of men! The process of judgment is not the same as sentencing. Sentencing is merely the final act of the process of judgment. But the sentence itself, whatever it is, is not *the end*. The sentence is UNTO SALVATION! Why else would all the "books" and *also* the "book of life" be opened before the judgment throne? A decision must be rendered, based on how each individual responds to the dealing of God. Some don't get their names "written in the book of life" at that point in their judgment — and at the end of the judging process we find that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was *cast into the lake of fire*" for a further work of purging and purification. The point Jesus makes is that it will be more tolerable or bearable for some peoples than others — some will need to be dealt with more drastically than others to obtain the same result. How could it be more tolerable or bearable for some than for others unless God is doing exactly "what it takes" to change and raise up His salvation in each one! What a plan!

What a judgment seat! What a Judge! What reality! Oh! what an unspeakably glorious and awe-inspiring scene John the beloved beheld as from his vantage point in the heavens of God's Spirit he saw

“a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and there was found no place for them” (Rev. 20:11). Who is it that sits there? It is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ, for He Himself proclaimed that “the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed *all judgment unto the Son*” (Jn. 5:22). And how does He sit there? In and through His body, the saints, unto whom **judgment is given** (Dan. 7:22; Rev. 20:4). A throne is a seat of authority. The throne is called “great” because of its vast magnitude, its awful sovereignty, and the majesty of the One who fills it. It is called “great” because it is a many-membered One. It is called “white” because of the absolute purity and righteousness of its Judge and His judgment. White also denotes *light* — that which reveals. So we see a seat of authority and great majesty, power, purity, and revelation!

Observe, the heaven, and the earth, fly from the face of Him that sits upon the throne! “From His face (intelligence, illumination) the earth and the heaven fled away.” Consider the scene! In its symbology the “earth” is that earth **which we are**, the carnal, soulical, earthly, and even humanly religious nature of old Adam. “The first man is **of the earth, earthy**” (I Cor. 15:47). “As we have borne the image of the **earthy**, we shall also bear the image of the **heavenly**” (I Cor. 15:49). “Heaven” means height, eminence, elevation, exaltation. God dwells in heaven, the invisible realm of spirit that transcends this gross material realm. When you touch God by the spirit, you touch heaven. When you experience God in the spirit, you experience heaven. When you know God in the spirit, you know heaven. When God is revealed to you by the spirit, heaven is opened and you behold heavenly things. There are many heavens, for there are many “mansions,” many realms, dimensions, and levels on which God can be touched, experienced, and known in the spiritual world. Most saints have passed through several heavens in their UPWARD WALK of progressive spiritual experience. But Jesus is greater than them all! For He has “ascended up FAR ABOVE A-L-L H-E-A-V-E-N-S!” (Eph. 4:10). God is so great in His fullness that even “the heaven of heavens” (the super-heaven containing all other heavens) cannot contain Him!” (I Kings 8:27). Christ accommodates us by meeting with us and revealing Himself to us in the heavens of our spiritual experience, where we sit together with Him in these heavenly places. But that is not *His true position*. He has ascended up *far above all heavens* so that His true position and state of being is in that exalted realm FAR ABOVE THE HEAVENS. Oh, yes, there is a realm above all heavens, and it is there that our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted. It is the realm where God dwelt before there were any heavens. This is a truth that few have understood.

The highest hope of untold millions of Christians is to go to heaven and spend eternity with Jesus. I’ve got news for you — heaven is not eternal. Nobody will spend eternity in heaven. If heaven is your hope then you will one day wake up homeless. It matters not how many heavens there are or how many heavens we have dwelt in or passed through, none of them is eternal. How can we know this? Because the heavens are *created*. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Gen. 1:1). Yes, in the Hebrew text it is “*the heavens*” — plural. In that long ago beginning God created *all the heavens!* I can hear someone saying, “But God Himself dwells in the heavens.” That is true, my friend, but the question follows, “Where did God dwell *before* He created the heavens?” God does indeed dwell in the heavens, but He also dwells in the earth. Surely you don’t think that God dwelt in the earth before the earth was created! What does it mean to you, my brother, my sister, when the Lord Jesus says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away...” Oh, yes, God dwells in the earth, for the earth is full of His glory, but God existed before there was an earth and the passing away of the earth will not discomfiture Him in any way! Nor will the passing away of the heavens!

What revealing light of revelation shined when Jesus said just prior to His death, resurrection, and ascension, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me *with Thine own self* with the glory which I had with Thee *before the world was*. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be *with me where I am*; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me, for *Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*” (Jn. 17:5,24). Before the foundation of the world, before that long ago beginning when God *created the heavens and the earth*, Christ existed *in the Father in a glory that transcends the glory He revealed on earth and also transcends the glory He has in the created heavens*. And now our Lord prays for His many brethren, that they may be with Him in that glory which He had before the world was, and know the love the Father had for Him before there were ever any heavens or an earth.

It is wonderful to know God in His heavens! Each heaven bespeaks a sphere of life, a plane of relationship, a level of experience in God by the spirit. When the Lord unveils Himself to you on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life and glory, and you experience Him in it, you ascend in Him to a higher heaven. But, thank God! there is a realm of HIS FULLNESS which

lies **above** and **beyond** all heavens! When the Christ appears on His great white throne of judgment its effulgence exposes the darkness of the carnal mind, uncovers the deceitfulness of the wicked heart, revealing in stark reality the man of sin sitting in the temple of God “which you are.” For us to become the manifest sons of God, the image and glory of God, this thing — self, carnality, and all that pertains to the fleshly nature — must be destroyed by the brightness of His appearing, removed, taken out of the way. Blessed be God! Before the face of Him whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength, none of the things of the flesh can stand, so they flee away, and no place is found for them! Our “earth” flees from before the face of HIM who sits upon the throne!

Before the face of Him who sits upon the throne in the higher-than-all-heavens, the limitations of our present “in part” knowing of the Lord, every heaven of spiritual experience which is less than HIS FULLNESS, stands revealed as falling short of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ — the image and glory of God. As God leads us onward and upward in Him from one glory to another we must realize that before the majesty of His great white throne, in the searching illumination of His eyes of flaming fire, none of our religiousness can stand, none of our spiritual immaturity can remain, none of the lesser realms of spiritual experience can abide — so **all** our **heavens** flee away, and no place is found for them! Is it not true that some of our heavens, or the exalted realms of spiritual experience we have known in God, have already passed away in our lives? Some of us first met God in a Baptist heaven, or a Catholic heaven, or a Pentecostal heaven, or a Mennonite heaven, or some other heaven, a spiritual place, realm, or dimension where we knew and experienced God on a certain level. But one day the moving of God came in our lives, we heard the voice of the Lord beckoning us to move on into a *higher place (heaven) in Him* and the heaven we had been living in with great joy and contentment suddenly rolled up like a scroll, passed away with a great noise, and no place was found for it within us anymore!

In the sovereignty and fullness of His throne there are no more “heavens,” no more companies, groups, classes, with various levels of servants, friends, apostles, prophets, pastors, bride, priests, or kings; no more traditional churches where people know the Lord through catechisms, liturgies, rituals, ceremonies, and sacraments; no more Fundamentalists who know Him only as Saviour, and Pentecostals and Charismatics who know Him also as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit; no more Word of Faith people who know Him as Healer and Provider; no more Deliverance people who know Him in the gifts of the Spirit, in signs, wonders and miracles; or still others who know Him in other glorious dimensions of truth and reality. John beheld the heaven and the earth fleeing away from before the *face* (full revelation) of Him who sits upon the throne. When all of our heavens and our earth have passed away we will find ourselves **IN HIM — PLUS NOTHING!** Oh, the wonder of it!

The message is just this — the wonderful work of the great white throne of judgment is not to condemn men and banish them to unending damnation in eternal fire. Oh, no! It is, rather, to bring God’s dealings of fiery judgment into men’s lives in such a manner and with such intensity as to finally roll up all their heavens and banish all their earth until they find themselves at home again **IN HIM!** And yet — there is a truth beyond this. Just as we are a “*new creation in Christ Jesus,*” so is there a new realm of manifestation of His glory, so that we are not to understand that when our heavens and our earth have fled away there is neither a heaven nor an earth to be found. It is specifically the one that fled away that will not be found! But notice, it is only the old earth and old heaven that are spoken of; and almost immediately afterwards the Seer exclaims, “I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away” (Rev. 21:1). The change is part of that “restoration of all things” of which the apostle Peter spoke when he wrote of the passing away of the present heavens and the present earth, and then said, “But, according to His promise, we look for *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*” (II Pet. 3:13).

The whole purpose of the great white throne judgment is to clear away all the old religious heavens that have ruled us, and the earth of the flesh and the works of the flesh that have bound us, to make way for God’s new order — the new heaven and earth of **CHRIST’S KINGDOM**. I do not say that even that heaven and earth are an eternal order, for Paul tells us of a reality beyond all this: “Then cometh *the end, when He shall have DELIVERED UP THE KINGDOM to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power...*and when all things shall have been subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, **THAT GOD MAY BE A-L-L I-N A-L-L!**” (I Cor. 15:24,28). That is certainly beyond the new heaven and the new earth of the kingdom of Christ! We experience these things more and more in our lives as we walk with the Lord. This is the ongoing process by which Christ is “making everything new.” By it

He transforms us into a new creation in which God can live, work, express, and manifest Himself in the totality of His life, glory, and power. When our old earth and heavens flee from before the Lord's face, when we allow no room for them in our experience, God's judging and refining has at last destroyed all carnality, sinfulness, religiosity, and all immature spirituality from our lives. Aren't you glad!

High above the earth realm, and far beyond all the heavens of spiritual experience lies the GREAT WHITE THRONE — and the invitation is extended: "To him that overcometh will I grant to **sit with me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). But you will never know Him in the majesty, power, glory, and all-surpassing eminence of His throneship, my beloved, until YOUR EARTH and ALL YOUR HEAVENS have fled away, and you have put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullness of His divine nature, to manifest Him in all His wondrous beauty and majesty. Those who share His throne are like Him, *exactly like Him*, so that should they number in thousands, or in millions, there is only ONE who is seen upon the throne! Can you not see that this process is going on all the time, as we are changed progressively into His likeness from one glory to another; day by day our flesh-life is fleeing away, and day by day our lower heavens are passing away. Isn't it wonderful!

"And I saw a *great white throne*, and Him that sat on it...and I saw the dead, small and great, *stand before God*, and the books were opened...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:12-13).

In the passage above is the picture of the judgment of God upon all individuals who now live, who have ever lived, and who shall yet live on earth — both saint and sinner. Most Christians believe that it is a judgment that follows a physical resurrection because John says that the "dead," small and great, are caused to "stand" before God. According to the popular teaching, one day soon Jesus is going to appear in the sky, and immediately all the dead saints will be physically resurrected out of their graves and the living saints will be caught up in the clouds of the sky with them to meet Christ and then soar away through the universe to a far away planet called heaven. Some believe that the unsaved dead will have to wait another thousand years to be resurrected. At that time ALL, saint and sinner, will be called to appear before the Great White Throne of judgment to have their lives reviewed out of God's heavenly record books in which everything they ever thought, said, or did has been meticulously recorded. Thunder rumbles and lightning bolts ricochet through the heavens. The Son of man is seated there in all His august glory, majesty, and holiness, in serious and somber contemplation of each person who appears before Him. Myriads of angels surround Him. All eyes are upon the Great White Throne!

We are considering a subject upon which there has been a fathomless sea of misunderstanding and a world of carnal conjecture. The idea generally entertained is of Christ coming to earth, seated upon a dazzling throne, and He summons everyone in rank and file before Him, to be judged. Adam would stand there, with mother Eve, and look in wonder upon his offspring. It would be the first time in which he has ever had the opportunity of seeing all his children together. What a sight he would then behold — far stretching, covering all the globe which they inhabit, enough not only to people all earth's plains, but crown her hilltops, and cover even the ways of the sea, so numberless must the human race be if all the generations which have ever lived, or shall ever live, shall at once "appear" before the great white throne of judgment! Everyone from before the Flood, from the days of the Patriarchs, from the times of Moses, and the Judges, and David, and from the Babylonian kingdom, all the legions of Assyria, all the hosts of Persia, all the multitudes of the Greeks, all the vast armies and citizens of Rome, the masses of Asia and Africa, the barbarian, the Scythian, the bond, the free, men of every color and of every tongue — what a vast assemblage would be mustered, what a spectacle would be held! I do not hesitate to say that though good and holy men have conceived the foregoing picture, it is, nonetheless, a myth, a religious superstition, entirely out of harmony with the whole Biblical portrait of judgment. This distorted picture arises from a carnal-minded and too-literal interpretation of a few obscure verses of scripture which were supplied merely as *symbols*, to be understood by the spiritual mind and interpreted by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God.

A tough store manager was walking through the packing room one day when he saw a young man lounging on a shipping crate, whistling and relaxing. He asked how much he was paid. The young man answered, "\$200 a week." At that, the manager took out his wallet, grabbed some bills and said,

“Here’s a week’s pay. Get out!” The manager immediately found the department head and demanded to know who had hired the young man. He replied, “We didn’t hire him. He was just here to pick up a package.” The message of this little story is this: *Assumptions can be costly!* We’d better find out what’s going on before we jump into the fray! In like manner, men who read the Revelation and try to interpret the visions John describes with human reasoning and carnal minds, often make dreadful and grotesque *assumptions* that have nothing to do with *spiritual reality!*

It reminds me of the story I read of a man who, diligently working at his desk in his sixth-floor office, realized that he was struggling to see what he was doing. He looked up and, sure enough, the seven-foot fluorescent light bulb above his desk was not producing any light. Calling maintenance produced no help, so he scrambled up on his desk and took a closer look. The bulb was clearly burned out. He very carefully removed it from its fixture and took it down. He then measured its length and walked down to the hardware store a couple blocks away. The store had what he thought he needed, so he bought it, took it back to his office, climbed back up on his desk, fastened the new bulb in, and his office was immediately flooded with light. The man had a good feeling of accomplishment and worked productively the rest of the day.

At five o’clock he was getting ready to leave. Just before walking out the door, he noticed the burned-out fluorescent bulb standing forlornly in the corner where he had leaned it. He didn’t think it was a good idea to leave it there, so he impulsively took it with him. He thought he remembered a construction site near his house with a large dumpster in front of it where he could deposit the burned-out bulb. So the man carried the seven-foot tube down the street, into the subway station, and onto the train. But then he realized he would have trouble sitting down with the long tube in his hand. He therefore remained standing, holding the tube upright. As the train went further, it began to get crowded. All the seats were taken and people were forced to stand. At the next stop a large number of additional people got on and four of them grabbed hold of the tube the man was holding, thinking it was a stabilizing pole for standing passengers. Now what? Pretty soon it occurred to him that all he needed to do was get off at his stop and leave the “pole,” in the hands of others. And that’s exactly what he did!

We smile as we think of the last person left holding onto that wobbly “pole.” The lesson is just this — when a number of people have grabbed hold of something it often looks as if it is genuine and can really hold us up. It appears to be truth when it’s not. We assume it is truth because so many people firmly believe it and are seriously counting on it! But in things spiritual, it is actually just a carnal-minded and erroneous understanding of God’s plan and purpose. The last person left holding the “pole” probably looked and felt very foolish and truly embarrassed — as I’m sure multitudes of Christians and preachers will also when they are brought face to face with the realities of God’s great judgments and processings, and His wonderful restorative, reconstructive, redemptive, and transformative purposes for His creation!

Consider the scene! According to Peter Jennings on ABC News September 20, 1996 scientists estimate that (at the time of that program) more than 20,000,000,000 have lived on earth since the dawn of civilization. Now, should all of these 20,000,000,000 people appear before the Great White Throne, standing in a line to be judged one by one, can we even imagine how long that line would be? If each person occupies two linear feet of space the line would stretch 40 billion feet — 7,575,758 miles — across the horizon! Now, let us suppose that it took only one minute (I am just speculating — such a judgment could take much longer than that, and certainly it would take longer on account of everybody’s sins having to be read out of “the books”) to review the record, deliver the verdict, and pass the sentence on the twenty billion people under consideration. But let us say it would take but one minute. At that rate it would take...

20,000,000,000 minutes, or
333,333,333 hours, or
13,888,888 days, or
38,052 years!

That is a long time if that is the way it is going to happen. When you stop to think about it, this is not a very efficient system. But the average person doesn’t stop to think about such things. That’s the way it is going to happen, we are told, so that is what we believe. We firmly grasp hold of our “pole.” Of course, with God the time involved is no issue, for, after all, He has all eternity to get the job done! And the poor sinners at the end of the line would probably relish the 38,052 years of standing in line — that time would push the inevitable doom far into the distant future! Yet, even that amount of time would

be infinitesimal when compared to the billions upon trillions of years and ages of time that poor, lost sinners would spend in the scorching, ever-burning, red-hot lake of fire as they burn and suffer excruciating pain and scream hysterically in conscious torment and agony through the endless ages of eternity. I am telling it like it is, or will be, *if* the common perception of these things is to be taken seriously.

As you can see, there is something wrong with this *literalistic* interpretation of John's vision. Something is very wrong with the whole picture — not that the numbers and calculations are inaccurate — but something is missing from our human reasoning and understanding. Could there possibly be a scriptural alternative to such a scenario as we have just conjured up in our minds? Or does the Bible really teach that the great white throne judgment is going to happen something like we have imagined? Ah, the missing ingredient is the fact that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book* which reveals *spiritual truths* and *spiritual realities* communicated to us by means of visions given in *signs* and *symbols!* GOD IS SPIRIT, and so are we! The vision is not about natural things and events, but spiritual! That is what we need to think about. All judgment comes from God, who sees and knows all things at the same time, even as He fills all things and is present everywhere at the same time.

God is not a limited physical being that can sit on a tangible throne in one restricted locality somewhere on earth or out beyond the blue. God is spirit and God is everywhere and thus His throne is a spiritual throne and is everywhere. The one grand truth that even the theologians do not dispute is that God is *omnipresent spirit* who not only created, but upholds and *fills* the whole universe and all things! And our scientists tell us that in the universe there are more worlds than individual grains of sand on the beaches of all the earth. Astronomy informs us of the enormous distances that separate the stars of the physical universe. So remote are the nearest ones that four years are required for light traveling 186,000 miles a second to traverse the distance. Yet speaking astronomically, such are our very near neighbors! Galaxies have been discovered which are billions of light years away.

You cannot put a God who is that great and everywhere present and bottle Him up on a physical throne in one limited spot. Oh, no! *He is everywhere and His throne is everywhere.* The throne of the God who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent **spirit** is not a material one at all, but bespeaks the REALM OF HIS SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY AND DOMINION, and our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of that rulership. “**All power** is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.” The throne of God is a sphere of power and authority *in the spirit*, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of being. The reign of God's Christ is the assumption of the almighty power and dominion of the Father. It is the dispensing of HIS POSITIVE ENERGY FORCE into His creation in specific ways. Exalted to that high realm Jesus no longer walks in a limited physical body, but He now indwells the church, **which is His body**, the FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL (Eph. 1:22-23).

If heaven were a “place” out beyond the galaxies somewhere, can you imagine how long it would take for God to hear a prayer, how long it would take to *get* to heaven were we to travel there, how long it would have taken Jesus to get from heaven to earth when He descended to dwell among us? Why, bless your heart, after two thousand years Jesus would still be on His way back to the throne even if He traveled at the speed of light! And He would need billions of more years to get there! The angel Gabriel was dispatched from heaven *while Daniel was praying* and was able to reach the prophet Daniel *while he was yet in his prayer* (Dan. 9:20-23). Do you suppose he made that kind of speed by flapping those “wings” everybody says angels have?! Real distance is measured not in miles or light years, but rather in time required to reach a destination. Heaven, therefore, is **not far away!**

The scriptures use many terms that are suited to our understanding. When God speaks to us He uses terminology that is comprehensible to us, in order to convey concepts that are beyond us. These are called “terms of accommodation” or “anthropomorphic terms” if I might use a \$20.00 word. It means simply this — there are certain attributes that belong to us as human beings that are attributed to God and they are used of God in order that you and I might understand God better. For instance, the scripture says, “the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth.” Now God doesn't have physical eyes! And frankly, I don't understand how you can see without eyes, and therefore the only way that I can understand it is for God to say to us, “The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth.” And now I understand that in some mysterious way God *sees!*

Not only do I understand that God sees, but I also understand that God sees everything, everywhere. Nothing is hid from His sight! The “eyes” of God are *spirit eyes*. God is omnipresent, that is, present everywhere at the same time. The spirit eyes of God, or His ability to see by Spirit, are as omnipresent as God is omnipresent! That is, the eyes of Spirit are not localized — God doesn’t have two remarkable eyes somewhere in His head with wonderful X-ray vision that can pierce the vast distances of the universe and see everything, everywhere at will. Oh, no! His eyes are omnipresent — He sees everything, everywhere at the same time and He sees it from right there where He is, not from some distant vantage point. His Spirit is right there present with you as you read these lines and He sees you there by His Spirit that is there. Because He “fills all things” His Spirit is at the same time in Moscow, Cairo, Beijing, Washington, Caracas, Johannesburg, and Paris and He sees everything there by His Spirit there. Omnipresent eyes! It is indeed wonderful! And yet they are not eyes as we know eyes, but just His *universal ability to see* by His Spirit. The One who made the eye can see without an eye! I don’t understand it — therefore the term “eye” is given to us as a symbol standing for the reality in God the Spirit.

Again the scriptures say that the heavens are the “handiwork” or “fingerwork” of God. God doesn’t have fingers like we have, but He can do the work of fingers, therefore the Holy Spirit speaks of the creation as the work of His fingers. So the One who made the fingers, the hand, and the arm can do the work of the fingers, the hand, and the arm, *by His Spirit*. The hand of the Lord is not localized, it does not exist in some specific spot somewhere in the universe from whence it moves out through time and space to perform some action. Oh, no! God is omnipresent Spirit — therefore the hand of God is as omnipresent as God Himself. His hand is a spirit hand and speaks of His great ability to act, perform, do, make, and create. God acts by His Spirit in every place at the same time. Therefore “His arm is not short that it cannot save.” God’s hand is right there in the room where you sit this very moment. And His hand is everywhere else in all the unbounded heavens at the same time!

Furthermore, Christ is now seated on the right hand of God — He is seated there on that right hand right there where you are, yea, even in the deepest depth of your being, so that the throne of God is nearer to you than the air that you breathe! Christ is seated at the right hand of power, that is, in the position where God acts, does, works, and creates, so that all God does He does in and by and through the Son of God. And He does it right there where you are! Can we not see by this how simple yet profound is the knowledge that we have been raised up and made to sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! The spiritual dimension of God’s abilities in Christ have been awakened and quickened within us, our spirit joined to His Spirit, so that we sit in that spiritual dimension by spiritual consciousness, and we haven’t moved one inch to get there! Somehow I understand that today and it makes the reality clear to my own dull human way of thinking.

The “ears” of the Lord are not huge elephant-like ears possessing such super-sensitivity that they can hear sounds from billions of light years away. Oh, no! The ears of the Lord are spirit ears, equally present in every place His Spirit is; He hears you not from a distance but from right where you stand in His presence. The ears of the Lord permeate all places and all things by His Spirit and they are all about you and within you. He hears every thought of your mind, every desire of your heart, every cry of your soul! And His wonderful omnipresent *spirit mind* is able to instantly and efficiently assimilate, process, compute, utilize and respond to all these untold trillions of bits of information with the same ease that you and I can drive our car while talking on the phone and be conscious of the weather all at the same time! God is all He is everywhere, and He can do all that He does everywhere. The mouth of the Lord is an omnipresent spirit mouth, His ability to speak in every place at the same time. Out of His Spirit He can speak within your own heart or ears, while at the same instant He is speaking to millions of other people around the world and to holy angels and creatures of all kinds in far distant worlds. He speaks to each by His Spirit present within them, not from some distant “place” where His “mouth” is! In like manner the creative power of God is an omnipresent power and God creates, not in one locale, but out of the infinity of Himself.

The dwelling place of God cannot be any smaller or more limited than He is! The whole vast realm of the heavens is His throne. The Lord spoke through His anointed prophet, declaring, “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isa. 66:1). He fills the entire immense extent of the heavens, which is the realm of the Spirit. The heavens are His throne, which means that He rules and reigns in the realm of the Spirit and by His Spirit. If we could measure the extent of the Spirit, from one end of the heavens to the other, we would then be able to estimate the

extent or bounds of His throne. Just as scientists cannot discover the extremities of the physical universe, so is it impossible to know the expanse of the Spirit. Neither the heavens, nor the earth, nor the whole universe can contain Him. Solomon said that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Our Father is greater than all! He and His throne are limitless and boundless! And He shall reign until all principalities and powers, all creatures and men, and all things of all orders everywhere throughout the unbounded heavens have acknowledged Him, and being reconciled in their hearts come to love, adore, honor, and obey Him with willing hearts. He shall reign until all things everywhere both perceive and resonate with the glory that He is!

Truly the throne of God is a **spiritual throne** and is as omnipresent as God is! God is everywhere, and His throne is everywhere, for His throne is naught but THE REALM OF HIS ALMIGHTY AUTHORITY AND OMNIPOTENT POWER. There is no need to go anywhere physically to relate to God's throne. The journey is a spiritual one! The throne is all around you, within you, and present equally everywhere within the realm of Spirit in which God exists and dwells. You can either experience or ascend that throne within yourself through union with Christ and the release of His power. The Greek word *thronos* means "the place and seat of authority" and refers to all executive authority that is committed into the hands of God's Christ, Head and body. Understand that the throne is here now, here is infinity; here is eternity; here is omnipotence. There is nothing to keep God from judging all men at any time or at the same time — in a second of time! And He doesn't have to go anywhere, nor do you have to go anywhere! God is omnipresent — everywhere present throughout the unbounded universe! So is His throne! And so are His judgments.

Chapter 230

The Great White Throne Judgment (continued)

“And I saw the dead, small and great, *stand before God*; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man *according to their works*” (Rev. 20:12-13).

Looking at our text we see what many have considered to be the “Final Judgment” or the “Great Assize,” although the text does not say that it is a “final judgment,” and thus, such a concept must be “read into” the scene. The scriptures indicate that there are yet “ages to come” in which God’s great judicial, redemptive, and restorative program must be carried forth to bring us to that glorious “dispensation of the fullness of times” in which He gathers together into one *all things in Christ* (Eph. 1:10). It is my deep and considered conviction that just as the “coming” of the Lord is progressive — past, present, and future — so is the unfolding of the “judgment day” past, present, and future. The question follows — When did the judgment day begin? Our Lord Jesus answers the question in the plainest of language. “For the Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed* all judgment unto the Son” (Jn. 5:22). And Jesus said, “For judgment *I am come* into this world” (Jn. 9:39). And again, “NOW is the judgment of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out” (Jn. 12:31). I dare say that not one Christian in ten thousand has connected passages like these to THE JUDGMENT DAY!

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

The judgments of God are first and foremost not external, but internal; not future, but on-going. The Word of God, history, and our own experience shout aloud the truth that the soul’s verdict is even now being written moment by moment, not by recording angels in heavenly books on some distant shore, but by each man himself on the fleshy tables of his own heart. This present life is to each of the consecrated ones his “day of judgment” — his day of trial, testing, proving, chastening, his day of being brought to perfection in Christ. When any man anywhere at any time begins to be dealt with by God to bring him into his full salvation, the “day of judgment” will begin to function in mighty power in his life. The apostle Peter’s words are in harmony with this: “Judgment must *begin* at the house of God!” (1 Pet. 4:17). This passage in the Greek text speaks of the judgment of God flowing *out from* the house of God; but nothing can flow out from the house of God that hasn’t first become an experiential reality *within* the house of God. Oh, yes, let all men know that all judgment *must begin* at the house of God! This does not imply a sudden visitation of catastrophes, calamities, and troubles, but it means that there will be a concentration of divine instruction and discipline, as the Father purifies each individual, until He can gather to Himself a FIRSTFRUITS.

It should be plain even to a child that the judgment day began with the coming of the Judge. The Judge is *within you* because the Christ is *within you!* It takes no extraordinary intelligence nor any

exceptional spirituality to reach that conclusion. Let us stop putting the judgment out beyond the cemetery and believe what God's word *really* says about it. To all who wait for a judgment day in some future time or age I now say, as our blessed Lord has said, "NOW is the judgment of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). Far too many Christians want to put it out at some final end, but either Satan is being bound and chained in your life today, and in the lives of many here and beyond, or he will never be eradicated from this planet. "Who shall give account to Him that is (now) **ready to judge the living and the dead**" (1 Pet. 4:5). How different is what God *really* says about the judgment day from what the preachers tell us! NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out! NOW God is ready to judge both the living and the dead! It is happening now and shall continue to happen in God's progressive unfolding of His judgments through the ages until that wonderful consummation when God becomes ALL IN ALL!

"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," saith the Lord (Lk. 19:21). On that far-away Patmos, in august symbol and awesome sign John in spirit beheld "the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the *books* were opened: and *another book* was opened, which is the *book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." As you meditate upon this significant passage, dear one, allow the Spirit of God to reveal truth to your heart. We have entertained such carnal notions when we come to the book of Revelation. The Holy Spirit must teach us the very first principles of this book — the book of Revelation is a book of *symbols* — and no symbol is ever to be taken in its literal form. It is significantly wonderful that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is not a four-legged lion with a sweeping mane, nor is the Lamb in the midst of the throne a four-legged lamb with white wool! The Lamb has seven horns — not literal horns, of course — for the horns are mere figures representing the seven-fold spirit of power and life which emanates from the mind and nature of the Lamb. I am sure my readers understand the simple truth that the various beasts in the Revelation are not literal beasts, the cities are not literal cities, nor is the great harlot a singular physical woman who sells her body to lustful men of the street. One and all are but symbols and figures of deep *spiritual realities*, positive or negative, as the case may be.

May I reverently inject another thought? The "dead" who "stand" before God and are "judged" out of the "books" are not the physically dead in the outward cemeteries, nor are the "books" such as you may have in your library. If they were, the principle of the book's symbology would utterly fail. If the Lamb who opens the "book" in chapter five is not a four-legged lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the book is not a two-covered book! And if that "book" is one of the Revelation's wonderful symbols, does it not logically follow that the "books" in chapter twenty are likewise word-pictures in the form of symbols?

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

Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, and the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by its true name.

Where is the record? And what are these "books" where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are naught

but the **BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE — THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR VERY OWN BEING!** What basis do I have for saying such a thing? The principle is laid down early in the book of Revelation itself. In chapter five John saw a “book” in the *right hand* of Him that sat upon the throne. Christ sits at the *right hand* of God, thus identifying the book with the Lamb. Only the Lamb could open the book, and when He opened it, it was found to be **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!** It was not a literal book that was opened — the opening of the book is simply **Christ being revealed to us!** **HE** is the book of the right hand! In like manner, in the sight of God you and I, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind, will, emotions, and character is everything that *you are*. What will they show, these books, when they are opened? Nothing, it seems, ever dies. The only thing that can blot anything out of this book of man’s nature is *the blood of the Lamb*. We can get out of these “books” and get into the “book of life” by the raising up of Christ in our lives, but nothing else avails. Should we die, the record is not blotted out. In some mysterious way the soulical aspect of our life accompanies us and we carry our character with us in a frame of mind and a sense of being from one realm to the other — what we have written, we have written; and the record stands.

This life of ours slips past, soundlessly for the most part. We sleep and rise, and our days glide away full of the little incidents of which their web is woven. And always our character is forming, has been forming all these passing years. More and more naturally our feet turn of themselves into the customary paths: firmer and firmer the shackles of our habits tighten around our will. For every word that we have spoken, every thought that we have harbored, every deed that we have done, have been inscribing themselves upon the fabric of our personality, and there building up the character which we choose to be. There is our record written with our own hands! “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh” (Mat. 12:34). When your mouth speaks, the message inscribed in your inner nature is exposed and read by all who hear. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page, a chapter of your book — the book which you are — known and read by all men.

And think not, O man, that should your earthly body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought and deed. **NO!** All is accurately recorded in the law of your own life, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual and soulical condition and state of being, and to deal with you in judgment God has but to “**stand you up**” and prompt you to speak or act — and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life and heart. At once your “book” will “open,” each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book **which you are**. There will be no mistake *then*, because the books *will* show the truth. I do not know what your name may be. There may be ten thousand or ten million men or women of the same name as yourself, but when the Lord puts His hand upon your book and opens it, it will be your book, and that of nobody else. What you are, is *what you are*, and what will be read will be out of *your* book.

What an aid to justice it would be if our courts could open such a book instead of relying on undependable testimony! Written records, letters, photographic evidence, fingerprints, and all the minute details so dear to the detective, are far better evidence than that elicited from human witnesses. Men do not see anything alike. They color it with themselves. Even their truest testimony is tinged with their own ego and prejudices. How unreliable would be the session if sinners were to be judged by the testimony of their fellows! None of this is needed. Notice! At the great white throne **no witnesses are called to the stand**. Not one! Yet all will be confronted by the facts. The facts are written within — in the genetic code of our being. The scroll of our life will be opened. “And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works*” (Rev. 20:12). When God, either now or in ages yet unborn, lays His mighty hand of dealing upon you, my friend, and summons you to **stand** before Him, your book will open, and you will not then manifest anything other than what you are, for “the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature (dead or alive, visible or invisible) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and *opened unto the eyes of Him* with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12-13). In other words, God can *see right through you*. But when your book is opened the substance of what you believe in and are will be exposed for *all* to see! You will not be able to help yourself. God will provoke you by His omnipotent ability to open up and reveal precisely who and what you are. Your heart is the evidence brought before His court!

One preacher shared the following experience. "As I said to a man once — I was visiting a prison, there was one man found guilty of a crime and he had been sentenced. He took an appeal and his sentence was increased a few years. I saw him in the prison expressing the very spirit and the nature of that for which he was convicted, and I said, 'When he goes before the judge again, he will be found guilty again the next time.' I said, 'No doubt he will get life.' Why? It was because the spirit of that which he was convicted of was manifested in him more effectively than it was when he was first convicted. Take these thoughts into consideration. If he would have done as one of those men did among them, CONFESSED his sins and forsaken them, he may not have been found guilty. Even though he was guilty of the act, when he went before the judge he could have found mercy and grace to help. But every time he appeared before the judges in our courts he was found guilty because the spirit of the crime was still working in him. So an open confession is good for the soul. But the most important thing is to be cleansed, washed, changed, transformed; forsake your sins as well as confess them. God's presence gives victory over sin and causes you to become a *new creation* in reality. A confession profiteth nothing unless you forsake them completely and live no longer in them. If those tendencies, fancies, pleasures, ideas, opinions, and deeds can still be found in you, they will identify you as the same unrighteous person. But if they are no longer there, there will be nothing in you to identify you as something other than Christ."

Without doubt, God is the great "book opener." This is God's way of judging us, or re-writing our books, if you please. The means by which He brings His judgment into our lives is very simple, yet extremely effective. For example, the person abiding in some realm of soulish death is brought to a crisis. God arranges circumstances and places the man in situations that open his book, thus *revealing himself to himself*.

I shall never forget an occasion, though it was nearly fifty years ago, when the Lord pressed this message home to my heart. In those days I was accustomed to changing the oil in my car. It never ceased to amaze me how a simple ten minute job could invariably turn into a disastrous hour-long ordeal! This certain day I had a few extra minutes, so determined to utilize them by changing the oil. I crawled under the car and proceeded to try to remove the oil plug. But it refused to cooperate. It simply would not budge. I pushed on the wrench with all my might; I grunted, groaned, and moaned as the minutes passed into an hour. The plug refused to yield and by this time was becoming damaged, making it more impossible to turn. Exasperation laid hold upon me. At that point I became exceedingly agitated and began to act very un-godlike. And just as soon as my rage reached its most explosive pitch, and what was manifested was all of *me* and none of *Him*, I saw two feet walking slowly by the car. The feet belonged to my neighbor. I knew that this neighbor was aware that I was a minister of the gospel! Suddenly I realized that my "book" had just been "opened" before God's great white throne and my neighbor had been permitted to read a very ugly chapter!

My heart smote me. Oh God, no! How ashamed I was that this man had read such a sordid scene! Humiliated and convicted (judged), at once I laid down the wrench and breathed the earnest prayer, "Father, forgive me! Help me somehow to get this oil plug out." No sooner were the words uttered than the Spirit whispered the words of wisdom, "Go to the other side of the car and *pull* instead of *pushing*." I crawled out from under the car and obeyed the prompting of the Spirit. In less than a minute the plug responded and the black oil flowed out. The message is clear — I could have drawn upon the Spirit earlier and prevented all the trouble — but God wanted to put His finger on something in my life! He opened my book and for me it was "judgment day"!

The grand purpose for this "opening of our book" is so that all that is written there may be exposed, revealed, displayed, and brought to judgment, dealt with by a concentration of divine discipline and instruction, as the Father processes each individual. The procedure is simple but very effective. The person abiding in some realm of death is caused to "stand" before God — brought directly into relation to the countenance of God. As it is written, "God shall bring *every work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14), for, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). Ah, you will despair and shrink before God's judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your book to *destroy* you, but to *deliver you!* It is a divine law — God can never deliver you, nor any man, until your heart has been revealed to be dealt with by God's stern and tender hand. Yield yourself under the mighty hand of God that overcoming victory may be obtained in *your earth*. We must never be discouraged when the motions of the flesh and the workings of the carnal mind overwhelm us, but neither should we become complacent about it, for God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never

terminate His judgments until every man is conformed into the image of the glorious Son of God! Aren't you glad!

God arranges the circumstances by which every man's book is opened — the inner condition uncovered. Some men are faced with a woman to reveal secret lust in his heart. Some men are given spiritual gifts and talents to uncover pride, arrogance, love of power, and greed that lurks within their nature. Others are given problems and difficulties to reveal anger, bitterness, or unbelief. Still others are brought to the wilderness of temptation, as was our dear Lord, just to reveal the spirit, mind, and nature of the Christ that has been formed in them! You see, Jesus was not driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to see whether or not He **would sin**; the encounter with the adversary was designed to show that in the crucible of testing, because He was the Son of the Father with whom the Father was well pleased — HE WOULD NOT FAIL THE TEST! The book that was opened there in the wilderness of Judea proved to be THE BOOK OF LIFE and Jesus' name (nature) was written in *that book*! You do remember, do you not, that when John beheld the great white throne he saw the books being opened; and then another book was opened, which is the book of life. Oh, yes! All of these books are brought before His judgment throne. Jesus was judged out of *the book of life* (nothing was found in any of the other books) and the result was His sonship ministry and the redemption of the world!

IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN...

I feel a great urgency about this message because the vision tells us that not only are the "books" opened, but also the other book, THE BOOK OF LIFE. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire — for further purging and purification. I want to help you grasp why you are here — you are being prepared to reveal the invisible God to the visible creation! Dear reader of these lines, you are not just *anybody*. You came out from God. There is a strange and wonderful statement in Hebrews 10:7. "Lo, I come (in the VOLUME OF THE BOOK it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God." These words are attributed to Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. This is, however, a quotation from Psalm 4:7. Therefore, the "volume of the book" referred to was written before the Psalms! The five books of Moses were written before any others, except, perhaps, the book of Job; and in these earliest books of the Bible Moses pled for God to have mercy upon the children of Israel, "and if not, blot me out of THY BOOK which Thou hast written" (Ex. 32:32). These words speak of a book written by God Himself which was older than Genesis or any of the other books of Moses. God wrote the law of His life in His Christ (Head and body) long before the Bible was written! The scripture indicates that the revelation Jesus was sent to bring to pass on earth was fully recorded in the "Volume of the Book" long before Jesus ever started to walk out His script in the earth realm. The nature of God written in the Christ, the Logos, the Word, which was in the beginning with God, was the heavenly reality of that Book of Life that would be written and opened on earth. Do you not get the connection between *the Word* and *the Volume of the Book*? That's what a book is — it is a word! And it is the Book of Life, for of the Word John says, "In Him was *Life*; and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:1,4). And then John tells us that "THE WORD was *made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...*" (Jn. 1:14). By revelation of the Spirit John is telling us that the Word was made manifest FOR ALL THE WORLD TO READ. This Word, this Holy Record of the Life of God, was not written upon stone, nor papyrus, nor golden parchment, but THE WORD was MADE FLESH TO DWELL AMONG MEN AND BE READ BY THEM! Unlike any other book in the world, this "Book" was alive and the title of this Book was JESUS!

Throughout the march of the ages men and women have recorded an innumerable multitude of life-stories of the mighty men who have trodden this earth and influenced the events of history and the destinies of men, movements, nations, and empires. Each and all of those biographies were meaningful to someone, often to many, but never in all the history of the world was a life lived out before the universe of mankind that was so overwhelmingly important, so all-embracing, so transcendental in its nature and so far-reaching in its results as the life of Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Himself, in His earthly life and ministry, in His death, resurrection, and ascension IS THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THIS GLORIOUS BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Following His examination in the wilderness, this "Book of Life" was offered to the public. Ah, Jesus never carried around a copy of the Old Testament when He taught the multitudes. I have in my library many Bibles including the Literal Bible, the Comparative Bible, the Analytical Bible, the Emphasized Bible, and the Amplified Bible. But Jesus Himself is the EXEMPLIFIED BIBLE! He is the PERSONIFIED BIBLE! He is the true picture of His Father, the Living Word of His Father. He is the full and complete revelation of His Father. He is the full and

abundant Life of His Father unto all who partake of Him. He is the Book of the Life of the Lamb — the autobiography of God — everything you always wanted to know about God and didn't know who to ask can be seen and read in the Book of the Life of the Lamb — JESUS!

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will *put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be my people. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:10,13).

Herein is an arrangement that will work — the old covenant was written and engraven in stone and the people were unable to keep it. Israel began well, accepted the covenant, and promised obedience. But there was no power to continue, to fulfill it; no power to conquer temptation, or overcome the evil heart; to remain faithful. Just as the old covenant was the law written and engraven in stone, and one could hold high this stone tablet and say, “Here is the covenant of our God,” so the new covenant is the law (nature) of God inscribed in the minds and hearts of a people — not merely a law, but that law **written, inscribed in a people** — so that you can point to that people and say, “There is the covenant of our God!” The people with the law of God written in their hearts IS THE COVENANT, THE BOOK OF GOD'S LAW OF LIFE. I heard of a man who collects presidential signatures. The autographs are valuable, some of them priceless — not because of the ink or paper that was used, but because of the person who wrote them. These presidential signatures are all appropriately framed and hung with dignity and honor. God has made a covenant with mankind that has been written by His finger and signed in blood. This is not a mere document but an agreement — signed in our Lord's own blood. His *blood* is His *life* and it is His life *formed in His people* which constitutes His signature with His blood. **YOU ARE THE COVENANT.** Never forget that!

We speak of “signing on the dotted line” and there's something awesome about it. Watch a head of government sign a bill into law; watch a bride and groom sign a marriage license; watch an executive sign a 100-million dollar contract — each time you will notice the solemnity, the weightiness, the finality. When I sign on the dotted line, that's it. The hospital may now proceed with my surgery; the army has me for four years; my spouse is now endowed with all my earthly wealth; I will pay \$1,000 a month for the house. They've got it in writing! God has graciously allowed His covenant with man to be put into writing and signed with His signature — within a people. That is an awesome thing for God to do, for now His covenant can be known and read by all men. In the integrity of His holy heart He is bound to keep all His word, fulfill all His purpose, develop all His life, display all His wisdom, nature, and glory in and through this people who are His covenant written upon the fleshy tablets of their hearts. Now He can be held to His word, for He has invested His signature onto the document. Jesus said, “In the *volume of the book* it is written of me: Lo, I come to do Thy will O God.” Jesus Himself was the WORD OF GOD, the VOLUME OF THE BOOK. It was IN HIM that God's will was written! And now the Lamb of God is living out His Life in *us* as the completion of that Book! God's called and chosen elect are thus THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Through that blessed company conformed to His image the world shall now, at last, read “the rest of the story”!

Paul asked the Corinthians, “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?” (II Cor. 3:1). He refers to ministers who had arrived in Corinth bearing letters of recommendation to them from the churches in Judea. Various teachers at Corinth had been originally introduced there by commendatory letters from abroad. These were letters of introduction, and were common among the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, as they are now. They were usually given to persons who were about to travel. So these teachers came to Corinth with letters of recommendation from other churches; and when leaving that city obtained similar letters from the Corinthians to approve them and introduce them to other churches. Acts 18:27 confirms the existence of the custom here alluded to by Paul: “When Apollos was disposed to pass into Achaia (Corinth) the brethren (of Ephesus) wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him.” This was about two years before Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, and is probably one of the instances to which Paul refers, as many at Corinth boasted of their being followers of Apollos (I Cor. 1:12).

But Paul says that he needs no such external recommendation to anyone for “YE are our epistle (letter), written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (II Cor. 3:2). His testimonial was the saints themselves! This he says was written on his heart. It was not a cold letter of recommendation, but the *living proof* of his ministry and the authority, power, and life of the Christ who sent him. “Forasmuch as

YE are manifestly declared to be the **EPISTLE OF CHRIST** ministered (written) by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." I want to introduce you to a book that everyone reads. No, it is not the Bible, nor will you find it on the *New York Times* bestseller list. The book I am referring to is the lives of people who have been quickened and transformed by Jesus Christ. Many men, women, and children who will never pick up a Bible or sit in a church service will read carefully what the saints' lives are saying about God and reality!

There is not so powerful a letter or sermon in the world, as a transformed life. The proof of Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God is not the Bible — it is the lives of those in whom He lives and walks and talks. The lives of God's redeemed people are the **only spiritual book** the world reads. The nature and character of God revealed in us is the form of language God uses to speak to creation. When God writes on the fleshy tables of our heart the very essence of His love, His mercy, His goodness, His wisdom, His power — His letter to mankind is written so legibly that it can be "read by all men." It is not written with ink, by letters drawn on lifeless substance, and in lines that easily fade, or that can be read by only one or a few persons at a time. Every trace of the Spirit's influence on the heart indelibly inscribes within our character the Word of the living God — God's message, God's revelation, God's life — truly it is **THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB!**

Ah, no hand but that of God can reach the heart, and inscribe His truth there. So, I am not the central figure in my life, although it is called mine. There is Another, and far greater, who does and says all the things in it that matter. Leave Him out of the story, and the whole grows lusterless and indeed, incomprehensible. For, rightly viewed, the life of every overcoming saint of God is but another chapter in the life of Jesus Christ. Look for yourselves and see! How, here and here and here and everywhere, it is His acts, not mine, or yours, that really count and speak. It is not a dead letter, it will not molder or decay, for it is the incorruptible Word of God that liveth and abideth forever. Though worms should destroy this body, this book of the heart will abide to other ages, to other worlds, and will stand in the day of judgment as God's Book of Life opened for all to read. It is the influence that shall be seen and felt throughout vast ages yet unborn until God becomes All-in-all, everything to everyone, everywhere!

Here, I would share some blessed insights from the nineteenth century sermons of R. J. Campbell. "Now what do we think about the Lamb's Book of Life today? Well, I will tell you what it is not. It is not a list of those whom God has agreed to admit to heaven because they firmly believe that someone else has done all that was necessary to get them there. It is God's roll of honor. It is the glorious company of those who have suffered with Christ. It includes all whose lives have been willingly and cheerfully offered on the altar of Love. The very phrases, 'the Lamb's Book of Life,' and 'the Book of the Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' are a declaration of this, and distinguish it from every other list of names that was ever written. Those whose names are in the Book of Life are life-givers. They are the brethren of Jesus, working in the Spirit of Jesus who is The Life to minister more abundant life to the world. When we speak of the Lamb's Book of Life we must never forget this! It is not merely the roll of those who have escaped something; it is the designation of those who have achieved something. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is still being slain on the altar of human hearts, and wherever that divine sacrifice is offered new power and hope stream into this dark and sorrowful world.

"You may be feeling that this explanation of the Lamb's Book of Life is not so sweet and beautiful as the one to which you have been accustomed, and which you greatly value. You may be saying to yourself, 'I do not like this.' We have got to see that the sacrifice of Jesus is of no use unless it makes us like Jesus. It has to be *repeated in us*. As Paul has it, we have to become willing to be delivered up to death for Jesus' sake that the Life of Jesus may become manifest in us. There is no salvation that is not this, and the gratitude and reverence that we really owe to Jesus are gratitude and reverence for having made this possible. **THE LIFE HAS GOT TO BE MANIFESTED IN US!** I put it to you again: which is worthier of Jesus, to believe that He has got us into heaven — a heaven from which all others are shut out — or to rejoice that He has shown us wherein true life consists? I do not care three straws whether I go to heaven or not — using the word for the moment in its conventional sense. But I do rejoice and thank God for that great Master and Redeemer of mankind who has shown me at an unspeakable cost what it is to **live out His life among men**. I wish I could live it, but I am frail and earthly, whereas He was divinely strong, and the light of God shown in all He said and did. And yet, no sooner have I realized this than my heart rises in loving thanks to Him once more for the assurance that human weakness and imperfection can and shall be transformed into divine strength and holiness by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God" — end quote.

Brother Bennie Skinner said in a message some years ago, "The scripture says that the saints will **judge the world** (I Cor. 6:2). God is preparing a mighty company of judges to judge the world in righteousness! 'And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and **judgment was given** unto them...' (Rev. 20:4,6). You say, 'But I thought God was going to judge the world!' He is — but in and by His saints. You say, 'But I thought all judgment has been committed unto the Son.' That's right — in and through His body, His people in whom He dwells and through whom He moves and acts. 'I beheld...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).

"Yes, the saints are going to judge the world! And how? By voting against evil? By demonstrating against wickedness? By marching, carrying placards, writing our congressmen, pleading issues before the courts? NO! The thing that is going to judge the world is what is **true** in them and in you and in me. Our very lives will be a judgment to this world. That is why in the judgment *their books* are opened and *our book* (of life) is also opened! The time will come when the 'books' will be fully opened. God is writing His life in us now. He is inscribing His nature, His knowledge, His wisdom, His will, His power, and authority on the fleshy tables of our hearts. Each one of us is a page in the eloquent book of the Lamb's Life. The life that is being fashioned and formed within our nature is the Book of Life. God is writing in us every day! Paul speaks of it when he says, 'You are the epistles of Christ — **ministered** (written) **by us**' (II Cor. 3:2-3). Paul's purpose was, as my purpose is, to serve God's elect, to teach, to instruct, to encourage, to bless, to strengthen by precept and example, so that the Lord's people can be written in by the finger of God. God wants to write in your life!

"Furthermore, God uses every experience of life to write the life of the Lamb in our book. God uses my wife to write in my book. God uses my children to write in my book. God uses my neighbors to write in my book. God uses my fortunes and my misfortunes to write in my book. God uses my enemies to write in my book. God uses circumstances to write in my book. God uses trials and testings to write in my book. God is writing in you, dear one, in everything that touches your life. That is why Romans 8:28 is so real, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.' You say, 'Man, I wish I hadn't had that experience.' Don't say that! God arranged that experience. It seemed a horrible thing, a terrible thing you went through, and you wouldn't choose to go through such a thing in a thousand years. You would never have chosen that path, but God chose it for you, because God is writing in your book. **God is writing in your book!** He's not writing for nothing — one day your book is going to be opened! And there is only one who is worthy to take the book and open it and loose the seals thereof, and that is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. The Lamb! Oh, the wonder of it! The book is the book of the life of the Lamb. The opening of this book is the unveiling of the life of the Lamb, the revelation of His life written and engraven upon the minds and hearts of those who share His nature. He is the One who is worthy to take each one of us and open us up. And it is only through Jesus Christ our Lord that we can be opened up as the Book of the Life of the Lamb!

"Most of us would rather remain a closed book. We wish to stay closed because of our unique personality, we are shy, reticent, humble, immature, or inexperienced. But I declare to you, beloved, that when God has finished writing in you, when He makes you a living epistle that He knows is capable of being read and known of all men, then HE WILL OPEN YOU UP. When God begins to break and remove the seals from off of us things will begin to happen in the outer world. Why is there such darkness over the earth, and gross darkness over the people? Because the very light of God is **concealed** within us. Although we are the light of the world, the light is shut up. God must work mightily in us to release the light of our lives that His glory may arise upon His people and be seen upon them. And when that hour arrives nothing can stop God's judgments from coming in the earth. And when His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Blessed be His wonderful name!" — end quote.

The following precious gems from the pen of the late Ray Prinzing are edifying here. "We are persuaded that God has a company, A PEOPLE WHOSE NAMES WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. They are a predestinated people, laid hold of by the grace of God for a specific purpose of **becoming His firstfruits** channel through which shall flow quickening streams of divine life to conquer death, and bring new life to all His creation. 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened...and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the

books, according to their works.' There will be **'books'** that are opened out of which men shall be judged 'by what they have done, their whole way of feeling and acting, their aims and endeavors, in accordance with what was recorded in the books' (Rev. 20:12, Amplified). And whatever purging and purifying is needed, whatever correctional processings must be applied, they shall be, for righteousness must be established. But it reads on, **THERE IS ANOTHER BOOK THAT SHALL BE OPENED**, and it is 'another book' that has our heart rejoicing, for it is the **BOOK OF LIFE**. It is a ministry of righteousness, not condemnation. It is an outflow of love. The **BOOK OF LIFE** awaits all the actions of the judgments of God to balance them with hope, victory, and a complete restoration of all that is fallen. What a tragedy were only 'the books' opened and there was not 'another book.' But the 'books' are opened first, and men are judged; then the 'another book,' the 'book of life' is opened — the revelation of **HIS LIFE** follows the judgment! When this 'another book' is brought forth, and opened, the message which has been sealed up in our deep shall be released, and it will flow out *a river of life...* — end quote.

Paul Mueller has shared some precious insights into this wonderful book of life. He wrote, "There is a wonderful truth that is about to break in upon the minds and hearts of the Lord's elect, and that is the blessed truth that it is God's intention to write His complete word upon the tables of our hearts. The entire scripture, including the Gospel of Christ and the inspired word of truth divinely ordained for our growth unto perfection, the manifestation of the sons of God, and the propagation and administration of the kingdom of God, is all to be written upon the tables of our hearts. The fact is, the Bible as we now know it will one day become obsolete. The blessed Book that we carry around, study and sometimes memorize, is to be *imparted into our lives* so that we are truly 'epistles of Christ...known and read of all men.' This is not to downgrade the Bible or to denigrate its inspiration, effectiveness, and authority. The book we call the Bible is, for the most part, the inspired word of God, and we are truly and deeply grateful for all it means to us. However, our respect for the Bible will not alter the great truth that it is God's intention that ***we become His living word!*** Every truth that has been given by the Spirit will eventually become a part of our lives, so that we will not need to turn to chapter and verse to speak truth, but rather, that truth will be so written and engraved upon our lives that ***we do by nature and express and manifest out of our state of being*** all the truth and life the Bible contains to the glory of God. It will not be a dead letter read from the pages of a book, but the living, anointed truth of God coming forth from lives that have been transformed by the power of that word" — end quote.

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

God has a **MESSAGE** for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! This message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the minds and hearts and lives of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of Self, in order to walk and live by the spirit and power of **HIS LIFE**. I am terribly at a loss for words to express the glory and wonder of God's **BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY**, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared, and published it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this Book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of all people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the pages of God's eternal and incorruptible **BOOK OF LIFE!** Isn't it wonderful!

Chapter 231

The Great White Throne Judgment (continued)

“And the *sea* gave up the dead that were in it; and *death* and *hell* delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were *judged* every man according to their works” (Rev. 20:13).

“And the *sea* gave up the dead that were in it...” In its symbolical and spiritual meaning the sea speaks of the *manifestation* of those who dwell in that lowest realm of life. Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The *wicked* are *like the troubled sea*, which cannot rest, whose waters *cast up mire and dirt*. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, “These are *raging waves of the sea, foaming out their shame*” (Jude 13). The beloved John on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on *many waters*. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, “the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*” (Rev. 17:15). I think there could be no better symbol by which to represent the people and society of any day than by the waters of the sea! At times the human race, even in their carnality, is calm and peaceful, then rough and boisterous, and then dangerous and treacherous.

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, bigotry, violence, tyranny, oppression, greed, cruelty, strife, war, and bloodshed. Ah, the *sea* is the *lowest realm* on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the *body* with its passions and lusts. Collectively the sea represents *society* as it is guided by physical desires and impulses and aspirations that are corrupt, restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control! You see it especially when crowds are out marching, demonstrating for ungodly and perverse causes, demanding their “rights” to practice perversion and evils of various kinds. The raging sea, foaming out their shame!

Now, it would be strange indeed, would it not, should the “sea” be a clear *symbol* in Revelation 17:15 and other places, yet be *literal* in our present text! Is John really talking about earth’s vast oceans yielding up the bodies of the dead who have been cast there throughout vast millenniums? Is that the “dead” who are brought to stand before God’s throne of judgment? God is certainly able to do such a thing, and I do not doubt that it includes them, but the fact is that ALL who dwell in the sea-realm of this present evil world are *spiritually dead* — dead in trespasses and in sins! Every man outside of Christ is *already dead!* How can he become any more dead than he is? Did Paul not say, “I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and *I died*.” Can we not see that when the *sea* gives up the *dead* that are in it there is a judgment of God coming to all who are dead in trespasses and sins, those who live in the manifestation of that low realm, restless, troubled, angry, cursing, tormented, conniving, fornicating, robbing, murdering, high on drugs, unloving, without natural affection — *“foaming out their shame.”*

“And *death* and *hell* delivered up the dead that were in them.” While the *sea* bespeaks the *manifestation* of the wicked who are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, *death* signifies the *condition* of the spiritually dead, and *hell* denotes the *realm* of the dead ones. “For the wages of sin is *death*...” (Rom. 6:23). It is not written that the wages *shall be* death, but the passage we have before us, penned by divine inspiration, is, “The wages of sin *IS* death.” “She that liveth in pleasure,” the scripture again says, “*is dead* while she liveth.” It is a sad and most horrible fact that millions and thousands of millions of people going about this earth today are dead men walking! They are dead to God! Dead to virtue! Dead to truth! Dead to purity! Dead to heaven! Dead to reality! Dead to righteousness! DEAD!

I speak not, therefore, concerning a death that is to come, I speak of the *wages*, in the Greek *opsonia*, which means the reward of a soldier, the *wages* of a man who is fighting as a soldier. Wages he has earned, as a patriot fighting for his king and his country; or wages which he has received as a mere

mercenary soldier, fighting for the pay which a tyrant might give him for his work in destroying life and property and liberty to put a usurper in power. The meaning, therefore, of the word is wages for a military man. But Paul says two things. First he says, "the wages of sin is death," and then he adds, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The free gift of God is the reverse of the wages of sin! God's soldiers do not receive the LIFE OF THE AGES as wages, but as a *free gift*. There are but two armies in this world, the devil's army and God's army. But, my, they do have very different *payment systems!*

If you are enlisted in the devil's army you are already receiving your wages. The devil's Saturday night always comes. Every man gets his wages. And Adam and all in Adam HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED THEIR WAGES! When Adam sinned and reaped what he sowed, he not only reaped for himself, Adam, but for all men in Adam, the entire race. "In Adam all die." In that day of death, it became more than the death of a single man, for it became the death of all humanity. Humanity left the condition of life, and entered into another condition called death, or if you please, man entered a *life of death*. He entered that realm or that life of death through the acceptance of wages, which wages was death. He earned the wages by sinning in the devil's army. The truth is not that man is under the *sentence* of death, as the church systems teach, and in *danger* of being lost, but he is *already dead and lost!* And Christ comes to seek and to save the lost, and to *give life* to the *dead* world! "If one died for all then were ALL DEAD" (II Cor. 5:14). Mark it well, *dead*, not in *danger* of death, or liable to it, or waiting to die — but dead already!

As one has written, "In one of his books Glenn Clark discusses the problem of why a rotten apple in a barrel of good ones will spoil the whole lot, but a good apple in a barrel of rotten ones is powerless to make the rotten ones sound. He says that the good apple has the stroke of death in it already. When the stem was severed from the tree its source of life and health and growth was removed. Even a good apple is a dying thing! He should have added that death was hovering near the apple even while its stem was still fast to the tree. Just let the wind swing the apple against a limb near at hand and break the peel, immediately rot sets in. Let a bird peck a hole in it, or a worm enter its body, at once the forces of decay and death are manifest, and the end is putrefaction. In the midst of life we are in death."

The first warning against disobedience is, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The words "thou shalt surely die" are more correctly translated, "dying thou shalt die," or "thou art dying to die." That is, "dying" is a process, and "to die" is the final act or event in the process. When Adam sinned it was life that he lost: it was death and dissolution that he received. Therefore the word "death" means vastly more than this old dilapidated body going to the grave; it means the whole condition or state of being of the man outside of Christ. May God make this truth real to your heart! There is only one life in the universe, and that life is Jesus Christ. "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).

In the conflict with which the enemies who have to be overcome by the people of God, the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death. In the final triumph, death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, that is, the death of death and the death of hell. Death is an enemy! Death destroys! Death corrupts! Death, foul, hateful, hell-born, "the wages of sin," belongs to the devil, and eats out the brain, blinds men to God and truth and righteousness, destroys all vitality, corrupts the mind, perverts the emotions, torments the soul, and reduces the eye to dust and leaves only an empty socket. Do not talk of death as though it were a holy thing. The King of Terrors, Death, is unholy. Death is an enemy. Death is devilish. Death is hellish. Death is corrupt. Death is foul and dark as night. Death is the wages of sin. Sin is the work of the devil. And now John in his vision beholds the wonder of this whole condition of man's death delivering up its captives to the righteous judgment of God!

And now we come to the scene of *hell* delivering up its dead. The Greek word used here is *hades*. Concerning the literal meaning of the word *hades* there can be no doubt. It comes from the Greek *a(i)des*. The "a" is a prefix which is equivalent to our "un," and the stem "id" means *perceive*. Thus we have UN-PERCEIVE or imperceptible — the *unseen*. Where do the dead go? They go into what has been called "the unknown." That is Hades — the unseen world, the unknown realm. Our English word hell is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word "hillan" or "helan," meaning a cavern, anciently denoting a concealed or *unseen* place. In parts of England men still say, "I plan to *hell* my potatoes," meaning to

bury them in a hole or pit, that is, a covered place, out of sight. And in the old days a young couple seeking to be alone, sought a *hell*, a place where they could make love without being seen by prying eyes.

We know that the physically dead haven't passed out of existence altogether, for man is not only a body and soul, but above all *spirit*. And when the "spirit of man" passes from this present tabernacle of flesh it goes into a realm unseen by the eyes of mortal man. David, in speaking of it at the time his first son by Bathsheba died, said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." He knew there was a place or realm or dimension where he would be able to join that infant child. And likewise the phrase often used in the Old Testament of those who died being "gathered unto their fathers" meant far more than having their bodies buried in the same cemetery. It bespoke a gathering in the unseen world. And our Lord spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, linking their names together as all being in the same place, and also added that their God is "not a God of the dead, but of the living," thus affirming that they were all alive at that time, even though they were in the Hadean state. Indeed, they were all in Hades — the invisible world of departed spirits.

We must pause for a moment here to make the truth clear that hell — the *realm* of the dead — is not by any means limited to those who have departed this life. It is a sad fact that many men and women in the here and now *live in hell* just as they are also those who are *dead* while they live! Remember, Hades means at its root "un-perceive," and multitudes live under such a veil of spiritual blindness that they are unable to perceive the world of reality. Sinners live in God's world, yet they do not perceive Him at all. They are unaware of God, of truth, of redemption, of spiritual realities, of what man's true state and destiny is. They exist under a shroud of darkness, a swirling fog of ignorance, that secludes them in a shadowy world of spiritual unreality. Even carnal Christians walk in their own hell of un-perception. Many who read these lines have had glorious experiences in God, have seen marvelous realities in the spirit, and have been given to understand the deepest mysteries of the kingdom of God, while family members, friends, and neighbors have no comprehension of any of this, and are completely unenlightened, unaware, unconscious, undiscerning — not cognizant in any way of this beautiful and powerful walk in the Spirit of God! Speak to them of the deep things of God and you may as well be trying to teach them advanced nuclear physics for they will stand there and look at you unknowingly as though you had just stepped out of a space ship from some far distant galaxy! Wherefore, we look with blessed anticipation to the day when hell "gives up its dead" to the righteous judgment of God, that they might *know Him!*

And beyond that, on another level, there is no hell that could be more vile than the hell I see around me right here in Texas, the hell of sin, sorrow, torment, fear, demon possession, hatred, murder, strife, drugs, immorality, rebellion, blasphemy, nervous breakdown, godlessness, and wretchedness. We have a great deal of hell here in Texas, and there are no hells that could be worse than San Francisco, Miami, Chicago, New York, Hong Kong, Calcutta, Ciudad Juarez, and ten thousand other cities of this world. "Oh, but there is a hell that is full of murderers!" you say. Well, these cities today are full of murderers. "But there is a hell that is full of devils!" you say. Well, these cities today are full of devils. "But there is a hell that is filled with liars, fornicators, and blasphemers!" you argue. Well, these cities today are filled with liars, fornicators, and blasphemers. "Ah, but there is a hell where the devil himself dwells!" you contend. Well, the devil himself is right here on this earth, cursed to crawl upon his belly, to feed upon the dust of the carnal mind and nature of man. Or is it that people cannot be that bad? What about Dachau and Buchenwald? Just let a war start and see what devilish, satanic, vile, brutal, inhumane things men do! Germany is the place where the Reformation started, it is a place of high education and culture. But it was Germany also where in the second world war some people made lampshades out of people's skins. It was a German leader who said, "We will eliminate the Jews from the face of the earth," and Germans killed in mass killings and devilish tortures. Remember how the church in the Dark Ages persecuted the saints? You would not believe that a human being could conceive such evil! What makes them act like that? It is because they are dwelling in a dark world of spiritual denseness where such things as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, righteousness, goodness, life, light, truth, and divine purpose and reality are *imperceptible* to them! They walk under the dark shades of spiritual obtuseness — the Hadean state!

We have lots of hell beyond us, but our work is to follow Christ, to be willing, as sons of God, not only to ascend the throne, but to be poured out as a River of Life INTO THE LOWEST PARTS OF THE EARTH, INTO ALL THE HELLS, and clean them out by His all-conquering power and transforming life, until there is no more hell anywhere. What father would not go to any of the hells of

the world, what father would not trudge through the saloons of the Bowery or the sex-filth of Las Vegas in the hope that he might run across his son or his daughter who is captive to the devil there and bring them back to God and the kingdom? This is the spirit of the Father who "so loved the world" and it is the spirit of the Son who "descended into the lowest parts of the earth" and it is the spirit of every son of God, born of the incorruptible seed of a Divine Hope, a Divine Faith, and a Divine Love. If you would not walk across the street to see some poor soul delivered and converted by the redeeming power of Christ, don't waste your time relating to me how you are one of God's "apprehended ones" to help in delivering the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. The Spirit of Reconciliation must reign within our hearts even now. The Ministry of Reconciliation must proceed from our lives even now. God will share with you His throne, He will give judgment into your hands, but you must be willing both now and then to *be there* when He "stands men up," when He "opens the books," and begins His corrective and redemptive processes of judgment in their lives!

We stated earlier that hell — *hades* — is the "imperceptible realm," a dimension of existence that is covered, unseen and unseeing, unknowable, a silent world of darkness. "The dead know not anything," saith the Lord (Eccl. 9:5). Furthermore, the dead see not anything, nor do they hear or feel anything. Now we know that is true of a dead *body*, but can we not ask how it could be possible for a natural man who is *dead* in trespasses and sins to hope to see or understand the things that belong to the wonderful realm of spirit, life, and glory, since death has closed his eyes to them? It is Christ and Christ alone who raises the dead, making men alive to God and the realm of the spirit. It matters not to Him nor to His resurrection power whether these dead be corpses buried in the earth or whether they be men walking on top of the ground, dead while they live. "Let the dead bury the dead," said Jesus, because He understood the mystery I seek now to explain. Well did the Son of God know that outside of Him both the man who was being buried and the men who cast the earth into his grave belonged to the realm of death and were alike dead!

This is the description of the land of the dead in which the whole world lives by nature. The land of the carnal mind, which is death, and the land of trespasses and sins in which there walk the dead. "Wherein," Paul says to the quickened ones, "in time past ye walked" (Eph. 2:2). Is that not amazing? We were dead and yet we walked; we were the walking dead, a land filled with zombies, walking, yet dead! Did you ever stop to think that when Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, came into this world HE WAS THE ONLY LIVING MAN IN A WORLD OF DEAD PEOPLE? The whole world lies in the hands of the wicked one and death reigns over all the earth realm! No wonder the scripture says that men are a stench in the nostrils of God because spiritual death sends forth its reek and stench. How the soul of Jesus must have recoiled at the state of death that was rampant over the earth! We, the walking dead, walked according to the course of *this world*, we are told. The good news is — because of Christ, the sea, death, and hell shall deliver up *all* the dead that are in them unto the righteous judgment of God! And consider this, my beloved. Since Paul speaks of the dead *walking*, and we know what he means, can we not in like manner understand John's words when he says, "And I saw the *dead*, small and great, *stand* before God, and the books were opened..." It is not necessarily a dead body rising up, but it is certainly the *person brought face to face with God!* That is the mystery.

THE SECOND DEATH

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **This is the second death**" (Rev. 20:14).

The scriptures teach an apparent paradox, saying first that to man it is given "*once to die*," (Heb. 9:27); and secondly, that all men abiding in the state of death must subsequently suffer a "*second death*." What can this mean?

Children in school learn what we call definitions. A definition is an explanatory statement which tells us exactly what a certain thing is, as "an island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water." God also gives us definitions in His Word. We could cite hundreds of examples! He tells us exactly what certain things are. And in the passage quoted above God tells us exactly what the *second death* is. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. **THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH.**" Now let me make this a little plainer. Definitions of men can be given backward. For instance, the definition, "An island is a tract of land completely surrounded by water," can be given thus: "A tract of land completely surrounded by water is an island." This is but another way of stating the same fact. It does not, in any way, change the meaning.

Now let us try this on the definition of the second death. The Bible states it thus: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.*" Now let us turn this statement around for clarity. "The second death *is death and hell cast into the lake of fire.*" Therefore we have exactly the same meaning either way it is stated. What is the second death? IT IS THE FIRST DEATH AND HELL CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE! This fact is **very important**. Most Christians and nearly all preachers read the Word of God very superficially. They read and suppose that the second death is men being tortured forever in the lake of fire. Yet there is absolutely nothing in this passage about *men*! The verse that follows the one we are considering speaks of men being cast into the lake of fire. But not this one! It is the state of death and the condition of hell that are cast into the lake of fire. The second death is not *men* cast into the lake of fire, or men tormented or tortured forever. That's not in the Book! The Holy Spirit has made it very simple and plain. The second death is the first death and hell *cast into the lake of fire*. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine.

One thing is obvious in this passage: hell and the lake of fire are *not the same thing*! Because the preachers rant on and on about a *fiery hell* multitudes of believers confuse the issue, supposing that hell itself *is* the lake of fire. Brother Elwin Roach once explained it thus: "What do we suppose death and hell are? Some will say it is obvious; but their thinking may be biased due to incorrect information. One common belief is that to be dead is to be a corpse, and hell is said to be a blazing place of fire and brimstone that will burn forever. If this were true, explain to me: **How can hell be cast into itself** (the lake of fire)? If the two words are synonymous, the verse could have been written: "*and hell was cast into hell,*" which we know cannot be. For instance, if we were on a camping trip, I could take a *piece of wood* and ask, What is this *stick* I hold in my hand? The answer would be, that *piece of wood* is a *stick*. The two words are synonymous. I could then cast the *piece of wood* into the *campfire*. Since the *stick* and the *campfire* are two different things, the stick can be cast into the fire. But it doesn't take a genius to know that I can't cast the *piece of wood* into itself — into the *stick*. And so it is with *hell* and the *lake of fire*. IF THEY ARE BOTH THE SAME, *hell* could not be cast *into the lake of fire*, plain and simple. Notwithstanding, since they are different from one another, *hell can be cast into the lake of fire!*"

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything that is cast into the lake of fire pertains to **death**? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the *Book of Life*, those who are *dead* in trespasses and sins, who inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. That is the end of death and hell and sin, for God shall destroy death in the lake of fire, He shall burn up hell in the lake of fire, and He shall consume sin and rebellion in the lake of fire. How I long to see the end of sin and death and hell — and sinners as well — for when they come out of their fiery purification they will come forth as redeemed and transformed men, no longer rebellious sinners. The time is coming, praise His name! when God shall be *ALL-in-all*, and there shall be neither sin, nor sinners, nor death, nor hell. It is clear that God does not destroy *men* in the lake of fire, nowhere does it say that, for that would be a contradiction of terms. How can you destroy death by creating death? How can you abolish death by bringing men under the power of eternal death from which there is no escape? Oh, no, it is not men who are destroyed in the lake of fire — it is the **kind of men they are** that is destroyed. It is **sin** and **death** and **hell** that are destroyed! As it is written, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed *is death*" (I Cor. 15:26). Thus the lake of fire is nothing more nor less than THE DEATH OF DEATH!

The following words by Ray Prinzing give precious insight into this wonderful truth. "The offence of the first Adam brought all men under the sentence of death for sin. Hence presently our mortal bodies are in a state of dying, while our minds need to be freed from minding the things of the flesh, to mind the things of the spirit. The act of disobedience of Adam brought forth death. Now, the obedience and work of righteousness of the last Adam also brings forth a death for every man. The question arises, Is the **second death** the same kind of death as the first? Many people think that it is a repetition of the first, and that the results are the same, while its action is more severe and cruel, and destructive, being by fire. And some Christians add very sorrowfully, 'and from this second death there is no resurrection, it is an endless torment in agony,' BUT NOT SO! For God's seconds are never duplicates of the first, they are always better, higher, and more powerful than the firsts, and used to counter-balance all the action of the firsts, and **much more** — He always saves the best until last.

"All Bible statements prove that the two deaths are absolutely **UNLIKE**, and that the two are opposite and antagonistic. The second death undoes all the work of the first death in the same manner that the last Adam undid all the work of the first Adam. Not to nullify the purpose being wrought out by

the plan of God in the firsts, but to bring a release from the firsts in a MUCH MORE manner of majesty and glory and power and scope of converge, into the greater and more glorious things of God. Creation was made subject to vanity for a purpose! Sin was allowed for wise ends, but when those ends have been secured it will have to cease to exist. The purpose is not nullified, but the means whereby the purpose has been executed shall be done away. Discipline is a means to an end, but not the end itself, it leads up to the 'AFTERWARDS YIELDING THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

"The first Adam died to God and righteousness, and became alive unto sin. The last Adam died unto sin (Rom. 6:10), and liveth unto God, and so fulfilleth all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The *first death* was a transition from life to death, whereas the *second death* is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to become alive to the higher realm. Because — the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God's universe.

"Death came as an enemy, the fruitage of an act of disobedience that turned man away from God and into the realm of carnality, minding self and flesh. Now God makes death overcome itself. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, a new life. It takes death to destroy death, and thus Christ 'did taste death for every man' — 'that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:9, 14-15). Since we are all under the effects of the first death, it is appointed unto us to die once more — not physical death, we are already in a state of mortality — but now a dying out to this present death state. We conquer this death of the carnal mind by dying to it — only God could use such a process bringing victory, but praise God, He is destroying the first death with the second death!

"All the Crucifixion, our identification with the cross of Christ, must first be accepted by faith as a fact, and then the working of it in and through us is a process. If it is done now, through our yieldedness to the call and claims of Christ upon us, we won't have to face it later, in what is called 'the lake of fire,' which is the second death. The passing through that lake of divine purification will thoroughly purge out the remaining fragments of the rebellion and waywardness of man, till the mystery of iniquity is no more, and then the carnal mind being abolished, death is no more" — end quote.

There is a strange and wonderful statement found in Revelation 2:11. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be *hurt* of the second death." I would draw your attention to the fact that it does not say that the overcomer experiences nothing of the second death, that he does not pass through it, or that its work is not wrought in his life; but the thought is that he will not be "hurt" by it. It is possible to pass through the most terrible experience and not be hurt by it. Listen! "And the three men, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they *have no hurt*; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3:23-25). Oh, to know that we can pass through the darkest night or the hottest fire and not be hurt by it if Jesus goes with us! How heartening and assuring to read such promises as these: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; and when thou walkest through the fire, thou *shalt not be burned*; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2). The great difference between the unbeliever and the child of God is that the unbeliever is taken hand and foot and "cast" into the lake of fire, fighting, kicking, screaming, and resisting all the way, whereas the child of God willingly and obediently walks into the fiery processings of God hand in hand with His blessed Redeemer. And, one way or the other, ALL MUST DIE UNTO SIN!

A. M. Hinchliff once wrote, "I wondered for many years what John the Baptist was talking about when he said Jesus would baptize us with fire. 'I indeed baptize you with water...but He that cometh after me is mightier than I...He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire' (Mat. 3:11). Also in Acts 2:3 we read, 'And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.' Luke wasn't speaking of the languages they were given when he spoke of *tongues of fire*. We

have all watched a fire burn and have seen the flames rise in what is often referred to as tongues of flame. They spoke in many different languages by the Holy Spirit, but the tongues of fire were for a different purpose. In speaking of the fire that is spoken about here many people think of the boldness that the Holy Spirit gives. They think of a preacher becoming 'fiery' in his speech and actions. The Holy Spirit will do that but that is not what the scripture is talking about.

"Let us read Malachi 3:2-3. 'Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a *refiner's fire*, and like fuller's soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.' Malachi is talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the fire that God has sent to refine His people! This is the fire that Jesus has baptized us with! This is the fire that rested upon His disciples on the day of Pentecost! God wants us to partake of His Holy Spirit that the fire may refine and purify us.

"I once visited a silver refinery. As one looked in through the door of the furnace you could observe a beautiful sea of molten silver. The flames were reflected mirror-like in the melted metal and one would doubt whether anything could be more pure. Then the operator of the furnace added a chemical reagent and within minutes none of that beautiful silver was visible. The material that was added reacted with certain impurities in the silver and these impurities rose to the top. The beauty was completely obscured. The operator then used a long-handled tool to rake all these impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver returned to its original beauty. Another reagent was then added and the same thing happened again. This process went on for about a week and by that time the silver was over ninety-nine percent pure.

"This is similar to the work of the fire of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We may look at one another and think we all reflect the beauty of Christ from within. Then God sends some circumstance which acts as a reagent and suddenly we find that beauty clouded over. Many times things come to the surface that we didn't even know were in our lives! We are then able by the help of the Holy Spirit to remove these ugly things that were hidden beneath the surface of our lives. We must pray for the process to go on until we are completely in His image and likeness. To have this work done in us by the Holy Spirit's Fire is not easy on the flesh! It is like a warfare. We must willingly submit to the process if we desire to be among the overcomers who sit with Christ in His throne" — end quote.

Let me repeat — all men shall die unto sin. Some lovingly submit to God's dealings that the dreadful death of the carnal mind in their members may be "mortified" or put to death, while others must be subdued and broken under the severe heat of judgmental fire. The former pass through the death to self — but are not "hurt" by it. In dying by a living and active faith to everything of the flesh, and living by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, a perfect work is wrought in which everything that is in any way opposed to God is brought to death. These become what God seeks in order to satisfy His heart. God has apprehended in this hour, as in all preceding generations, a remnant in whom *His Spirit* is working, and they are becoming daily experiential partakers of His death, overcoming all the desires, allurements, deceits, and lusts of the carnal mind and the fleshly heart. To those who now *overcome*, the same shall not be "hurt" of the "second death." For us who willingly submit to this process "no man taketh our life from us, we lay it down." But for those who will not lay it down, I do not hesitate to say that IT WILL BE TAKEN FROM THEM. Make no mistake about it. There are multitudes who shall resist God until the extreme measures He must use to subdue them are beyond our comprehension. For them the second death shall hold terror, and will prove a most painful experience. Let us die now! Let us take the cup of suffering and submit to the refining fires now! Let us arise in the newness of *His life* now, to be conformed to His image. He that overcometh *now* shall not be *hurt* by the second death!

There is another passage that speaks to this truth. "*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). Those who experience the first resurrection are the ones who have their *soul* fully redeemed and transformed into the nature of Christ. Because they are both *blessed* and *holy* the second death hath no more power over them! That is, they do not need to be forcibly "cast" into the lake of fire under the sovereign command of the Lord, and in truth the fire of God has already accomplished its complete work in them. There are several different words in the Greek which are rendered in many of our Bible translations by the one English word "power." There is *dunamis* from which we get our words "dynamo," "dynamite," and "dynamic." This power is that of great force.

There is another word which is very similar to our word "energy." Still another word, *kratos*, gives us the power of ruling, as in our combined words, "democrat," "aristocrat," and "autocrat." But there is still another word, *exousia*, which is translated "power" in such statements as, "power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12). This word would be better translated "authority." This is the word that is used in the passage above. The second death has no "**authority**" over those who have been blessed and made holy in Christ, whose souls have been fully saved, raised up in His life, and made one in Him! For these the judgment day is over, ended! And even in that judgment day they were not "hurt" by the second death for they yielded themselves willingly to the fire of God and there was One who walked with them through the fire! This means that the work is complete in the overcomer, there is nothing more ever to be dealt with by the righteous judgments of God — this is the true "eternal security" of which men speak! The "second death" no longer has any authority in their lives! Isn't it wonderful!

It is true that some men are cast into the processing of the lake of fire. But what a disreputable lot! "...the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). These are men saturated with, and captivated by, the power of the first death — dead in trespasses and in sins, sold under sin, slaves to every devilish passion, possessed of corrupt and perverse natures, obsessed with every evil device, unrelentingly driven by the spirit of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And nothing God has done has yet broken these stubborn wills or brought these men to repentance. The wages of sin has not broken them. The harvest of evil has not broken them. Hell has not broken them. The tender mercies and longsuffering of the Lord have not broken them. The Spirit has faithfully told us of a second death into which unbelieving and incorrigibly wicked men shall surely go. They go there with death and with hell. The second death will be an experience and a period of time similar to this first death we are now experiencing, but much more severe and intense than anything we now know. But don't entertain the idea that it is some literal kind of fire, some physically tortuous method God uses like tyrants who poke men with red hot irons, or like waterboarding techniques used in times past by our own CIA in order to coerce men into confessing, recanting, or yielding up information. Oh, no! God is not a sadistic tyrant. The fire and brimstone are THE HOLY GHOST FIRE OF GOD! Our God IS a consuming fire! It is, therefore, a *spiritual exercise of God*, not a literal or physical tactic of ruthless men. Aren't you glad!

The penalty of sin is very great. The processes of God to break the resistance of willfully wicked men are extremely severe. Not only in this present age do they smite us, but in the second death which is to come. It can only be described as the "lake of fire." This dealing of God is reserved for those who have not profited from the previous judgments and still need further correction to subdue them to the will of God. When the process is complete, and the last sinner has emerged from the discipline with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, having learned the lessons of the awful fruit of man's "own way," fully yielding to the Lordship of our Saviour, then at last shall be fulfilled the beautiful promise, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle (dwelling place) of God is *with men*, and He will dwell with them, and they shall *be His people*, and God Himself shall be with them, and *be their God*. And God shall wipe away *all tears* from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death**, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: *for the former things are passed away*. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are *true and faithful*" (Rev. 21:3-5).

Whatever we hold as the nature of the death state, may we let this truth sink deep into our hearts: DEATH IS TO BE ABOLISHED. The ringing declaration, "The *last* enemy that shall be destroyed is death," overthrows the whole structure of accepted, but unproved, theology which shuts up the mass of the human race in "*eternal death*." When the "last" enemy is destroyed, abolished, it is self-evident that none remains. Those wretched religionists who demand the *endlessness of death*, who argue for eternal torment in the lake of fire, the second death, do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. The lake of fire *must* end because death and hell are cast into it, which is the second death, and in the end THERE SHALL BE N-O M-O-R-E D-E-A-T-H. No more death! No more first death. No more second death. No more of any kind of death. To say there is no more death is to say that there is no more sin and no more sinners, for sinners are *dead men*, and the wages of sin *is death*. To say there is no more death is to say that God has not "burned up" all the wicked and left them dead, or in hell, for as long as any creature of God is in a state of death, death is not abolished — its power still reigns. To say there is no more death is to say there is no more hell, for hell is "the realm of the dead." To say there is no more

death is to say there is no more a lake of fire, for the lake of fire *is* the second *death*. What a universe of truth is contained in three little words: NO MORE DEATH!

We are now approaching the final verse of chapter twenty. “*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*” (Rev. 20:15). The grammatical construction is not that strong in the actual Greek text. As you can see by consulting an *interlinear* the literal translation of the Greek is: “*And IF anyone was not found in the scroll of life having been written he was thrown into the lake of fire.*” In Greek grammar it is very *conditional*, indicating a big “if,” as though at this point in the processes of divine judgment there would be but few who would face the sentence of the lake of fire. The wonderful truth is, however, that even in the lake of fire there is *hope!*

Most Christians are confused not only about the *purpose* of the lake of fire, but also about the length of time men stay there. Have you ever heard a vivid, graphic sermon about the pains of the wicked in the lake of fire? I have! One brother related the following: “I heard in a sermon as a young boy in Arkansas, a description of how long ‘eternity’ really is. The preacher was speaking of everlasting torment in the lake of fire for all outside of Christ, even the little baby that dies without knowing Jesus. To impress the audience with just how *long* that torture — that blistering, sizzling, pain-wracked, excruciating agony of torture would be prolonged, he said, ‘Imagine, if you can, a huge, solid granite mountain exactly one mile high, and one mile wide. Once every year, imagine that a little bird flies to the top of that one-mile-high block of solid granite and cleans his beak. A whole year goes by, and the bird flies to the top of the granite mountain and cleans his beak again. You get a fair idea of how long is *eternity* if you imagine how long it would take for that bird, cleaning his beak atop that one-mile-high block of solid granite to wear the granite completely down until it was *gone!*’ The young boy wondered within himself, All of *this?* All this pain and suffering because a little *baby* who had never heard the name of Jesus; perhaps a baby belonging to another race, or to a non-Christian religion, who died under what the churches call ‘Adam’s sin,’ went to the lake of fire? He then proceeded to ask what horrible things that innocent baby could have done to merit even a moment’s punishment, even a harsh *spanking*, let alone TORTURE, and that for **ALL ETERNITY!**” — end quote. The truth is, however, the Bible nowhere speaks of “eternity” in connection with the lake of fire! The Greek term is “*unto ages of ages*” signifying the on-going dealings and processes of God until the work is complete and all men are purged, purified, and fully reconciled to God.

If there were a great lake of fire that would burn throughout eternity, this would mean that people whom God had created for His pleasure would be suffering on and on, endless ages of time. Always God would realize that in His universe the souls of the vast majority of mankind were suffering torment so hideous that it is beyond comprehension, and that would never end. God’s mercy could not find them, God’s grace could not reach them, and God’s power could not save them! Satan would be the victor and God’s universe would be marred forever! Sin would be constantly before God and never again could God be happy amongst His children — unless He is a sadistic psychopath! What kind of God do you serve? Is He a fiend that takes pleasure in roasting and toasting His children forever? Or is He so cold and callused, so void of empathy, that He just ignores them without feeling? Or does He pull them out of the fire when they have scorched a little too long and when they have cooled down, drag them back into the flame? Is this the kind of God we serve? No, A THOUSAND TIMES NO!

Think of the lake of fire as God’s great Rehabilitation Center. The fire of that dealing is His very professional and effective Rehabilitation Therapy. Some years ago there was a reality television show called *Clean House*. It was about three trained specialists who go into homes that are a mess. In each episode, there is clutter everywhere. In some homes there is so much junk that visitors must remain standing because the furniture is covered with all kinds of stuff. The *Clean House* specialists face the challenge of convincing the residents to get rid of their junk. And the strange thing often is — even though it makes their lives miserable, they don’t want to get rid of the clutter! So some very interesting scenarios play out as the specialists do what they have to do to change these people’s mindset! You and I can be the same way in our relationship with God, not to mention the world! We say we want to clean things up, and we can see what’s got to go. But so often even we cling to things that make life miserable for us and for others. But our God has a wonderful Rehabilitation Therapy! Oh, yes, HE is a specialist! God builds a great bonfire — whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life — whoever is not expressing and manifesting the Christ — is cast into His great bonfire! And as Paul wrote, “**EVERY MAN’S WORK** shall be made manifest (the “books” opened!): for the day shall declare it, because it shall be *revealed by fire*; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work

abide...he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but *he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire*" (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

"And He saith unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto *him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely*...the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:6-8).

"*I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*" May I reverently ask, Who would be more **thirsty** than the man in the lake of fire? These passages must be taken in their association and context. If you don't believe the man tormented in fire is a thirsty man just ask the rich man in our Lord's parable who died and lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. He sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and cries out: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." Now, it is not my purpose to explain the meaning of the parable in this writing, for that is another story altogether. But, irrespective of its spiritual meaning, in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man was tormented in fire and wanted Lazarus to come and cool his tongue and slake his thirst. He had been a very bad man, and so was tormented in the hell that he had created for himself. But when he asked that Lazarus should come, Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: *no one can cross it.*" Abraham could not cross that gulf! David could not cross that gulf! Moses could not cross that gulf! None of the prophets and none of the Patriarchs could cross that gulf! NO MAN could cross it!

There is no denying that, BUT THE CHRIST CROSSED THAT ABYSS. There is the difference! You say that Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us." Let me remind you that, although Abraham said that, the Christ did not. That is right, Abraham, you could not bridge that gulf! And even if you could, you did not have the *keys to the gates*. But the Christ crossed that gulf, He strode into Hades, He went and preached to the spirits that were in prison, and He led captivity captive; that is, He captured the captives, those who were captives to sin, captives to the devil, and captives in hell, and led out from thence a mighty host of captives, and delivered them into the liberty of the children of God. The Christ crossed that gulf, and HIS SALVATION BRIDGED IT. Christ bridged it! The Christ Himself IS THE BRIDGE! It is no use talking nonsense, saying that the gulf was not bridged. It was not bridged at the time Jesus told that story, but when He arose and grasped the *keys of death and of hell*, He made a way for His banished to return.

It was bridged by Jesus Christ, and there is not any gulf that He cannot bridge. I believe it! If there is, then He is not God, because there is no gulf that God and His love cannot bridge. Jesus Christ has bridged the gulf between God and man, between heaven and earth, between Israelite and Gentile, between bond and free, between male and female, between rich and poor. He has bridged all the gulfs, blessed be His name, and so "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all *one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28). "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged *according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit*" (1 Pet. 4:6). Thank God! a greater than Abraham is here. He bridges the gulf between heaven and earth and between earth and hell, for it is written, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things *in heaven*, and things *in earth*, and things *under the earth*; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). Weymouth translates, "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in the highest heavens, of those on the earth, and of THOSE IN THE UNDERWORLD, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The hymn writer captured the wonderful truth of this when he penned these immortal words:

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!
Oh, the mighty GULF THAT GOD DID SPAN —
At Calvary!

Chapter 232

The New Heaven And The New Earth

“And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the *first heaven* and the *first earth* were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

With this passage we come to a most significant truth. While nearly everything in the book of Revelation takes place in the realm either of heaven, earth, or the sea; and while we have explored these from the vantage point of three dimensions of consciousness, experience, and life in which men walk, there is yet a further truth which is vital to our understanding of the visions John saw relative to these realms. The reality is that there are **TWO SETS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH!** There are, indeed, **TWO CREATIONS, TWO WORLDS, AND TWO HEAVENLY UNIVERSES!**

First, let us inquire as to what is meant by the terms “heaven and earth.” These are the two realms first mentioned in the Bible, in the very first verse of the very first book. “In the beginning, God created the *heavens* and the *earth*” (Gen. 1:1). The symbolisms of scripture are always appropriate and fitting. The literal, physical heavens and earth bear a certain relationship to each other which well illustrates the function and administration of the spiritual heavens and earth. The heavens, for example, control earth’s tides, atmospheric conditions, day and night, and seasons. The heavens *rule* and the earth is *ruled*. Heaven influences earth, but the earth in no way affects heaven. From the very first pages of scripture, the sun is spoken of as the *ruler* of the day, the moon and stars as the *ruler* of the night.

The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens of our solar system. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the spiritual sun, we find that God made “the greater light to *rule* the day, and the lesser light to *rule* the night” (Gen. 1:16). Here we first have the idea expressed of both sun and moon being *rulers*. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a “Sun.” “For the Lord thy God is a SUN and a shield” (Ps. 84:11). Also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is called “the SUN of Righteousness” (Mal. 4:2). He rules. Furthermore, in reference to this principle of the sun and rulership we read, “He that RULETH over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the SUN ariseth” (II Sam. 23:3-4). Then we find David the king called “the LIGHT of Israel” (II Sam. 21:17).

Concerning saints who are ordained as kings and priests in the kingdom of God we find that they are compared to the sun. “Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father” (Mat. 13:43). Of these same ruling members of God’s elect Jesus says, “And he that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations and he shall RULE them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:26-28). Then he hastily adds, “And I will give him the MORNING STAR.” That is, I will give him power over the nations — rulership — and I will give him the position as the morning star to give direction to mankind, to announce and proclaim the dawning of the new day of the Lord! Now consider these meaningful words of Daniel the prophet wherein he foretells the manifestation of the sons of God, saying, “And they that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness as the STARS for ever” (Dan. 12:3). Then we find in Daniel 4:26 that “the HEAVENS DO RULE.” God’s heaven is His throne. “Heaven is my throne” (Isa. 66:1). The heavens of God’s Spirit in the symbolic terminology of prophecy is the seat where the *sun*, the mighty God Himself, sits and *rules!* And as God’s heaven is His throne, so the prophetic heavens include all the governmental realm of His kings and priests and judges *through which God rules*, and He is *Lord of all*.

All the above constitutes the heavens of God’s Spirit! But now there is another heaven of rulership which is not that of God by His Spirit. It is the rulership of men, including even the basest of men. This *natural governmental realm* is demonstrated quite clearly in the words of the prophet Daniel to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, “thy greatness is grown, and REACHED UNTO HEAVEN” (Dan. 4:22). He had just become the most exalted monarch of earth, the greatest ruler among men: the SUN of that governmental “heaven.” The prophet Isaiah, describing the casting down of earthly kings from their thrones, says, “THE LIGHT IS DARKENED IN THE HEAVENS THEREOF” (Isa. 5:30). This

statement is most meaningful when compared with the words of Jesus when He foretold the removal and destruction of all the rulers and governmental powers of both Judaism and the entire pagan world, saying, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the SUN BE DARKENED, and the MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT, and the STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN, and the POWERS OF THE HEAVENS SHALL BE SHAKEN" (Mat. 24:29). These words of our Lord signified the complete dissolving, darkening, and abolishment of all the governmental orders of His day! Within thirty-five years the kingdom of Judah had ceased to exist and within three hundred years the whole pagan system of Rome began to collapse under the power of the gospel of Christ. Those were the "heavens" that passed away!

The sun in prophecy is the most exalted ruler of any order, the moon the second or lesser, and the stars are other governmental authorities and powers. The heavens are the thrones which these rulers occupy, whether the rulers be men, spirits, powers, organizations, ideologies, or some other entity. The earth is that which is ruled by the heavens — that which looks to the sun, moon, and stars for its light and direction. The heavens that Jesus foretold would pass in Matthew 24 were the orders of *that day* when He came in the flesh. In the book of Revelation, however, John is viewing the eventual perfection of the bride of Christ and the manifestation of the sons of God. This prophecy pertains to the eventual *outcome* of the church age, not its *initiation* two thousand years ago. There is an order of human government now, at the end of the age, but all these are soon to pass away, be darkened, fall from heaven, and this time a new, permanent, eternal order shall be inaugurated! In this new day of the kingdom of God the manifest sons of God shall arise in the power of Christ's resurrection and glory to constitute the celestial bodies that shall rule the earth in the wonderful age now at hand! We are being made to know by the spirit of revelation from God that all that has been giving light in the past, and that has ruled in the past, is going out and shall be darkened forevermore. The glorious *Christ company* shall take the place of all the former sun, moon, and stars. **NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH** — oh, the wonder of it!

Let us now further pursue this thought of *the two heavens and the two earths*. I know of nothing that will so thoroughly awaken the fathomless depths of wisdom and understanding than the blessed knowledge of the sacred mystery that *Christ saves men right now* from "this present evil world." And while you, dear reader, may be one of those waiting with rapturous expectation to be whisked away and "evacuated" off this earth to spend eternity in some far-off heaven somewhere, Peter expresses with urgent and profound aspiration the true desire of all sons of God who groan for the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption and the triumph of the kingdom of God in all realms, saying, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness**. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, blameless" (II Pet. 3:13-14). It is an incontrovertible fact that the vast majority of Christians today are not looking for the same thing Peter was looking for — **NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH!**

Multitudes of believers entertain the notion that when the scriptures speak of the "earth" they always refer to this planet that we live on in our physical existence. They think of towering mountains, great rivers, spacious plains, vast deserts, immense oceans, productive farmlands, rocks, soil, wind, clouds, rain, heat, cold, cities, and towns. They conceive this orb that circles our sun as the "earth" spoken of by the Holy Spirit of inspiration. Now, sometimes that is true. But in many cases that is not the truth! In its spiritual meaning "earth" often signifies a dimension, a realm of life, a state of being, a level of consciousness, a plane of understanding and perception. The apostle James speaks of a wisdom that descendeth not from above, but is "*earthly, sensual, devilish*" (James 3:15). Paul tells us that "The *first man* is of the *earth, earthy*; the *second man* is the Lord *from heaven*. As is the *earthy*, such are they also that *are earthy*; and as is the *heavenly*, such are they also that *are heavenly*. And as we have borne the image of the *earthy*, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*" (I Cor. 15:47-49). Can we not see by this that when the scriptures speak of "earth" they are not always speaking of the planet called earth. Rather it indicates a dimension of conscious existence which carries the imprint and bears the character of that which pertains to the low realm of the earthly — carnal, worldly, temporal, mundane, physical, ignorant, unperceptive, unspiritual, lustful, sensual, unclean, corrupt, base.

People also have the idea that "heaven" is a *place* somewhere up in the sky — that if you could get a rocket ship powerful enough, and people could live long enough, they could fly that ship through space and eventually actually approach the dazzling light and glory of that celestial world of God, angels, and redeemed men; that heavenly city having impressive gates of pearl, impregnable walls of jasper,

wondrous streets of gold leading to millions of extravagant mansions inhabited by heavenly creatures and glorified men, situated beside the sparkling, rejuvenating waters of the effervescent river of life. Now I'm telling you this, my beloved, because this is precisely the concept held by untold millions of Christians concerning heaven and earth!

"And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Heb. 1:10). This passage of scripture reveals two important points which are foreign to the thinking of the vast majority of the Lord's people. First, "the heavens" (plural) indicate not one singular far-off heaven somewhere, but at least two, or perhaps several, or even many realms of heaven. Second, "the heavens are the *works of thine hands*." The heavens are not the "eternal dwelling place of God" as the religious systems teach, but they are the works of God's hands, created, not eternally existing. The very first verse of the Bible makes this truth unmistakably clear. *"In the beginning GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH."* Not only did the earth and all the heavens have a created beginning, but listen now to what follows in verses eleven and twelve of chapter one of Hebrews. *"They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."*

Jesus said that we should pray, "Our Father, which art *in the heavens*..." That's how it reads in the Greek text. How many preachers and teachers in the churches today are proclaiming that the heavens where God dwells and the earth are going to perish? Don't you dare preach that that bright and blessed heaven where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Paul, Peter, and dear aunt Mary and uncle Joe have gone to is going to perish! Yet the apostle Peter declares, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be *dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Pet. 3:10-11).

Ah, it should be clear to any thinking mind that both heaven and earth are used in different ways and with various meanings. We need to think deeply about these things, beseeching the Lord for wisdom and understanding. There can be no doubt that the prophets were not speaking literally of the visible heavens, or this physical terrestrial ball of earth, or the material mountains, rivers, and trees when they spoke by the spirit, saying, "Let the *heavens rejoice*, and the *earth be glad*; let the *sea roar*, and the fullness thereof. Let the *field be joyful*, and all that is therein: then shall all the *trees of the 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. 96:11-13). "The Lord reigneth; let the *earth rejoice*; let the *multitude of isles be glad* thereof" (Ps. 97:1). "The *wilderness* and the *solitary place shall be glad for them*; and the *desert shall rejoice*, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and *rejoice even with joy and singing*...and they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God" (Isa. 35:1-2). "The *mountains* and the *hills shall break forth before you into singing*, and all the *trees of the field shall clap their hands*" (Isa. 55:12). "Let the *floods clap their hands*: let the *hills be joyful together before the Lord*" (Ps. 98:8-9). Do the prophets mean that the starry heavens, and the physical earth, fields, trees, floods, wilderness, mountains, and hills will literally feel the emotions of joy and gladness and audibly vocalize the singing of songs and in some magical way actually *clap hands*? ***I don't think so!***

There can be no doubt that we are living in an hour when the Lord is revealing many things about His great purpose and work in His elect. Speaking of the heavens and the earth the apostle says, "As a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be ***changed***" (Heb. 1:12). Then in another place he says, "As we have borne the image of the *earthy*, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be ***changed***" (I Cor. 15:49,51). With these exhortations fresh upon our minds let us think reverently on what it means that the heavens and the earth shall be folded up like a garment and be ***changed***; and those who have been of the earth, earthy, shall be ***changed*** to bear a new and heavenly image. Are these two not referring to the same change *within God's elect*? Everyone who reads these lines should seek that God will open his eyes to see that it is something deeper and higher than the external heavens and earth that He had in mind when He spoke through the prophet Isaiah proclaiming, "For, behold, I create *new heavens* and a *new earth*: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create *Jerusalem* a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isa. 65:17-18).

Now please don't think the Lord is speaking of the city of Jerusalem over in the Middle East, for He continues, saying, "And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of *weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying.*" These are the same words uttered not of the old earthly Jerusalem, but of the *new heavenly Jerusalem* as John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, exclaimed with holy wonder, "And I John saw the holy city, *new Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall *wipe away all tears from their eyes*, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor *crying*, neither shall there be any more pain: for *the former things are passed away*" (Rev. 21:2-4). Saints have read and re-read these precious passages of holy writ taking for granted that they understood perfectly what was written, and frequently reading over the passages never discerning by the spirit of revelation the deep spiritual truth of what God is saying. Truly the Lord is speaking in symbolic language of great spiritual realities fulfilled *within His people!*

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, *look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye *look for such things*, be diligent that ye may be found of Him *in peace, without spot, and blameless*" (II Pet. 3:13-14). It will be a wonderful day when all the Lord's people understand the great truth that there is even now a new heaven and a new earth *wherein dwelleth righteousness.* "We look for it!" Peter says. Since you are looking for it — now give diligence to be found *in Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.* In other words — BECOME WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR! When you are at peace, without spot, and blameless, you have then *discovered within yourself the new heavens and the new earth...the ones wherein dwelleth righteousness!* This new heaven is the heaven of our regenerated spirit wherein God dwells, and this new earth is the earth of our transformed mind and soul by which we are able to demonstrate through our body in our everyday living, what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Oh, yes!

"If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that *everyone that doeth righteousness is born of Him.* Little children, let no man deceive you: he that *doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous*" (I Jn. 2:29; 3:7). Can any doubt it — *there* is the NEW EARTH *wherein dwelleth righteousness!* Paul speaks the same truth this way, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the *righteousness* of the law might be FULFILLED IN US, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT" (Rom. 8:2-4). It is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death. That is the new administration of the new heavens and the new earth! Earth is always the lower realm of things; heaven is the higher dimension of things. The old earth is the old carnal mind, the old Adamic nature, the old self-centered soul and fleshly desires of the body; the old heaven is our former unregenerated, unawakened, unquickened spirit. The new "heavens" are that high and holy rule and reality of God in our spirit, whereas the new "earth" is soul and body brought under the reign of the spirit, thus establishing righteousness in our earth realm. Isaiah presents this new order of heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and *personalizes it* in these expressive words: "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call *thy walls* Salvation, and *thy gates* Praise. The sun shall be no more *thy light* by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light *unto thee*: for the Lord shall be *unto thee* an everlasting light, and thy God *thy glory*...and the days of *thy mourning* shall be ended. *Thy people* shall be *all righteous*...the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:18-21).

When righteous Noah stepped out of the ark that bright morning he stepped onto the soil of the very same earth that existed before the flood, and at night he gazed into the star-spangled splendor of the very same heavens above. Yet — *all was changed!* The *old order* of things was gone, and a *new order*, or a *new heavens and earth*, would now be manifested. Was it not a *new heaven* and a *new earth* by being *purged* through the overflowing waters of the flood from the wickedness and corrupt order that previously polluted the earth? With what joy and satisfaction do we now entertain the precious promise: "For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and *the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind*" (Isa. 65:17). Hallelujah! What a wonderful thing that God shall so thoroughly cleanse our own little world and the whole vast cosmos that even our minds will be purged from the remembrance of it! God will make such a good job of His work, that the past will be completely obliterated and never thought of any more! God shall not end this present evil world and call forth the new by destroying

either His creatures or His creation. Not one thing, not one precious person shall be lost! He shall bring this world to an end and establish new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness by **MAKING ALL THINGS NEW** — changed, purified, and transformed by His Holy Ghost Fire! “And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I *make all things new*. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:5). Not *all new things*, but *all things NEW!* That is the wonder.

The apostle Peter, writing to the elect of the Lord, explained just how this present heavens and earth pass away. By inspiration he wrote, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall *melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be BURNED UP*” (II Pet. 3:10). The old world of Noah’s day passed away in the waters of the flood, but the heavens and the earth which are now are *reserved unto fire* (II Pet. 3:7). The book of Revelation is just as clear and explicit as to how the new heavens and earth are brought into being. Hear it! “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life *was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea (wickedness of man)*” (Rev. 20:15; 21:1).

When we can truly see and understand by the spirit, and when we do not have a chapter break between the verses quoted, the intent and meaning of what the apostle was seeing suddenly becomes crystal clear. You see, beloved, in the Greek text there are no chapter and verse divisions as we have in our English translations. These were added by the translators for our convenience. Therefore, those whose names or natures are not written in the book of life, who are then cast into the lake of God’s Holy Ghost Fire, is not in the original text the *last verse* of chapter twenty. Nor is the statement, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth,” the *first verse* of chapter twenty-one. Because of the chapter divisions in our English Bibles we are led to believe that somehow John is changing the subject, therefore we must start a new chapter. Not so! Read together in sequence as these verses are in the Greek text, can you not see that the new heavens and the new earth are simply the *result* of men whose natures do not conform to the life of God being cast into God’s great purifying fire!

I would also point out John’s use of the little conjunction “and.” The use of this conjunction indicates that something went before and what follows continues the drama. “And” shows that the action is continuous, simply flowing on and on without interruption. For instance, if I say, “I walked down the road *and* I saw a dog that appeared to be lost; *and* I approached the dog *and* spoke friendly to him. He responded at once *and* wagged his tail, *and* as I continued on toward my house he followed me.” You will notice that what follows after each connective “and” grows out of, or is the effect or result of, what happened before. If I had not walked down the street I would not have seen the dog. If I had not seen the dog I would not have approached and spoken to him. If I would not have spoken in a friendly manner to the dog he would not have wagged his tail. And if this connection had not been made he would not have followed me home. And...and...and! Now let us quote the passage above again and see just how one action in the drama leads to the next — indeed, how each is the *result* of the action preceding it.

“AND the sea gave up the dead which were in it; AND death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: AND they were judged every man according to their works. AND death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. AND whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; AND there was no more sea. AND I John saw the holy city...” Seeing that “and” was used to continue the thought, it becomes clear that the new heaven and the new earth are the direct result of the cleansing, purging, purifying, refining, and transforming action of the lake of fire! Oh, yes, when a man comes to God’s appointed day of dealing, and his nature needs to be cleansed and purified, he is subjected to the *corrective judgment* of God. “No more sea” indicates that the state of being of the restless, surging, sinning, tossed, and tormented masses of people has been dealt with; for when God’s great judgment by fire finally comes to a close, the whole world of mankind will have found their everlasting end in the righteousness of the redeeming Christ of God. You can count on that!

Here we have the two heavens and the two earths — the OLD and the NEW! With astonished wonder the Seer or Patmos beheld this scene in spirit and cried out, “And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the *first heaven* and the *first earth* were passed away...” It is significant to note that the word translated “first” is the Greek word *protos* which is rendered in verse four of the same chapter as “the *former* things,” and that is a more accurate rendering. “...for the *former heaven* and the *former earth* were passed away.” You will understand a great mystery when you see how it is that whatever has ruled

or does rule your life apart from the spirit becomes your “former heaven.” Of a truth I tell you that the thing that rules or motivates or controls you in either soul or body, in mind, emotion, will, or desire, constitutes the “heaven” over your life! If Hollywood with its glitter and entertainment, its values, standards, and spirit rules you then the ruling heaven over your head is Hollywood. If you “eat, drink, and sleep” sports, then sports are the heaven that rules you. If politics, political ideology, politicians, and some political party is what lights up your life, then you are governed out of the political heavens.

Some people’s heaven is the business world; work, climbing their way up the corporate ladder, gaining prestige, position, and power, and *making money*. Those who are ruled from these heavens are obsessed and consumed by this realm, becoming workaholics, often unprincipled in their ethics, stepping on others and destroying people in their selfish, frenzied climb to the top. There is certainly nothing wrong with being in business or earning a good living — it just cannot *rule us!* Other folk’s heaven is philosophy, education, pleasure, drugs, sex, or lust. And we cannot fail to mention the various “religious heavens” that rule over billions of lives on planet earth!

Men governed out of the religious heavens fight over religious creeds, forms, organization, traditions, sacraments, liturgies, and a thousand other things; they condemn everyone else to hell, demand obedience upon penalty of eternal damnation, lay heavy yokes of external rules, regulations, laws, dress codes, you cannot do this or that, cannot go here or there, demand tithes and offerings, fleece widows and rob the poor, make merchandise of men’s souls, burn heretics at the stake, and blow themselves up as suicide bombers! By the time many so-called “holiness” groups get through with the women in the church, putting them through the dress-making and appearance departments, these very women have lost most of their appeal to their husbands, and then they wonder why the world is filled with “unsaved” husbands! All through the years these holiness groups have imposed an external appearance of “holiness,” forcing their people to conform to certain contrived standards of conduct. Such “holiness” focuses primarily on what they wear and the kinds of places they go. Some cannot even go to the county fair, wear a wedding ring, put on make-up, or drink a Coca-Cola! That is not *holiness*, my friend, it is *legalism!*

There are some groups that will split and start a new “church” over the length of the ribbons on a prayer covering, how many buttons are on the sleeve of a coat, how the beard is trimmed, whether one wears a necktie, or whether the chrome on their automobile is painted black. The further one goes in these directions the more ridiculous it becomes! I see these women at the mall dressed in their long dresses and a particular style of head scarf, and I know by their attire that they are some kind of Christian. But it doesn’t tell me they are “holy,” it only lets me know that they are *carnal*. Where does scripture teach us to be known as Christians by the style of our clothes? You see, I would never recognize these women as Christians because of the love, joy, peace, and glory of God radiating from their countenances — only because of the outer garments they are wearing! Doctrines, creeds, traditions of the elders, commandments of men, and *control over men’s lives* — these are the governmental powers of these RELIGIOUS HEAVENS!

Every man has his “heaven” and every man *is the earth* that heaven rules over! For many who read these lines the most recent heavens that have passed away are the heavens of the old-order church systems of man. Of this Paul Mueller wrote, “Once again, in this new Day, the Lord has purposed to do a new thing in the earth. But since all power and authority to do anything in the new earth must come from Heaven, from His throne, or from the realm of Spirit, God must create a new Heaven, or a new realm of Spirit, which He has done. And when the Lord brings forth a new Heaven, He is, by that sovereign act, changing the order of things, that He might do a new thing in the earth. You can beg and plead with the Lord, fast and pray earnestly, asking Him to bless the old-order church works in this new Day, but He may not answer you, for our Father is doing a new thing! There is now a new Heaven, a new throne realm, or a new realm of Spirit, which governs all God’s work on earth! And with the coming forth of this new Heaven, *‘the former things are passed away.’* God has established a new spiritual order, beginning in the Heavens, and that new spiritual order is beginning to change everything spiritual that pertains to the earth, so that, in the fullness of Father’s time, a new earth shall also come forth! And now I join John in declaring, *‘And I saw A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH, for the former heaven and the former earth were passed away.’*

“Therefore, we will have to think in terms of doing things on earth according to God’s NEW WAY, not our own way, which is the old way, or the way we were accustomed to doing things in the

past. A NEW HEAVEN HAS COME FORTH. And that new Heaven is a new Spiritual order, with new principles and new plans for the kingdom of God on earth, which will provide us with NEW METHODS OF WORKING WITH THE LORD and doing His perfect will on earth, during this new Kingdom Day! It is difficult for us to imagine what that new ministry will be like, for we tend to think of 'ministry' in the context of church order, which is the old order of the past. But a new ministry exists in the Heavens of God's Spirit, and those who are Spirit-led and Spirit-directed will be able to read, hear, and receive that new ministry, in the Spirit and by the Spirit. The Lord's chosen elect are ready for change, and they have progressed spiritually with the Lord, as the holy Spirit has led them. *'These are they...'* who are motivated by the Spirit, and are therefore able to discern the will and the way of the Lord pertaining to His kingdom, for the Heavens of Spirit are open to them (Jn. 1:51)" — end quote.

A new heaven and a new earth necessitate the passing of the *former* or *old* heaven and earth. The *former* and the *present*. The *old* and the *new*. THESE ARE THE TWO SETS OF HEAVENS AND EARTH I SPOKE OF EARLIER. Each heaven has its sun, moon, and stars, its primary source of dominion (sun) in our life; its rules, culture, and pressures (moon) which also direct our thinking, behavior, and activities; and the myriad lesser influences (stars) which likewise affect our actions. The way we think, act, walk, and live out our life *is the earth-realm* ruled from those heavens! And every earth has its mountains and valleys, its rivers and streams, its air and oceans. Here is the truth we must consider. When we see in the book of Revelation events taking place in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the earth, with mountains, trees, grass, rivers, streams, seas, and in the air we must understand and know whether these belong to THE OLD HEAVEN AND THE OLD EARTH or to the NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH! John saw them *both*! And until we see them both and are able to *distinguish between them*, our understanding of the Revelation will be dimly defective. For example, when something is taking place involving the sun — is it the sun of the old heaven, or the sun of the new heaven? If something is happening in a high mountain — is it a mountain of the old earth, or a mountain of the new earth? Can you not see the mystery? What a difference it makes when we understand which heaven or earth we are viewing! It is not difficult to determine which heaven the new Jerusalem descends from. "And I saw a *new* heaven...and I John saw the holy city, *new* Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:1-2). There can be no doubt about it — the NEW Jerusalem comes down from God out of the NEW heaven! Those who are looking for the holy city to come down through the stars of the galaxies like a space ship from some distant sphere simply have not learned the ABC's of SPIRITUAL REALITIES!

Think about it! The Lord has declared, "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall *remain before me*, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isa. 62:22). The Lord, our King and Creator of all, has declared that He will create the new heavens and the new earth. And the new heavens and the new earth will be permanent and endure forever. God's word tells us they "shall *remain (continuously) before me*, saith the Lord." Now think about all the cataclysmic events that transpire throughout the book of Revelation and then consider this: The *new heavens* and the *new earth* which *remain before the Lord* cannot be darkened, removed, fall, turn to blood, be shaken, visited by earthquakes, plagues, disasters, fire, pestilence, judgments, or ruled by beasts. Can we not see by this that many times in the Revelation it is our *old heavens* and our *old earth* that are being visited by the Lord and dealt with, for all the above mentioned things happen in the heavens and in the earth as they are judged by the mighty power of the Spirit! It is our old heavens and earth that finally completely pass away! It is the sun of our old heavens that is darkened! It is the stars of our old heavens that fall unto the earth! It is the moon of our old heavens that turns to blood! It is our old earth, our natural, carnal, fleshly life where the beast rules that is being shaken, devastated, shrouded in darkness, burned with fire, and brought to naught!

Let your heart meditate deeply upon the wonder and glory of the *new heavens* and the *new earth*. Let us begin with these inspired words of the apostle Paul, "Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, He is a *new creation*: old things are *passed away*; behold, all things are *become new*. And all things (of this new creation) *are of God...*" (II Cor. 5:17-18). I am wonderfully blessed by the rendering of this passage from the New English Version: "When anyone is united to Christ, THERE IS A NEW WORLD; the old order is gone, and a new order has already begun. From first to last, this has been the work of God!" Wonderful! The Williams translation has it, "For if anybody is in union with Christ, he is the work of A NEW CREATION; the old condition has passed away, a new condition has come. This has all originated with God!" Oh, yes! Our new heavens and earth, our new world, our new order and condition originated

in Christ Jesus, and entering into Him brings to an end the old corrupt order of consciousness, lifestyle, and nature, and the establishing of the new which “after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24).

Thus, these “new heavens” and “new earth” are not a new material heavens of galaxies, stars, suns, moons, and planets, nor a new literal earth. The physical heavens and earth were made perfect, and the scriptures show that they will remain for the ages (Ps. 89:36-37; 104:5). Oh, yes, God will bless even the natural earth in new and wonderful ways for man’s sake, but it will still be this same earth we live on today. The new earth is a *new kind of people*, those who live out of a soul that is under the dominion of the spirit, and new heavens are the *new authority and order* out of the heavens of the Spirit. When the Daystar of the new creation, Christ the Lord, arises in our hearts; when the life-giving rays of the sun, even the Lord the Spirit, break forth upon us in His glory, warmth, and splendor, then this old world within us begins to be dissolved. The old heavens and the old earth within us meet with the all-consuming heat of the Sun of righteousness and fall away to nothing in the light of the glory of God. The Spirit of Jesus within then begins to frame a new heaven and a new earth in soul and body, even one wherein dwelleth righteousness. All things are born anew within us by the creative word of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus and not only the heaven and the earth pass away, but there is *no more sea*; no more great overflowings of the carnal mind, no more inundations of the flesh nature, no more swellings and surgings of unholy emotions and ungodly desires, no more roarings of human Adamic pride, intellect, wisdom, knowledge, reasoning, ego, self-hood, or worldly glory, for the sea is dried up within us never to be anymore at all!

Every apprehended son of God is coming to *experientially know* the new heaven and the new earth! This is what was transpiring in John’s experience when he said, “And I *saw* a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” John *saw* the new heaven and he *saw* the new earth! To see the new heaven and new earth means to have a fresh understanding or a new concept about heaven and earth. John saw the new heaven and earth by being *caught up in the spirit* into the day of the Lord. This is a wonderful truth that shows that the new heaven and earth can only be seen *in* the spirit and *by* the spirit! John said, “And I *saw*...” The verb “saw” means to *discern, perceive, cognize, discover, recognize.*” We will never discover anything that God has hidden from us, but when by His grace He draws back the curtain and reveals to us the wonders of His glory we are blessed to see things that others cannot see. John says, “I saw!” “I saw a new heaven and a new earth!” John makes it personal, and it must become personal for each of us. By the same spirit of revelation I can now say, “I see!” “I Preston see a new heaven and a new earth!” Do you, my beloved, have it within your view? With the understanding of the spirit and the perception of the mind of Christ can you see a new heaven and a new earth created within your own experience?

It should also be evident that there is a precise order to what John saw. He first said, “I saw a new heaven.” He then followed this by saying, “*and* a new earth.” Heaven bespeaks the inner world of spirit. Earth signifies the outer life of man. There can never be a new earth until *first* there is a new heaven! That is always the order — heaven comes first and then the earth. “In the beginning God created the *heavens and the earth*” (Gen. 1:1). People are always trying to restrain or change their outer man without a quickening or renewing of the inward man. They try to obey outward rules, regulations, and all kinds of religious observances which will make them appear godly but does not change the nature. And it doesn’t work! Can we not see by this that we can only see a new earth after we see a new heaven! If you have not seen a new heaven, a new dominion out of the indwelling spirit, you will never see a new earth, for earth is set in the heavens! From the beginning this has been the divine order.

Heaven is the tabernacle of the earth. In the spiritual sense the new heaven is your spiritual life raised up within you in power and great glory, and the new earth is your redeemed, transformed soul and body. New! “For the former things are passed away.” “Behold, I make all things new.” “If any man be in Christ, he *is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (II Cor. 5:17). The truth of John’s vision is just that. It’s not the literal mountains, the trees, the rivers, and the oceans of planet earth that are made new. It is *new men*! When one has truly experienced this his first old religious concept of heaven and his first old religious concept of earth have passed away. His old spiritual and mental-physical state of being have likewise passed away! He has received a new understanding and touched a new reality! It is a state of being and an identity beyond what we have been consciously aware of. The new heaven and the new earth are indeed the *new man, the new mind, the new spirit, the new heart, the new nature, the new life, and the new creation* that we are. Isn’t that far

better and greater than new mountains, trees, and rivers! The sons of God are within themselves the firstfruits of this new heaven and new earth! It is a new way of thinking, a new perception of reality, a new consciousness of being, a new dimension of expression, a new plane and power of living! Oh, the wonder of it!

We know the reality of the new earth when God comes down out of the heavens of His Spirit to dwell and manifest in the earth realm — the visible, tangible realm. John said that he saw a new heaven and then at once he said, “And I John *saw* the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God *out of heaven*, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice *out of heaven* saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:2-3). The New Jerusalem, the Holy City, is God coming down out of the invisibility of spirit to manifest His presence, life, and glory visibly in and through a people. The New Jerusalem is the capital of the new earth — the dominion of God formed and crystallized within and through a people in union with Christ. These are God’s elect in whom the heavenly reality has been fully formed! These are they who are the light of the world, for the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of this city! The New Jerusalem is the firstfruits of the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!

To those who walk in the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God the Holy Spirit is giving a new concept of earth. Multitudes of Christians are possessed of the Babylonish notion expressed in the old song that says, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.” For these poor souls life in the flesh is a toil, a drudgery, filled with weakness, lack, pain, trouble, temptation, and sorrow and they are just waiting to die and get out of here. “Stop the world and let me off” is the popular “rapture” mentality. One thing is very clear — these precious folks have never SEEN THE NEW EARTH! Neither have they seen the NEW HEAVEN! Once you have seen, discerned, perceived, discovered, recognized, and experienced the new earth you no longer have any desire to “go” anywhere! There is no need to go anywhere! God manifested in and through your soul and your body *is* the new earth! That is the new earth “wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Study the word righteousness, my beloved, and you will see that it is fulfilled only *in and through men*! This passage leaves no room for doubt that the righteousness of God expressed in and through our lives constitutes the new earth! Where else would you want righteousness to dwell? Where else does righteousness need to dwell? How could righteousness ever be found in that earth out there except it flows through righteous men? Where can righteousness dwell in such a measure that it transforms everything in the whole world? Only in the lives of mankind! When the righteousness of God is revealed through the lives of all people everywhere, the old earth will have fully passed away for every man, and the new earth will be established in the glory of God. Isn’t it wonderful!

You see, beloved, it is not about what happens to this physical planet called earth upon which we walk. Oh, no! It is not that earth out there at all — it is this earth which *we are* that has become new! And yet — it is wondrously true that the earth out there *is* and *shall be* affected, delivered, and changed by the life of God manifested through the new heaven and the new earth that we are! This is certain, for man is given the dominion over the earth and over all things. The outward world fell under the curse along with its ruler, Adam, and it shall be delivered, cleansed, and restored from the bondage of corruption through its ruler, the many-membered Christ, the second man, the last Adam! The firstborn Son of God demonstrated this wonderful reality when He calmed the storm, fed the five thousand, and turned water into wine. Do you see the new heaven, the new rulership, my brother, my sister, and can you see the new earth? I see a new heaven and I see a new earth! I see a heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, glory, authority, and power! Oh, yes, I SEE IT!

Chapter 233

The New Heaven And The New Earth (continued)

“And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the *first heaven* and the *first earth* were *passed away*; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

There is no truth within the pages of God’s blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating a new heavens and a new earth. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, “I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, AND LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE” (Isa. 51:16). Zion is a people, the Lord’s elect, and it is in Zion that the Lord plants the heavens of the new spiritual order by His word, and lays the foundations of the new earth wherein He dwells. It is God’s called and chosen elect, His glorious city and mount of Zion, that He sets in the tabernacle of the heavens to be in a settled place, firmly established by His love and grace, secure in the new spirit and the new nature, no more to be lost or wandering in the emptiness of selfhood.

Stand with me for a moment in holy contemplation of these words the Lord spoke to Isaiah. The Lord said that He would plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth *in Zion*, His people. But the Lord prefaced this by telling Isaiah *how it would be done!* Hear it! **“I have put my words in thy mouth...that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth.”** It would be accomplished by THE WORD OF THE LORD IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SPOKESMAN! How would you suppose God would create a new heaven and a new earth? How did He create the physical heavens and earth? “And God *said*, *Let there be!*” The apostle Peter tells us that it was “by the *word* of God” that the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water (II Pet. 3:5). John tells us in his Gospel, “In the beginning was *the Word*...all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made” (Jn. 1:1-3). God creates by His word! God creates the new heavens and the new earth with a “*Creative Word*”! He is moving within us in this hour by His revelatory word, His living word, His omnipotent creative word to plant within His elect the new heavens and to lay the foundations of the new earth. This word is nigh us, even in our *mouth* and in our *heart!* (Rom. 10:9-10). This word has no corruption in it at all — it is the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

It has been made very clear to me by the spirit of truth that the only way God can create within us this new heavens and new earth, in all the splendor of their fullness, is to bring us back to the beginning. When God has finished His work in you, my beloved, He will have taken you back to the beginning — because you are His spoken Word. Not just the Christ in heaven somewhere, but the Christ within us *is the Word of God!* All that God has done, is doing, and shall yet do in us is by His powerful, omnipotent, living, creative word! How do you think a man is “born again”? “Being *born again...by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever” (I Pet. 1:23). The Father birthed each one of us by the spoken Word! We were birthed as the living offspring of God, who is spirit, in the image and likeness of God, through or by the Word! “And God *said*, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). That’s all God did in Genesis chapter one. “God *said*, Let there be...and it was so!” And now the thoughts of God have risen up within our minds and hearts, bringing us to the realization of our sonship to God! Treasure every word that God is speaking into your mind and heart in these days, dear one, for this word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God is the power of God to plant the new heavens, and lay the foundations of the new earth, *within you!* Aren’t you glad!

It should be clear to every enlightened mind that God is in the process of making an entirely new creation, or making *all things new* — not this time a mere natural creation, nor yet a purely spiritual one, but a *spiritual-physical* one. The present natural creation is really only a step in the process of making the creation God had in mind from the beginning. “First that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual,” is the divinely revealed order. Does that mean the natural is completely done away with, supplanted by the spiritual? Not at all! If that were so, there would only be a new *heaven*, but not a new *earth!* It means that the natural is *swallowed up* by the spiritual. The natural is a necessary step in the

process of making the kind of creation God purposed from the beginning. Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the *proto-type* of that new creation — the PHYSICAL SPIRITUALIZED, RAISED UP INTO UNION WITH THE DIVINE AND HEAVENLY! The *physical body* of Jesus was raised from the dead, brought out of the tomb, spiritualized and made a *spiritual body* — not a *spirit*, mind you, nor yet just a *body* — but a SPIRITUAL BODY! Jesus is still referred to as a *man* all through the New Testament, not only after His resurrection, but also after His ascension. And to this day “there is one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus.”

The firstborn of this new creation order is a GOD-MAN upon the throne of universal power! Think of it! When you see Jesus as a divine-human, a God-man, one of the natural creation *metamorphosed, spiritualized, raised up into the celestial and incorruptible*, then you see exactly what God is after in the whole creation, and you also see what the finished product of the new heavens and the new earth *within you* will be like! “This corruptible must *put on* incorruption.” “This mortal must *put on* immortality.” How unspeakably wonderful! We see the natural creation all around us, but this natural creation is not the finished product any more than the ore dug out of the earth is the fine piece of jewelry the artisan has in mind when he begins his work. The whole creation is still in the process of being made into the kind of creation God started out to make. God is still Creator! And He is still *creating a new heavens and a new earth!* The work has only begun in *us!*

The new heaven is the spirit of Christ and the new earth is the body of Christ, the members of which have put on incorruption. The new heaven is the new *mind of the spirit*, and the new earth is the *soul and body quickened and governed by the spirit*. Surely the fullness of redemption includes possessing the “mind of Christ” as well as a body “fashioned like unto His glorious body.” And being conformed to His image, partakers of His divine nature, we shall be His “all righteous” ones — a new heaven and a new earth WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS!

The coming “world” will be one that will see the fullness of God in operation through His Zion people, His manifest sons, the demonstration of the mighty power of the new heavens and the new earth. It is not a mansion over the hilltop, nor a cabin in the corner of gloryland, nor white night gowns, nor harps, nor palm branches, nor dangling feet in some stream of celestial water. Oh, no! There is a job to be done! A battle to be fought! A victory to be won! An enemy to be conquered! “And there was *no more sea.*” “And there shall be *no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*” This is God’s will for humanity on this earth, and this is what our call to sonship is all about. We are not headed for a great eternal “praise service” in the sky. Creation is groaning and waiting for the sons of God to deliver it from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. That is a work program! When God created in that long ago beginning the record states that He *worked*. And making *all things new is work!* It would be a most beautiful thing if all the saints of God could have an open vision that would enable them to understand the glory of God’s purpose on earth, and His election in man.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME...” (Heb. 6:4-5). The Rotherham translation renders this last statement, “Mighty works of a coming age.” The Interlinear Greek New Testament says, “The works of power of the age to come.” Jesus said, “Greater works than these shall *ye do!*” But have the followers of Jesus really done any *greater works* than Jesus did? They did *more works*, but not necessarily *greater*. The book of Acts doesn’t record any. Neither do the epistles. Nor does church history. And, my friend, after a century and a quarter since the restoration to the church of the baptism in the Spirit, after some seventy years since the great healing campaigns of the 1940’s and 1950’s, and the awesome Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit with the restoration of the five-fold ministry, gifts of the Spirit, and the prophetic flow, have you seen any *greater works* than raising the dead, cleansing lepers, walking on water, calming storms, feeding thousands with a few fish and loaves of bread, and turning water into wine? You know you haven’t!

Yet, according to the writer to the Hebrews, there are MIGHTY WORKS OF A COMING AGE, GREATER WORKS THAN JESUS DID TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO! And according to the writings of the apostles, all we have experienced of God during this church age, of His Spirit, of His Word, of His power, glory, miracles, manifestation, and revelation, has been merely a small *taste*, a little *sampling*, of the glory and power to be revealed through the sons of God in that coming age! Why,

friends, we have only received the *firstfruits* of the Spirit, just a little *down payment* of what God will do through His in-Christed body upon this earth. Can you imagine a world where the hospitals have been emptied, the doctor's offices deserted, the prisons closed, the policemen all laid off, the armies and armaments all dismantled, the mortuaries locked, the dead raised, all nature tamed, controlled, and subdued, the nations turned to the Lord, all men restored into the image and glory of God, and the whole world system transformed — and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YOU SEE as all creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the glorious mind of Christ rules and reigns over the earth realm through the manifest sons of God! The fullness of what we have just had a taste will be the normal works on behalf of humanity in that blessed world to come. This will be the new heavens and the new earth raised up and established in each and every man in all the fullness of what that means!

God's people are still lacking in understanding, and we must keep our anointed focus on the reality that the new heavens and the new earth are preeminently *personal*. The earth itself will only be blessed and transformed because the *people* are transformed into the righteous kingdom of God and are filled with the mind, spirit, faith, peace, joy, glory and power of God. When you look at a map of the world you find parcels of land with names such as Canada, United States, Russia, China, England, Africa, etc. These are the names of geographical territories. Here in El Paso we live only a few miles from the Mexican border and before the drug wars made Ciudad Juarez, Mexico the most dangerous city in the world we sometimes drove down there to take friends who wished to experience Mexico, or to shop or get dental work done. When I cross the border I am driving on soil that is called Mexico. When I return and cross the border again, I am back in a country called the United States of America. These are the names of these land masses. But when you listen to the news and hear that our country is conferring with Mexico about the drug wars, that the United States has sold a million bushels of wheat to Russia, that Japan has sold a million automobiles to Germany, that Europe is sending peace-keeping forces to some country in Africa or the Middle East — what are we hearing? The newscaster isn't talking about the land, the terrain, the soil that bears those names. He is talking about the *people* who live in these various lands. It is the *citizens* of Russia, Japan, the United States, and Europe that he is speaking of. Not the places, but the people. The land mass itself does nothing, it neither buys nor sells nor builds nor anything else. What determines the conditions and activities in any country is the people that live in that place. The people are identified by the *realm* or *territory* where they live. In just the same way, when the scripture refers to "heaven" and "earth," it is not referring to *places* as such, but the beings who inhabit them. When scripture says, "Let the *heavens* rejoice, and the *earth* be glad," what is going to rejoice? Is it stars, suns, planets, moons; is it hills, rocks, trees, valleys, and rivers? Of course not! It is the *inhabitants of those realms* who are to rejoice and be glad.

In the opening chapters of the Bible the Garden of Eden reveals the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It is not the Kingdom IN Heaven — it is the Kingdom OF Heaven, the kingdom that originates in and out of a heavenly realm. Our prayer is that the kingdom will *come*, so that God's will is done *on earth* as it is in heaven. God is now creating a new reality on earth, a *people* that is *heavenly* but that walks on *earth*. They bring heaven down within themselves to earth. Within them heaven and earth converge. They have no desire to leave earth to "go" to heaven. They are not looking for either a rapture or death. They *are* the city that comes down from God out of heaven. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." If your aim is to get to heaven, and the holy city comes down from God out of heaven to be the tabernacle of God with men — you will miss the holy city altogether! Golden streets in heaven? I don't think so! The golden streets (a symbol, of course) are in the New Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem is on earth!

This new reality is formed in the elect of God in this hour and shall spread to all creation. God is creating something new! A new history is beginning! A new world is coming to earth! The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea! God is raising up the life of Christ in a people and through the sons of God He is putting a seed *into the earth*. We are now the light of men and the light of the world! We are now the salt of the earth! We are the new seed for the new age! God's purpose in raising up Christ in us is that through us the generation of mankind may be lifted out of the curse of sin and death, toward the revelation of eternal life and glory. Why else did Jesus heal the sick and raise the dead? Why did He exalt the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed? Why did He touch, with miracle power, the hopeless and possessed? Surely not in order to tell them that they would be blessed after death in some far-off heaven somewhere!

Jesus, the first manifest Son of God, brought the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God to men great and small right here on earth *because the kingdom of God is at hand!* He brought heaven to earth. He revealed what the whole world of mankind would be like when every man has been touched by the omnipotent power of His life. That is the homeland we seek! There is no other to be sought, *for the tabernacle of God is with men.* The holy city comes down from God out of heaven. There is a new heaven and a new earth *within the experience of mankind.* Strange, is it not, how all the churches on earth teach just the opposite! They teach that the tabernacle of man is with God — in heaven. They teach that the streets of gold, the river of life, the tree of life, are all *far away in heaven.* But the goal of all God's redemptive effort is that finally He will be a God whom men will see on earth, a God who will make earth to be one with heaven, where Jesus is Lord over all men and they, in Him, will live in the Kingdom of Heaven. *That is the new heavens and the new earth!*

There is really nothing complicated about the new heavens and the new earth. To aid our understanding of this beautiful truth let us learn a lesson from the symbolisms of the book of Revelation. The key to this understanding is the word "sea." As soon as John sees the new heaven and the new earth he immediately notes that "there was no more sea." Again and again throughout the book of Revelation we have shown that the word "sea" is not used in the literal sense of the vast oceans of earth, but in a figurative and symbolic way. The vast majority of the events in the Revelation take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These three realms, of course, represent three dimensions of life within each of us, three states of being, life-styles, levels of consciousness, spheres of existence, and realms of experience. There is a "heaven" realm within our spirit, an "earth" realm within our soul, and a "sea" realm within our body. The highest of these realms is heaven — where God dwells in our spirit. Earth is the in-between realm, a dimension that at its highest touches heaven, and at its lowest kisses the sea. That is the soul which lies between the spirit and the body. It can yield to the spirit above to become heavenly, or to the sea (body realm, flesh nature) to become sensual and devilish.

The *lowest* of these three realms is the sea. Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: "The wicked are *like the troubled sea*, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, "These are *raging waves of the sea*, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 13). No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man, with the passions and lusts and the motions of sin that lurk in the body with its lower nature, that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and every wicked work. It is more than a raging sea of evil — it is a virtual *tsunami of self-destruction!*

Now, when John says, "...and there was no more sea," that does not suggest to me that the vast oceans of earth have dried up. That tells me that there is no more realm for a dragon to rise out of; Leviathan, that serpent in the sea, has been destroyed. There are no more men in whom the dragon nature agitates, tosses, overthrows, and torments them like the troubled sea. That tells me that all men have been reconciled to God, the nature has been transformed, and the peace and righteousness and love of God reigns in every heart. It is already true within the elect of the Lord! Ah, there is a place — a place in God's *new heaven* and in God's *new earth*, in the triumph of Christ raised up in our land, where the anguish represented by the sea exists for us no more! When all men, and all things, and all realms have been restored into Christ again it shall truly be said, "AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA!"

If "no more sea" does not indicate the drying up of earth's oceans, is it not also true that "a new heaven and a new earth" does not suggest that somewhere out in space John saw a new planet, or a new atmosphere, or a new solar system, or a new cosmos? I know and am sure that the new heaven and the new earth of which the prophets have so vividly spoken is a typical representation of the new order of the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God is established in that domain where God's *saving power* has defeated all opposition, broke down every wall, transformed all that is contrary to God's nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the *Kingdom of God*. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will, the word, and the ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — *there* the kingdom of God has come and is advancing! In the kingdom it is no longer God ruling *over you* by His sovereignty from without,

but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge, and will of God *entering into you, becoming your very own reality.*

This is where the kingdom of God and the new heaven and earth become synonymous. The kingdom out of the heavens must affect the earth and bring a mighty change. The highest expression of the new heavens and the new earth, or the kingdom of God, in the world today, is found in that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who lean upon His breast, who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are loyal subjects of His kingdom, for they ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is their Father. They obey without question, for it is their nature to do only and always those things that please the Father. They are true citizens of the kingdom of God! They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine and heavenly kingdom. They are the embodiment and manifestation of the new heavens and the new earth. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! They are destined to share all His glory and sit with Him upon His throne! They are the members of the government of God, the holy city coming down, and the kingdom of heaven is expressed through them and the power and the glory of the kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come.

Consider again these awesome words: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth *were passed away.*" How unutterably significant this is! John tells us in the plainest of words that there is a new heaven and a new earth *for...that is, because...the former heaven and the former earth had passed away.* The message is just this — God cannot bring forth His *new* until the *old* has been done away with! If the Spirit of God has begun to build in your life a new world and a new order, and left any of the old citadels of fleshly living, of self-will, of carnal understanding, of religious mentality, and worldly ways and means standing, they would have to come down. You may congratulate yourself upon their remaining, but it is a false congratulation, your glorying is not good. I am sure of this, that Christ will never put a new piece upon an old garment, or new wine in old wineskins: He knows the rent would be worse in the long run, and the bottles would burst. All that is of the flesh's spinning must be unraveled. The natural building must come down, lath and plaster, stud and truss, roof and foundation, and we must have a house not made with hands, of a new creation.

It was a great mercy for the city of London, England that the great fire cleared away all the old buildings which were the den of the plague, a far healthier city was then built; and it is a great mercy for a man when God sweeps right away all his own righteousness and strength, his own religious edifice and soulish efforts, when He makes him feel that he is nothing, and can be nothing, and can do nothing, and drives him to confess that Christ must be all in all, and that his only hope and strength lies in the eternal might of the ever-blessed Spirit. Sometimes in a house of business an old system has been going on for years, and it has caused much confusion, and allowed much dishonesty. You come in as a new manager, and you adopt an entirely new plan. Now, try if you can, to graft your method on to the old system. How it will frustrate you! Day after day you say to yourself, I cannot work it: if I had swept the whole away and started afresh, clear from the beginning, it would not have given me one-tenth of the trouble!" God does not intend to graft the system of His kingdom upon the fleshly ways of man, nor upon the tired old methods of religious Babylon, nor to make the new Adam to grow out of the old Adam, nor to evolve the new heaven and the new earth out of the old heaven and earth, but He intends to teach us this: "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (II Cor. 5:17). "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, *I make all things new*" (Rev. 21:5).

Consider with me this scene. There is an organ in the corner of a church building. Suppose the pastor tells the congregation that this organ is going to be taken away this week and replaced with a new one. Then on next Sunday they come to church and he says to them, "The old organ is gone now and we have a new one in its place." Would you look for a fresh coat of paint on the old organ? Would you listen to determine whether the old organ had been tuned up? Would you examine the organ to see whether it was the old organ with some new parts installed? No — you would expect to see a *brand new organ!* Well, our text says that our old heaven and our old earth will *pass away* and be *replaced* by a new heaven and a new earth!

"For, behold, I *create new heavens and a new earth:* and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). When God says that He "will create," what does He mean? He means that He is going to call into existence something that did not previously exist. "In the beginning God created

the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). He made the billions of swirling nebulae and galaxies of glory. He created the earth, the sun, and the moon. He had nothing with which to begin. He simply spoke and these things came into existence. Now, you can build a table or make a cake, but you must use pre-existent materials. However, when God creates He brings things into existence only by His powerful and omnipotent Word! So when I say that God is creating a new heaven and a new earth, I do not mean that God will use the old heaven and old earth. These are passed away! Our physical life does not become our spiritual life. Our carnal mind does not become our spiritual mind. Our human strength does not become "anointed" to be divine strength. Human wisdom is not translated into the wisdom of God. All must be destroyed!

In the Bible the term "creation" is used one hundred and twenty times, and each time it is used it means the origin of things and not the cleansing or the change of some old thing. That reveals why every *revival* in church history has eventually gone into apostasy. A new revelation, a new vision, a new anointing, a new ministry, a new worship, a new moving of the Spirit was simply *added* to the old church order that was already in place. It was new wine in old wineskins, it was a new piece of cloth sewed onto an old garment. How soon it burst! How soon it rent! I do not hesitate to tell you that the manifestation of the sons of God has absolutely nothing to do with any established religious order of man. When the sons of God are revealed they will not be preaching in church buildings, they will not advertise a crusade, they will have no worship team and no choir. They will not sing ten choruses, prophesy over a few folks, followed by preaching and an altar call. When they heal the sick or cast out devils or do any miracle the people will not be paraded across a platform with great theatrics before television cameras. There will be no offering plates, no announcements, no pot-luck dinners, no fund raising seminars, no youth meetings, no singles clubs, and no altar calls. The new heavens and the new earth that God is creating is unlike any religious thing you have ever seen! It is something that has not previously existed. It is greater than all. The only model for it is the ministry of Jesus, the firstborn Son of God — but even that is not enough! For His sonship ministry was in the days of His flesh — but the sons creation is groaning and travailing for shall arise in THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION! Nothing less than that will suffice, for they shall not heal the sick to get sick again, or raise the dead to die again, or feed the multitude to become hungry again. Oh, no! These sons come to *deliver creation from the bondage of corruption*. They come to *bring forth a new creation*. Don't think you know how it will be, my beloved, for it will be far beyond anything your mind can conceive!

None of Adam's race will ever enter this new world. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). Adam must die, as was spoken to him in the beginning. Adam's nature and life cannot inherit this new heaven or this new earth. Not that God is vindictive or unforgiving. It's just that the Adamic nature cannot stand in that glorious light unto which no man can approach. So God is creating a *new man*. "This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which SHALL BE CREATED shall praise the Lord" (Ps. 102:18). This creation or world of which I speak was never in existence until Jesus came. He was the beginning of this *new creation Man*. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. In Revelation 21 the Lord says, "Behold, I make all things new." Then immediately He says, "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Can we not see that HE is the beginning and the end and the surety of this new creation for it all comes forth *out of Him*. He is its beginning or origin, just as He is also its end or consummation.

So through Jesus Christ, something new came into existence. And He is the Door, so none can enter this realm except through Him. He is the Head, so once in this realm you cannot move or operate in His divine principles except as He directs you. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, so no one ever had this without Him, and you will never get past Him or surpass Him; no matter how far you go in God, you will find that Jesus is there, too! He is truly the GOD-MAN. And in union with Him we become GOD-MEN. As it is written, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the GODS!" Yes, indeed, *who is* like unto Him? Those who are born of God and conformed unto His image. Oh, the wonder of it!

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4). Now I have discovered that each time I read the scriptures I find something new. The word of God is absolutely inexhaustible! It seems truly remarkable to find something new in so familiar a chapter as this, yet I have no doubt there are depths and heights of revelation far transcending our present comprehension. Notice how it reads, "These are the generations of the *heavens* and the *earth*..." — the heavens are mentioned first. Then, when he begins

to talk about man, it reads, "...in the day when the Lord God made the *earth* and the *heavens*." There is a complete turn around, a reversal of the order; the earth becomes the center of interest because man is to be lowered into this material realm, formed of the dust of the earth, and placed in dominion over all the earth realm.

Just here we want to note a particular word, the use of which is peculiar to Genesis — the word *generations*. Every time it is used it gives the generations that are to follow, thus the generations of the *heavens* and the *earth* are clearly the generations of MAN. Now notice something that is quite wonderful, and in looking at it keep in mind the fact that when the Lord speaks of the generations of the earth, He is not speaking of what preceded, but what follows. He speaks of unfoldment, not origins; of results, not causes. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Man is at once the offspring of both the heavens and the earth! His spirit of life is from the very nostrils of God — it is the divine life of the heavens. God did not breathe such a life into any of the animal kingdom, nor the sea creatures, nor the vegetation. Only man is the offspring of the heavens! These are the generations of the heavens and the earth, so now God takes dust — man is of the earth earthy — and God breathes into man's nostrils the *spirit* of life. Man is not only of this earth, but man is of heaven!

In fact, three stages are given here of creation, for the word for "*creation*" is used only three times in the first chapter of Genesis:

- (1) The creation of the world of matter:
"*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Gen. 1:1).
- (2) The creation of life:
"*And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good*" (Gen. 1:21).
- (3) The creation of man with spiritual capacities:
"*So God created man, in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them*" (Gen. 1:27).

These three phases find their conclusion in Paul's great statement, "Your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 5:23). On the physical plane man is kin to the animal world — he is made of the same kind of dust with the same kind of biological make-up. Now just because a Ford automobile has four wheels, two headlights, and one steering wheel, does not mean that it was made in the same factory as a Rolls-Royce. They are different although they have the same parts. They are made this way because they both are going to operate on the same place, the highway. Man has two eyes, two ears, and he has a mouth; he has a digestive system and an elimination system, as also does the animal world, because both live in the same environment, they both travel, as it were, on the same highway. This merely proves that on the physical side he is made of dust, as the scripture says. On the psychological side he has a soul, the functional part of man with his drives and his urges, which in some ways are similar to the animal kingdom, but much more sophisticated and rational — but which, because of the fall, are also too often depraved and perverted. Then there is his spiritual side which came directly from God when God breathed into him divine life, the God kind of life. Man has a humble origin; he has a high origin. There is part of him which is mean; there is part of him which is mighty; there is part of him which is sensual, there is part of him that is holy. He is both earthy and heavenly. Truly the Psalmist was inspired when he wrote, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

The first man Adam lost the dignity and power that was his by yielding to his lower nature, raising it up to dominate and rule his life, obscuring the majesty and glory of His divine nature. The second man, the last Adam, came to reveal and restore the true reality and stature of man as he was meant to be. He came as the *Redeemer* of all mankind! The grandest of all truths is that CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD! If you want to truly understand 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. **That is what God meant!** "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost* (who know not *who* or *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 (good news) of CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3-4). "In whom we have redemption through His blood...who is THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, the firstborn

(prototype) of *every creature*" (Col. 1:14-15). His dignity is still further elaborated in these words of the writer to the Hebrews: "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON..." (Heb. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "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..."

How totally inadequate do our words become in the light of words of such wonder as these! Jesus is the *prototype* of what God intends man to be. He is God's finished product, God's perfect man; what every man should be and ultimately will be. We will only understand the majesty of man in God's image when we see Jesus as THE BEAM OF THE DIVINE GLORY, and THE OUT-RAYING OF GOD'S PERSON. Jesus Christ is the express or *exact* image of the Father's being, the perfect imprint and the very image of God's nature. The allusion here is to the impression made in ancient times by a seal on molten wax; and as the image made on the wax is the exact representation (though on another substance) of the die, so is Christ the exact representation of the invisible Father in human flesh. And thus He was able to say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

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. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, but this is what God meant when He said, "Let us make *man* in our image, and after our likeness." CHRIST is the image of God and God meant for every man to look and speak and act and be just like Jesus Christ! Can you not see the mystery? *This is the value of man's life in redemption*, for God sent One who was all that man was meant to be to purchase us — not to harps and golden streets and fluttering wings in some far-off heaven somewhere — but back to relationship with God as sons in His very own image.

As we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image of God" we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power, and attributes. The *image* of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus, man is the true image of God! The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shined upon the world of mankind the truest revelation of God and lifted man's sights higher than their poor thoughts would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption and so great a salvation shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning before sin entered, and as he ever shall be world without end — THE IMAGE OF GOD WITH DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS.

There is a story which I have shared before but am compelled to share again in the light of our present thought. It is the story about a little piece of wood that once bitterly complained because its owner kept whittling away at it, gouging it and making holes in it. But the one who was cutting it paid no attention to the stick's protests. He was making a flute out of that piece of ebony, and he was too wise to stop when the wood complained so bitterly. The man said, "Little piece of wood, without these rifts and holes, and all this cutting, you'd be just a stick forever — a useless and valueless piece of ebony. What I am doing now may seem as if I am destroying you, but instead it will change you into a flute. Your sweet music will charm the souls of many and comfort sorrowing hearts. My cutting you is the making of you, for only thus can you be a blessing in the world." The meaning of this little parable is clear: That flute, whose music blended so sweetly in the orchestra, was made a flute only by the knife and file that filled it with rifts and holes which seemed to be its very destruction. But the purpose of the master was the cutting away of the outward form so that breath could flow through it. The breath upon the wood created a melodious sound which made it an instrument to the praise of God. Ah, the Lord is shaping us, my beloved, cutting away the denseness of our outer shell of the flesh with its darkened understanding, making rifts and holes in the way that seems right to the natural man, that the in-breathed spirit of life from God may sweep through our earthen vessel, producing the image of God, that His glory might be revealed in creation. Aren't you glad!

Now while we are considering such a wonderful work as this, does our heart not say, "Truly this is the vision John beheld on Patmos when he said, "And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the former heaven and the former earth were passed away!" Even now as we learn to rise up in the purpose of God, to put on His mind, to walk in His ways, to know His voice, to be led by His Spirit, to be

conformed to His image, the nature, glory, and authority of that NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH are being formed within us. There has been released from heaven in the past several years a great and wonderful expectancy. It is the expectancy that all heaven is about to break loose in the midst of the Lord's people on a world-wide scale. Do you identify with that expectancy? God is raising up voices throughout the length and breadth of the earth to say, "The earth is about to see the glory of God in an unprecedented way." A host of heavenly messengers has been released to every corner of the globe bearing the message, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:5). I have heard that message from every quarter of the earth, and it is the word of the Lord for this day! God's "new heaven and earth company" is prepared to arise and bring such a transformation to the nations that it shall come to pass as John proclaimed, ***"...and there was no more sea!"***

As the late Carl Schwing wrote, "It has been appointed to the sons of God to establish the New Heaven and the New Earth in righteousness and peace. The high places shall shout for joy and leap for gladness; the low places shall be filled with blessing, honor, and glory unto the Lord. And like a mighty river the Word of the Lord shall go forth, baptizing all things in the light and life of the Son of God. All creation shall gather before the Father to proclaim His power and might. Everything that has breath shall glorify the Lord. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that God's Christ is Lord and King over all...unto the eternal praise of the Father. Knowing that such glory lies just ahead, should we not lose sight of all else? Even now our inner son can ascend to the place of his former birth and eat of the feast that has been prepared. Even now we can walk at the Father's side amid the Paradise of our former dwelling.

"Though all the powers of the world and of religion oppose the hand of the Lord, He shall, through the sons of His Christ, bring forth His good pleasure. Not one portion of His plan will be altered, not one among His creation will be able to resist His authority. Among the lightening and the thundering of the Father's infinite glory, the sons shall send forth the proclamation of freedom, to establish the justice and goodness of the Lord. Life, and love, and grace, shall burn as a purifying flame throughout all creation, until God is all and in all. The New Age dawns before us; the New Heaven and the New Earth loom upon the horizon; bask freely in the rays of this earthly morning. Let thy spirit soar upon the wings of the Spirit to the place known only to the sons of God. Enter into the peace and stillness of the age; enter into the rest of the Greater Sabbath. Where we are, there is light; for He who is our light hath enlightened us with Himself. He is the True Light, born from the Divine Energy of the Supreme Being. He is the Light that conquers all darkness; the Light that shall lead all creation into the City of Life. He is the Eternal Light that rises as the Morning Star within our hearts."

Chapter 234

The New Jerusalem Bride

“And I John saw the holy city, *new Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*” (Rev. 21:2).

One will never be able to understand the deep mystery of Christ and His bride until first he understands the great mystery of God Himself. I have previously pointed out in this series that man in the beginning was created male and female in the image of God. The moment we understand that *male and female IS the image of God*, then our hearts will throb with heavenly rapture at the awesome glory, power, and exaltation of Christ and His bride. When he that readeth can grasp the wonderful truth that God bears within Himself both the characteristics of male and female, of Father and Mother, then he can better understand the divine word spoken “in the beginning” when God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so...*in the image* of God created He him; MALE AND FEMALE created He them” (Gen. 1:26-27).

Most people speak of God and His Son without even giving thought as to how it is that God has a Son. All nature with unified voice reveals that one male, or two males, or a thousand males, or a billion males can never produce an offspring. The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even *His eternal power and Godhead* (Rom. 1:20), and creation immutably proclaims the mystery that it takes both a male and a female to reproduce life. This simple law of life is a divine revelation of the GODHEAD! God is within Himself both a Father and a Mother and it was within this unique reality of His Being that God Himself brought forth His Son and His sons. I would not for one minute nor in any way seek to dishonor or diminish the glory, the honor, or the majesty of OUR FATHER — the Lord God Almighty. But He is completely pleased to have me declare to you the reality of Himself which is male and female. Motherhood is a most profound revelation that is rooted in the deepest essence of God Himself.

“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called *their name* Adam, in the day when they were created” (Gen. 5:1-2). Male and female. Both Adam. Both man. Both in the image of God! God made His image exactly alike, yet opposite. From the very beginning we can journey into the depth of God’s Being in the revelation of His image and nature as male and female. Adam is a figure we are pressing through to know God. With what divine clarity does the inspired apostle teach us that Adam himself was but a type of the Christ. “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who *is the figure of Him that was to come* (the second man, the last Adam)” (Rom. 5:14). This presence on the earth of man — male and female — is the glory of God emanating out of the sphere of His invisible substance and the figure, the symbol, the picture, the prophecy of *the last Adam and His wife* — Christ and His bride! It is not important *how* man was created, nor even *when* he was created — but to see the mind of God radiate and descend and express itself into human form, He made His invisible nature of male and female into a model creation that could see and comprehend, though the female at creation was still hidden within the man, just as the female nature of God was hidden within Himself from eternity. And just as Eve, the female part of Adam, was taken out of Adam and formed into its own unique identity, so is the bride of Christ taken out of Christ and raised up into its own reality and expression for union with Him. Oh, the mystery of it!

You see, Adam was created on the sixth creative day, but Eve was not formed from his side until some unspecified time afterward. When Adam was created on the sixth day, Eve was in Adam. As I did some research on this I found that the science of genetics tells us that the body cells of humans each contain 46 chromosomes that carry information for biological inheritance. These include a pair of sex chromosomes — two X chromosomes in the female body cells but an X and a Y chromosome in the male body cells. We can see, therefore, that it is entirely in accord with the science of genetics that God created a man first and then woman *from* the man. If God had created a woman first, and man from the woman, He would have had to create Y chromosomes by a special creation and added them to the X chromosomes

He obtained from the woman in order to create a man. As a result, Eve and Adam would have been two creations, not one.

But God created man first, and then woman from man, so He had from the man the X chromosomes necessary for the creation of the woman. We can see, then, that from the standpoint of genetic information Eve was not a separate creation. Eve was in Adam. As Dr. Bob Koontz wrote many years ago, Eve was in a sense the first clone, cloned from the cells God took from Adam. The Hebrew language used in Genesis agrees beautifully with this thought. In Genesis 2:22 God “made” (Heb. *Banah*), most commonly translated “to build,” the rib (Heb. *chamber*) of Adam into a woman. The Hebrew word *bara*, meaning an original or initiating creative act, is used of the creation of Adam in Genesis 1:27. All of these facts show that Eve was biologically, psychologically, and spiritually *in Adam* until she was “made” or “formed” or “built” from substance taken from his life! As God separated Eve from Adam, giving her form and raising her up into an identity, and exalting her and setting her together with Adam over all the works of His hands (“let *them* have dominion...”), *so* God is separating out of His Christ the wife He has in His own side, giving her form and raising her up into an identity, and setting her with Christ on the universal throne of authority, glory, and dominion over all things in all realms. This glorious God-Woman is the Lamb’s wife, the bride of God’s Christ! God’s agenda is to get this woman fully raised up into her own unique identity, to give her form and substance, to inspire the consciousness of this woman, that she may find herself and fulfill herself in God’s great and eternal kingdom!

TWO WOMEN — TWO CITIES

In our previous studies on this subject we have seen that in John’s visions in the book of Revelation two women and two cities are clearly presented. One of the women is a pure virgin, clothed with the resplendent glory of Christ (Rev. 12:1-6). The other woman is a harlot, gaudily attired with scarlet and purple, and decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls. One of the cities is the holy city, New Jerusalem. The other is called Mystery Babylon the Great. In the symbolism of prophecy a “woman” signifies a *church* and a “city” signifies a religious or spiritual *government*. Thus, the virgin woman represents the true church, the bride of Christ, and the harlot woman represents the false church, the fallen, corrupt, apostate church systems of man. The “holy city, New Jerusalem” is the symbol used to represent the established rule and government of God composed of the perfected and holy bride of Christ and the overcoming sons of God. The city is the woman, the bride of Christ, whereas the *throne* in the midst of the city signifies the manchild, the sons of God who rule the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 12:1-5). But as with Adam and Eve in the beginning, it is a *joint dominion*. “Mystery Babylon” can be nothing else but a church which is also a religious government over men’s lives, a great ecclesiastical kingdom, backed by the power and influence of the world — the carnal church systems of man exalted to power and dominion in the earth. This is why God will judge, throw down, and utterly destroy the Great Babylon; and this is why God is building up His holy city, the pure bride of Christ and the holy sons of God, New Jerusalem, to shine with His scintillating light of life to lighten all peoples and all nations, filling the whole earth with His glory!

New Jerusalem is the capital city of God’s kingdom, and will reign over that kingdom forever. Babylon is the capital city of the great kingdom of religious Babylon, which kingdom shall pass away. The mount Zion, which is *in Jerusalem*, where the “many brethren” of Jesus reign, is the chief eminence, the highest pinnacle attainable spiritually in Jerusalem: Babylon is founded upon seven mountains of shame. The true church is a woman crowned with twelve stars of divine and heavenly government: the false church is also a woman, with her own name and shame written upon her forehead. The head or husband of the true woman, God’s church, is the Christ: the head or husband of the false church is her paramours, the kings of the earth. The true woman brings forth children unto God — the manifest sons of God; the false woman brings forth her harlot brood. The city of God, New Jerusalem, is to be the habitation of God forevermore; the city of Babylon shall become heaps, the habitation of bitterns and owls, “...and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 14:23; 34:11-17).

Why does God want to bring forth in the earth a spiritual woman — the bride of Christ? The answer is found in the typology of the first woman, Eve. “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; *because she was the mother of all living*” (Gen. 3:20). The *mother* of all living! The mother of all living is the image of God — bringing forth children in His image. Let us consider this woman, the mother of all

living, under another significant type in the revelation of God. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons (Ishmael and Isaac), the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for there are *two covenants*; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is *above* is free, which is the *mother of us all* (that is, the saints). For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, *are the children of promise*" (Gal. 4:22-28). Here Paul is telling us about two distinct and different *women*, two distinct and different *Jerusalems*, which stand for two distinct and different *covenants*. Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac are used as illustrations. In the allegory, Abraham represents God, the Father. Sarah, as His wife, represents the original promise and covenant God made with Abraham to bring forth in the earth a people, a race, a nation. This promise and covenant preceded the giving of the Law at Sinai and the raising up of Israel as a nation under the Law.

Just as Sarah was old and barren and had no son, so there were no children by this covenant, there was no nation birthed out of the first, the Abrahamic Covenant. When the Egyptian bondservant, Hagar, was given to Abraham as a wife, she pictured the second covenant — the covenant of the Law given by Moses. Thus, Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, typified the natural Israel, the nation of unregenerated people developed under the Law Covenant after the time of Moses. Finally, Isaac, the seed of promise was born under the first, or Abrahamic Covenant, which was God's Promise — picturing a spiritual people developed out of the spiritual promise and covenant — without Law, thus the covenant of Grace and of the Spirit. Then Paul made a comparison of Hagar to mount Sinai (the Law) and the capital city of Jerusalem in the land of Israel, declaring, "For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem (the earthly) which now is, and is in bondage (under the Law) with her children." Sarah, on the other hand, typifies the free woman, the spiritual covenant which brings forth the promised seed — Christ. And this Sarah is also Jerusalem — not the earthly Jerusalem, of course, for that is Hagar — for the apostle explains, "But Jerusalem WHICH IS ABOVE (New Jerusalem which *comes down*) is the *mother of us all*."

"Jerusalem which is above" pertains to the heavenly promise and the spiritual seed — the enChristed. Ah — the Jerusalem "which now is" is the one with which the saints at Galatia were well acquainted in that day, the natural city there in Palestine built on seven mountains and surrounded by a great wall, and containing a magnificent temple that was first built by Solomon and later rebuilt by Zerubbabel. It was the center of Jewish worship, as well as their governmental capital city. It was the central place where the Law given to Moses on mount Sinai was administered to the people. In other words, it represented the "law" system which is in "bondage" and all the natural seed which serves God "under law." But he contrasts that Jerusalem which represents the natural seed and the law system which regulates the flesh of the outer man, with another Jerusalem, "Jerusalem which is above," that is, in the high places of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! This second Jerusalem, this *new Jerusalem*, is a *free* system, not a bondage, and she represents a spiritual seed and she is *our* spiritual *mother!* The prophet said she would dangle her babes (converts) on her knees and let them nurse at the breasts of her consolation — *mother care*.

There is another point I must mention in passing and then return to this thought of the two Jerusalems. There of two sets of "two cities" in the New Testament. Paul speaks of the two cities as the two Jerusalems, the bond city and the free city, the earthly city and the heavenly city. But then in the book of Revelation we have two cities — but they are not two Jerusalems — rather, there is one Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem, and the other city which is an harlot, Mystery Babylon. Now what can this mean? Is the earthly Jerusalem and Mystery Babylon one and the same thing? Not at all! The two Jerusalems were two *covenants*, but Mystery Babylon and New Jerusalem are two *churches*. Can you not see that this is a different symbol altogether! Mystery Babylon has never *been a covenant* nor has it *had a covenant!* You see, in A.D. 70 the old Jerusalem with its government, temple, priesthood, and sacrifices was destroyed never to exist again as a *covenant*. It is all gone. There is a city, yes, but no theocratic government, no Mosaic law, no temple, no priesthood, and no sacrifices. But following the destruction of the old Jerusalem there arose another city, and another woman in the earth which grew right alongside the people of the Jerusalem which is above, becoming rich and powerful and glorious throughout all the earth and over the nations as the Revelation reveals. The old earthly Jerusalem in New

Testament times never did occupy a position of prominence and power either *among* or *over* the nations and the kings of the earth. Jerusalem was just a dusty little province in a remote corner of the world of that day. So these are the two cities and the two women of the Revelation — quite distinct and different from the two women Paul spoke of in chapter four of Galatians. But let us now return to the two Jerusalems.

Two women. Two cities. Two covenants. Two seeds. And while the earthly Jerusalem with its law system was destroyed, the *seed* of that old covenant remains with us to this day in the midst of the Lord's people! The covenant of Hagar, the Law of mount Sinai, with its darkness, tempest, and lightnings still swirls and blows and thunders in the lives of many. It makes people servants, fearing the wrath of God. How sad that so many churches today still major in that covenant! Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? "*Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman*" (Gal. 4:30). The bondwoman, the old Jerusalem, is the bondage of legalism, ritualistic religion, external forms and sacraments, traditions of the elders, man-made rules and regulations. The Jerusalem which is above, the freewoman, is the *new covenant*. It is free in the pure Spirit of the Lord, and is *our mother*. She gives birth to our being, our sense of reality, bringing us out of the natural sense and into the spiritual, out of the strength of our fleshly identity and into the strength of our spiritual identity, out of our earthly consciousness and into the heavenly!

This woman is a covenant and a people birthed of that covenant, and in her covenant she contains a promise in her womb, in which the seed has come to bear again the Christ, for the Christ is birthed *in us*; that is the way He comes to us. We are the children of the freewoman, and her consciousness is being raised up in us — the feminine side of God. This is the realm of freedom in Christ into which we have been birthed. Thank God, we do not dwell in a place of law, nor of commandments and outward ordinances any more! We are children of the heavenly Jerusalem — there is nothing outward or organized or traditional here — all is spiritual and heavenly! We are not waiting to enter into this city through the pearly gates in the sweet bye and bye on some distant shore, for "We ARE COME to mount Zion, and UNTO THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD, THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM...to the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, whose names are written in heaven...and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:22-23). Yes, beloved, *we are come!* This entrance into the realm of the heavenly city is not a future hope, nor is it somewhere off in space: this is where we *now* have come in our walk in the Spirit of God. We are now seated in the heavenly places, we have now entered in through the gates of the city, we are now walking the street of gold — that is, *walking out* the divine nature of God. We have a right to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, which is the very life of Christ, and we have drunk of the river that flows out from the throne, even that water which is the Spirit, and it has become within us a wellspring of water springing up unto eternal life. While multitudes look for a literal city from outer-space, we *are come* to the New Covenant City of Inner-space, where Christ *in us* is our hope of glory! How few realize this precious truth! And this city to which we are come, this heavenly Jerusalem, IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL!

Let us UNDERSTAND! The reason there is this mysterious attraction between the masculine and the feminine is because the feminine was taken out of the masculine. The woman was taken out of the man, and something you women are is uniquely what we men are, but it is separated from us, and therein lies the phenomenon of why male and female seek union. Jerusalem above is the *mother* of us all. What does that mean? There is a divine quality of God that is feminine that has *birthed all spiritual life* and it is the same divine quality of God that is birthing us in this realm of sonship to God. God in Christ is the masculine characteristic of God. Christ in the church is the feminine characteristic of God. Thus Christ in union with the church births men into the family of God! All of Jerusalem's children are born of the spirit, and led by the spirit of God. And now in this heavenly light, power, and spirit, they come to be heavenly Jerusalem's children, born from above. Oh, the mystery of it!

This heavenly Jerusalem, this church of the Firstborn, is the mother of all them that are born of the spirit and walk in the spirit, which gives them power to become the sons of God, and they that believe in the light that the spirit brings are the children of the light, and walk in the light of their mother, New Jerusalem. And you may read how this New Jerusalem is garnished with pearls, symbolically, and there is written on the gates the names of the twelve tribes, and on the foundations the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. So here you may see that there is no night here, but always day, in the holy city, where we dwell and the Lamb is the light. All the children of the light, of spiritual understanding, that are born of the spirit from

above, see it as their mother, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the spiritual light of this city, New Jerusalem, which is from above. And all Jerusalem's children, that have overcome, have right to the tree of life, and drink of the water of life, which as Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, flows out from Christ and out of our innermost being in this new and heavenly Jerusalem.

And in this heavenly Jerusalem there shall be no more curse and no more death, for it is here that God is delivering us and removing from us the curse of sin and death. All who wait for another city shall die and not live, but all who dwell in this city may eat of the tree and drink of its quickening water. And he that overcomes, saith Christ, "I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:12). We understand by now, do we not, that the Jerusalem which is above and is free and is the mother of us all is God's high and holy realm of the spirit, wherein we may walk in perfection, intimacy of fellowship, and vital union with God. The New Jerusalem is the kingdom of God, the church of the Firstborn, and the bride of the Lamb, a people born from above and in union with Christ. She is a city that is not located away out there somewhere in the blue, but in the heavens or exalted places of the Spirit of the Lord. To walk in her light is to walk in the state or kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The church has been called the mother. Why? Because the church is the dispenser of the life-giving seed of the Spirit and the Word, and the church is the formation of God's divine feminine nature within a people on the earth. The first concept that calls us out of the world unto Himself is a woman. Long millenniums ago the mighty Moses brought this word to the Lord's people: "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12). What blessings accrue to those who honor their father *and* their mother! Again and again we are told to honor our father *and* our mother, and this is the first commandment with the promise of life. We have this as a natural law — and I am in no way seeking to diminish that natural law — for verily I say unto you that he who truly values and honors the heavenly Father *and* the heavenly Mother will ultimately respect his earthly father and his earthly mother a well. We have learned to honor God our Father, but it should be obvious to all who read these lines that few have learned to honor God as our Mother — that unique aspect of His own Being that births all spiritual life and reality.

LOOKING FOR THE CITY

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out to a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for *he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that *they seek a country.* And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a *better country, that is, an heavenly:* wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: *for He hath prepared for them a city*" (Heb. 11:8-16).

The scriptural, spiritual, heavenly symbolism of truth is here illustrated in simple terms for our understanding. In this magnificent passage we are told that Abraham looked for a city. He did not want Babel, for he departed from the land of Babel. The writer tells us that if Abraham had cherished Babel in his heart the Lord might have permitted him to return. But Abraham was looking for something better, something far greater, he wanted a city that has eternal foundations. He did not want a man-built city; he looked for one whose builder and maker is God! When he looked for it he left kindred and country, and wandered about homeless in the very physical land he was to inherit, which was merely a shadow and type of what he was really looking for. Did he ever find it? No. But by faith he saw it afar off, and he *will* find it, he *will* see it in reality!

All who follow in the steps of faithful Abraham are strangers and pilgrims on this earth — in this present world-system. This outer fleshly realm with its order, culture, religious systems, political systems, commerce, education, and all the rest, is not their home, their realm of dwelling, their state of being. They are looking for that city that is being built by God, for they are citizens of the New Jerusalem

which is of heavenly, spiritual quality and substance. Those who are looking for a heavenly, spiritual city know full well that they are only strangers and pilgrims in this present order of man, in this carnal, mortal world. They endure their life, living as in a temporary state. They have no desire for the things of this realm of dust that excite the carnal man, for they seek a better country than this! No nation, civilization, or system built by man can make claims of permanency. Nations we know once existed, not a cobblestone of their existence can be found. World empires, during my brief time on this planet, have folded up their tents, pulled down their banners, and they are gone. Men whom we thought could never leave us have died, and we wept when they did. Others whose names we feared and who held life and death in their hands for millions, like the withered grass are but dirt, a haunting memory in the minds of their victims. In our own country, after our founding fathers fashioned for us a land of freedom and opportunity, our government has progressively changed, grabbing for more and more power and control over every aspect of our lives, while our liberties have eroded, our freedoms been usurped, our morals degraded and perverted, our tax money squandered, our economy devastated, and no one seems able to stop the downward spiral. Nothing permanent, nothing lasting exists in this carnal world of man! I have watched men build large churches and powerful religious organizations expecting them to transform the world, and then the leaders fell into sin and scandal, and now they can't be found. Their sin or their death was the end of the large following and the movement disintegrated.

Abraham looked for this permanent order. I look for this permanent order. This was the city of God that the man of faith looked for, not a vast earthly empire. All sons of God look in the same direction! "Those who are born of the Spirit," Jesus said, "SEE the kingdom of God." Not of this world, but something far in excess, the real of the real, the permanent of the permanent, the eternal abiding place, the city of refuge, the Holy of holies, the promise of all promises, from corruption into incorruption, from mortality into immortality, from death unto life uncreated, from time into eternity where measurement has totally lost all its sense. As God's elect walk with the Lord in this strange land, God is preparing for them a city, a sphere of dwelling, a state of being of eternal substance, raised up within by the glorious mind of Christ. I do not mean by this that the city of God is located in some far-off heaven somewhere. Oh, no! It cannot be too strongly emphasized here that the New Jerusalem is *not* heaven (as that term is commonly understood) in any sense of the word, nor is it a literal city made with brick, mortar, stone, wood, or gold in some specific geographical location. This glorious city of God is a *spiritual city* made up of *living stones* forming a *spiritual house*, a heavenly people, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, heart of His heart, mind of His mind, nature of His nature — the bride of Christ! It is heavenly in *character*, but is found here *in* the world, but not *of* the world.

In the book of Revelation John is carried away into an exceeding high mountain and there he is shown that which is called a *bride* and a *city*. From the top of that high mountain John looks out and sees a most wonderful city, coming down out of heaven from God, filled and flooded with the glory of God. The description that follows sets forth to the uttermost bounds of human understanding the grandeur and beauty of the glorified bride of the Lamb, represented by this great city. The dimensions are perfect in proportion and in their outer relations. Its foundations are adorned with the costliest, most precious stones, the walls are built of jasper, and each gate is one immense pearl; but the city itself is builded of a gold as transparent as pure glass. The name of the city is New Jerusalem. Now why is this city called New Jerusalem, instead of New York, New Providence, New Brunswick, New London, or some other name? Well, Jerusalem of old was known as "the city of the great King." The expression "new" stands for another order, a new dispensation and economy in which only the transformed body of Christ takes part. The glorious description of this city indicates the excellency and perfection of the new heavens and the new earth ruled by the new capital city. Its lofty gates of pearl upon which are emblazoned the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, its twelve foundations of precious stones, upon which are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and its jasper walls and golden street are merely representations faintly shadowing the transcendent majesty of that new and perfect government. In the midst of the city is a river of water of life clear as sparkling crystal, signifying all the life-giving blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God flowing out to mankind from this grand city.

That city for which Abraham looked is a city formed of *enChristed people* which has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, nor the light of any candle, for the Lord God is the light thereof. These Christ people have no need for the outward light of creeds, doctrines, laws, ceremonies, rituals, ordinances, baptisms, traditions, organizations, programs, etc., for the very presence and life of God Himself within is their illumination. The nations walk in the wondrous light of this city's reality, and the kings of the

earth bring glad tribute of their glory into it. Through the open gates no evil thing will ever enter. Within its precincts stands no temple made with hands, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it, those who abide in Him are its priests and its sacrifices are those spiritual sacrifices offered up from within by Christ Jesus. On each side of the river is the tree of life yielding continuous fruitage of the power of the Christ life. And the leaves of the tree are the living word which brings healing to the nations. The heart never fails to respond with a quickened beat to the lines: "His servants shall serve Him; and *they shall see His face*; and His name shall be upon their foreheads" — that is, His nature and character shall radiate out of their lives. Description is far beyond the utterance of my poor tongue! Its majesty and fame and power and blessing escape me! Methinks that we can but tarnish its exalted glory by our frail attempt to describe it. It will abide forever and through those wide gates that never close will flow forth to all people and all nations the illumination and quickening and dominion until God has gathered together in *one* all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth.

Rare indeed is the man or woman in the religious systems of earth who has a true and spiritual understanding of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem bride of the Lamb, but alas, nearly all view it as some kind of new constellation which will come from the skies into close proximity to earth and be near or upon it. As one has written, "No doubt the sudden coming into sight, from heavenly space, of a glittering object, unknown to astronomers, self-luminous, above the brightness of the sun, steadily approaching, till it enters our atmosphere, and comes in close proximity to, if not in actual contact with this globe, transcends all human experience, and defies all natural phenomena." Men seem intent upon calculating the city in cubic miles as though it were nothing more than a huge metropolis slightly more wonderful than those at present on earth.

According to Revelation 21:16-17 the city lies foursquare, 1500 miles each way with a wall around it 144 cubits high. That makes the wall 264 feet high. I can just imagine a city 1500 miles square that lands and covers the earth from the Mississippi river to the Atlantic ocean! From south to north it would reach from below the Mexican border to above the Canadian border! It would stand 1500 miles tall, with such a bulge on the side of earth's face that the earth could no longer revolve and continue its straight course around the sun year by year. It would literally smash all the farms, villages, highways, people, cattle, and industries over 2,250,000 square miles! Now just what might be the population of such a city? If each individual was given one cubic mile of this city, the population of it would be 3,375,000,000 people — about half the present population of the earth. But again, if each individual were given one cubic acre, the population of the city would be something like this: 51,840,000,000,000! What a city! Another waxed eloquent about the size of the mansion each inhabitant would possess, replete with space for gardens and fountains and other such childish nonsense.

Until our spiritual minds are able to grasp the simple truth that the *body of Christ* is the temple of God, and that God has no other temple and never will; and until we understand by the spirit that every room and mansion in that temple is a living son of God, a literal habitation of God through the spirit; and until we understand that the city of God is the *bride of Christ*, and that the stones of that city are all living stones, as Christ Jesus Himself is a living stone and the only foundation that can be laid, we have understood nothing at all. The book of Revelation shows the development of this Bride-City from glory to glory. Each view is a fresh and further comprehension of the grandeur of the purposes of God for all who are called to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The total victory for all the elect is detailed in all its glorious and eternal reality. This is the beauty of the Church Triumphant! This is that glorious church that is without spot or wrinkle! It is so great and mighty! It stands in the age and the ages to come clothed in the awesome majesty of the glory of God and His Christ! It is seen in all of its splendor and heavenly beauty. It was birthed into the earth at Pentecost and has been processed and matured throughout the 2,000 year church age. In the closing chapters of Revelation it comes into its final and full divine perfection and is viewed in the ultimate eternal triumph and purpose of God.

Thus we see that the New Jerusalem, contrary to the driveling childishness that is taught, is not a fanciful monstrosity some fifteen hundred miles high, which will one day come floating or crashing down out of the clouds to settle and rest on the earth like a bump on a little boy's head, throwing it out of balance and off its course. God made this earth complete and as it should be long, long ago. He created it a perfectly functioning reality, and "nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it" (Eccl. 3:14). Truly, unspiritual men, who walk after the carnal mind and its imaginings, can invent many fairy tales. Thus saith the Lord: "And they shall call *them*, the *holy people*, the redeemed of the Lord; and *thou* shalt be called Sought Out, a *city* not forsaken" (Isa. 62:12). And again, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come,

and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the nations shall come to *thy light*, and the kings of the earth to the brightness of *thy rising*...and they shall call *thee*, the *city of the Lord*, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 60:1,3,14). It is evident that a PEOPLE is the CITY! There can be no doubt that the city in the Revelation is not a literal city, but rather those who have adorned themselves with the very nature, the very qualities, that their Husband requires. “But *ye are come* unto mount Zion and unto the *city of the living God*, the *heavenly Jerusalem*...to the general assembly and *church of the Firstborn*.” The message is clear — the bride doesn’t live IN the city: the bride IS the city! To that city we have come! It has come down into our hearts; day by day we walk its street of righteousness; we live in its light of truth, we breathe its heavenly atmosphere of life and light and love, we enjoy its rights of God’s blessing, provision, and power!

BUILDING THE CITY

Jerusalem of old was the capital city of the national Israel; and as that old order was but a type and shadow of the new (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:16-17), therefore the New Jerusalem must be the capital city, or the ruling element, in Israel today, which is Christ’s Kingdom and of which our Lord said, it “is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36). In other words, New Jerusalem is the ruling class, the kings and priests unto God: those who have overcome all things and have attained to the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in grace. It comprises those who rule with Christ upon His throne. We, therefore, who have been accounted worthy to suffer with Christ (II Tim. 2:12), *are* the New Jerusalem which shall rule over God’s infinite realm for evermore. We are the city foursquare, which is the bride of the Lamb. This is the Jerusalem from which, in the age and the ages to come, the Word of the Lord shall go forth to all the earth (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2). In fact, it is even now going forth! This is the Jerusalem from which even now the Lord has uttered His voice (Joel 3:16). This is the Jerusalem from which, during the age and the ages to come, living waters shall go forth to the whole world (Zech. 14:8). “And everything shall live whither the river cometh” (Eze. 47:9).

In scripture a city pictures a government. Abraham was seeking for a city, for a government — the heavenly arrangement, a divine rule by the Spirit upon earth. Cities of old were often actually nations within themselves known as “city-states”. Each had walls and was self-sufficient. Some of the great cities of ancient times were Babylon, Athens, Rome. Some cities were nations within themselves, while others ruled over territories beyond their walls. The city was representative of the nation. The power and might of the land flowed from the city. They were not intended merely as dwelling places, because most people were involved in agriculture and animal husbandry and were self-sufficient. As men multiplied, some of the people began to live in cities; and then cities became centers of power and ruled the surrounding area of the land in which they were located. It did not avail an enemy much if he conquered the land surrounding the city. The city itself had to be conquered for the victory to be significant, and only then could it be said that the land had been taken. The real seat of government, power, and authority resided in the city. The walls of the city were formidable protection. Armed with this understanding, we can see the use of an illustration given by Solomon wherein he said, “He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.” And again, “He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 25:28; 16:32). A city without walls was an easy prey for the enemy. Likewise, anyone unable to control his emotions, passions, and carnal desires is an easy prey for his enemies (the flesh, the world, and the devil) and will quickly be overrun by them!

Oh glorious city of God! In the 48th Psalm we read the description of the city of our God, and we begin to see deep meanings in these comparisons. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, *in the city of our God*, in the mountain (Zion) of His holiness” (Ps. 48:1). It is in this city that praises to God ascend day and night! The bride rejoicing in the Lord in both light and darkness, in times of blessing and in times of trial and suffering, in easy things and in hard things, those who are of the bride company can be known by their offering up unto Him the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving continually; and thus she and the city are one. We are told that she is “beautiful in elevation (situation).” Jerusalem was not builded in low swampy lands, but upon a beautiful elevation of the mountains. Neither are we built up so that we are “comely as Jerusalem” when we remain upon the low lands, amid the miasmas of earthly swamp lands, amid the fogs, and vapors, bogged down in carnal understanding, fleshly wisdom, religious delusion, or in negativism, fear, or despair. Upon the high lands of the Spirit of the Lord the air is clear, and as we climb higher and higher upon the mountains of God, we become “beautiful in elevation” — full of grace, joy, peace, faith, wisdom, and might!

This is “the city of the great King,” and “God hath made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge.” How high is our calling when God has chosen us to be a part of “the city of the great King,” “...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22). Truly in this city of the great King God hath made Himself known! He has made Himself known in her palaces for a refuge — a high tower. Has He not made Himself known in every palace of His habitation in this heavenly city, as the Strong Tower and Rock of Defense to every tempest-tossed and tested soul? Only in Him is there safety; only in Him is there protection; only when we are consciously in Him, and continually trust upon our union with Him can we stand firm and overcome all things. Praise God! In our experience with Him day by day He is more and more making Himself known in the palaces which *we are*, and victory and life become our portion, swallowing up all darkness and death. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth” (Ps. 50:2). Isn’t it wonderful!

We read that “Jerusalem is **builded as a city that is compacted together**, whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of Yahweh, for an ordinance to Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Yahweh” (Ps. 122:3-4). The word translated “compacted” has most precious meanings, which more perfectly apply to the heavenly Jerusalem, than to the earthly city. We need not think that this is strange, when we bear in mind that the earthly Jerusalem was the figure of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. And we are melted before God when we apprehend the full import of these meanings when applied to the bride of the Lamb! “Compacted” means “to join together by means of fascination; to be charmed and thus bound together; to have fellowship.” This sets forth the harmony and the beauty in architecture of the earthly Jerusalem, with its lofty walls, its beautiful palaces, its glorious temple. It was so beautiful that men were *fascinated* by it, *charmed* by it, and irresistibly *drawn* to it for their dwelling. In the spirit it sets forth the harmony, the perfection, the beauty, the fellowship, the perfect unity of the living stones of the New Jerusalem! These living stones, which are built upon the only foundation, Jesus Christ, are *compacted together* in Him, through the drawing and welding of the Holy Spirit. It is not the unity promoted by commitment to a preacher, a ministry, a church, a movement, or a doctrine, but the love of Christ, the purpose of God, and the power of the Spirit which sovereignly draws them together, and they are made steadfast through the deep dealings and processings of the Lord. Oh, yes!

Men can build movements and little kingdoms around themselves or their ministry, but no man can build up the city of God! Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose **builder and maker is God!** Today, that city is found! It is God Himself who joins member to member and builds all together as an habitation of God through the Spirit. Ray Prinzing shared a thought which is most fitting here. “Thus Abraham sought — looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. This was in contrast to Cain — we read, ‘Cain went out from the presence of the Lord...and he builded a city’ (Gen. 4:16-17). If we walk after the way of the flesh, and the world, we seek to build our own city, we seek to establish our own kingdom and our own righteousness — and all we have wrought is a magnification of VANITY. But when we cease from our own works, and SEEK HIM who is the Builder and Maker — then HE builds the city. Indeed, ‘Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it’ (Ps. 127:1). How many yet ‘LABOR IN VAIN!’ Here the Hebrew word is *shav* meaning vanity, falsehood. They think they are building something true, but it is useless, fitted for destruction, a counterfeit to the real. Only Christ can live the CHRIST-LIFE through us. Only GOD can do the works OF GOD! So it is imperative that we come into UNION WITH HIM, to be led by His Spirit, so that whatever we do is ‘not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord’ (Zech. 4:6)” — end quote.

The bride of Christ is both a city and a woman, and as a woman we find the same principle of God “building” this heavenly reality and company. I love this that we read about the first figure of this bride of Christ — Eve in the Garden. “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, *made* He a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:21-22). God separated Eve from Adam, so that the graces and powers of man are divided; only in the twain is there “one flesh.” When God took a “rib” from Adam, the Hebrew word is *tsela* used elsewhere of “side,” or “side chamber,” or just “chamber.” Obviously God took more than just a bone, but that whole *chamber of the womb*, and from this He built a womb-man or woman. From that time on she would help, assist

the man to bring forth after his kind and share a joint dominion with him over all the works of God's hands.

The Hebrew reading is that out of that chamber the Lord took from Adam he **'built'** a woman. The Hebrew word is *banah* and the only true definition of the word given in Strong's Concordance is "to build." God took this organ from Adam to use as material to **build** and I am sure by the time she was completed and God breathed into her the breath of life, this first bride that bore the earthly image was a beautiful creature indeed! We could say she was **well built!** There is no doubt that she was the perfect specimen of womanhood and without doubt she was, as they say, drop-dead gorgeous! I can't imagine how beautiful Eve was before the fall. We have seen a lot of beautiful creatures, but they are only creatures bearing the image of the fallen race, and what beauty was in Eve before the fall can't be fathomed. God started from that "chamber" of Adam's being and began to build and He built — constructed, developed, erected, raised up, framed, fashioned, composed, and put her together just like He wanted her to be, and then He brought her to Adam and presented her to him, and she was so marvelous in Adam's eyes!

In the same way Jerusalem, the beautiful city of God, is a city *compacted together* — **built** by the hand of God! Any number of houses without inhabitants would not be a city, and on the other hand millions of people turned loose on the prairie would not be a city, for don't you see that a city is a *compound structure* of houses filled with people and of streets? The houses form the material framework, and the people are the *real you*, like the soul and spirit dwelling in the body. In this glorious city the outer man, that is, the outward expression and outward ministry is the house — the inner man, the life-flow out of the spirit, is the inhabitant. Both Paul and Peter referred to their body as a "tabernacle." The two united together — outward and inward — as the expression of HIS GLORY make the city of God. Body and soul united with spirit in a divine union form a "palace" or a "mansion" in the New Jerusalem city. "And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, *costly* stones, to lay the foundation of the house (temple). And Solomon's builders, and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers, so they PREPARED TIMBER AND STONES TO BUILD THE HOUSE" (I Kings 5:17-18). "And the house (Solomon's temple), when it was in building, was built of stone MADE READY BEFORE IT WAS BROUGHT THITHER: so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (I Kings 6:7). "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell *in them*, and walk *in them*, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (II Cor. 6:16).

Truly the glory of the latter house shall exceed the glory of the former, as the New Jerusalem exceeds in glory the old Jerusalem — a whole new dimension of His glory and an entirely new arrangement is at hand. The primary work of this hour, I believe, is an **individual** work. It is like Solomon's temple. Long before there was the "putting together" of all the members of that magnificent edifice and the filling of the house with Glory, there was an extensive and extended preliminary **individual work** wrought meticulously upon each member. The giant cedars of Lebanon were cut down, each board was hewed and shaped. The gold was mined, refined, and beaten into form by the artisans. The exquisite tapestries were cut and sewn. Each stone was individually quarried and chiseled to perfection. Only after all that **individual preparation** was completed was the building raised up and compacted together WITHOUT THE SOUND OF A HAMMER OR ANY INSTRUMENT!

Seems to me many brethren have tried to put the body of Christ together as a visible organism and expression *before* the deep work of preparation has been fully accomplished upon each "living stone." That is why we continually have divisions, church splits, groups and efforts that fall apart, and ministries that self-destruct. If you try to build this city by carnal strength or soulish manipulation you will hear the sound of many hammers — but it *still won't stand!* If your "group" has fallen apart, if your "church" has split, if your "congregation" has changed then nothing you have done represents the "building up" of God's house — though the **individual work** may have partially been accomplished in some lives. Nearly all the efforts today accomplish some aspect of that individual work which precedes the raising up of the temple of God. As Alma McClure once pointed out, that explains why we so often find ourselves alone, on the backside of the desert, not fitting in with any group, even when we have tried to do so. But don't get under condemnation in the meantime, my beloved, as God works HIS PREPARATION within you! Because He will be joining PREPARED member to PREPARED member! Often it takes the isolation, the separation, the ostracism, to *prepare* you to be a temple stone truly shaped by the Lord, to be effectually fitted and joined to that stone God has in mind to set you next

to! Each stone was “made ready at the quarry” and that certainly helps us to understand the *strange path* that many have been required to travel! Yes, the hammer, ax, and iron tools of the Lord’s choosing have struck us in our place of preparation, and we have cried out in pain, not understanding why the trials have been so great, and seemingly without end! But be of good cheer! In the fullness of time God’s temple of sons and God’s bride-city WILL come together — by a sudden, powerful, sovereign move of God! That is the mystery.

Jesus walked among the people, calling twelve, and seventy, then multitudes of disciples, teaching, preaching, healing, doing signs and wonders, demonstrating the kingdom of God. There were vast multitudes of people who followed Him, but there was no cohesion, shape, or form. It was an *unstructured* kingdom. It was a great company of stones not yet assembled. Against that backdrop He left them and ascended up on high. He left His disciples, only a little flock, with all the powers of earth arrayed against them, as defenseless sheep in a wilderness, surrounded by wolves. He left a mere handful of ignorant and unlearned men and women: poor, despised, and rejected. He left a few uncouth fishermen and a publican to conquer a world of sin and shame. But when the day of Pentecost was *fully come, suddenly...* God put something together, stood it up in the earth, and revealed His glory. They came off victors through grace and turned the world of that day upside-down, the bloodstained banner waving from one end of the Roman Empire to the other. What a transformation the Spirit’s power wrought!

We stand today in an hour not unlike those days preceding the day of Pentecost. The next great Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, is about to “fully come.” The Christ is among us in a fresh manifestation, there is a new message going forth, a declaration concerning the next step and phase of the kingdom of God — the perfection of the bride of Christ and the manifestation of the sons of God. There is a unique dealing of God in these significant days and an urgency to enter into the greater glory to come. The bride is being adorned for the marriage of the Lamb, the manifest sons of God are ascending the heavenly mount Zion, the city foursquare is coming down from God out of heaven, the tabernacle of God shall be among men, and the new order for the new age will soon be birthed sovereignly BY GOD HIMSELF when the fullness of time has arrived. The greater temple will speedily arise in glory and majesty and power in the earth *without the sound of a hammer* — with no carnal efforts or soulish works to produce it. In the meantime we must individually submit ourselves to Father’s dealings, and the word and ministry He sends our way, continuing to press experientially into Him, in preparation for the manifestation of His life without measure.

The holy city descends, John tells us, “*as a bride adorned for her husband.*” Let us visualize the scene. The day has come. All the planning for the wedding is over. The guests are ushered in, and the attendants parade to the front of the sanctuary. Before entering the sanctuary himself, the minister stops to see the bride, who is waiting impatiently for the musical cue that tells her everything is ready. The minister compliments her on the gown she is wearing. It is more beautiful than any he has ever seen! Radiating love, she informs him that her husband-to-be designed it just for her.

May I say to you that the bridegroom, in my judgment, is the most short-changed thing in a modern wedding that’s imaginable. The minister takes his place and the bridegroom comes out and walks down and stands before him, and nobody pays any attention to the bridegroom, nobody acts excited when he comes out. The only one that smiles is his mother! She smiles at him, but no one else does. And now the moment arrives for the bride to come out. And I want to tell you that every head in the building is turned! Why? They want to see how she is attired, what she wears. She is the main attraction! And I am of the opinion that that is just the reason a great many people go to weddings to hear the same ceremony repeated again and again — you go through the same thing every time. YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT THE BRIDE WEARS!

I think of another wedding with a bride who is dressed in that which her Groom has designed — in materials that He purchased Himself, and which she with great care and effort attired herself with, and she too is clothed with beauty! In chapters twenty-one and twenty-two of the Revelation she is eager for her musical cue, she has the kind of excitement that pertains to a bride, and then she steps forth and walks down the isle of the universe and the heads of men, and women, and cities, and nations, and of all creation are turned to behold her in all her beauty! It is the greatest wedding of all history. It is the wedding of the bride of Christ and the Lamb! And the Lamb is mentioned in those chapters and at His wedding, but like the modern day bridegrooms He does not take center stage but remains in the background. And He doesn’t mind at all, for, after all, He is receiving His beloved and glorious bride and HE wants her

displayed for all to behold! Oh, yes! *“Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready”* (Rev. 19:7).

Chapter 235

The Tabernacle Of God With Men

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God*” (Rev. 21:3).

BEHOLD! This is the word with which John begins his description of what he saw next. Someone has said that the word “behold” in the scriptures is the “Stop, Look, and Listen” sign of the Bible. It always calls for special attention and directs our focus to a truth of unusual importance. The word comes from the Greek *idou*, a demonstrative participle. There are four things we should understand about this word. First, it bids the reader or hearer to give attention to what is being said, as if we were to say, “Now listen!” Second, it is used when an event is specified which seems impossible, yet occurs. Third, it is an exclamation of one pointing out something and calling attention to it. Fourth, it means to observe what is about to be said and consider it thoroughly.

Now let us look at the words that follow: “Behold, *the tabernacle of God is with men,*” is how we find it described in the King James Bible. It is significant to note, however, that the verb ‘*is*’ does not appear in the Greek text. A more literal translation would be, “Behold the tabernacle of God with men!” That is, the tabernacle of God is with men — ***behold it!*** The tabernacle of God with men is the holy city, New Jerusalem! The tabernacle of God with men is the bride of the Lamb! ***Look at the bride! Fasten your eyes upon the holy city! Behold the tabernacle of God with men!*** By the time we reach this chapter of the Revelation every spiritual mind has figured out that the tabernacle of God is not a tent in the wilderness, nor a temple on mount Moriah, nor a literal city floating down out of space and setting down somewhere in the Middle East, but the tabernacle of God is a spiritual people that has been built up a spiritual house, made of living stones, fitly framed together and compacted by every part, raised up in the earth to be an habitation of God through the Spirit. That is the mystery!

Our problem has been that with carnal minds and natural thinking we have conceived of the holy city in the way we know cities on earth, cities having tall buildings, streets, businesses, residential areas with homes, schools, and churches. To us this is a city — this is New York City, Detroit, Miami, or Seattle. Yet none of the above stated things have anything whatever to do with the real city! Should you tear down all the buildings and everyone live in tents, you would still have a city. The most frightening thing of all would be to remove all the people, leaving only the buildings. Then you have a ghost town where the wind whistles eerily around the buildings, shutters and doors bang and hinges squeak mysteriously in the night, while tumbleweeds careen wildly down the streets and bounce off into the darkness. Your spine will tingle and your skin crawl should you have to spend the night there alone! This speaks to me that a city is not buildings or streets or anything else — the city is ***a people!*** A city is a body of people compacted together, living in the same locality, walking, working, and functioning together as one harmonious whole. The indwelling of God in a people is expressed so beautifully in the little chorus:

I was born to be Thy dwelling place,
A home for the presence of the Lord;
So let my life now be separated unto Thee,
That I may *be* what I was *born to be!*

There are three symbols — the temple, the bride, the city. It seems to me that the intent of the Holy Spirit is that if you miss the significance of one, surely you will pick up on the other! It’s as if the Lord says, “Consider this now, my child; I’m giving you three symbols of the same thing — you should discover the key in at least one of them and understand by now that the New Jerusalem is *not a place*, nor is it a *thing*.” The problem untold millions of Christians have is that they have all their life-time heard the unrelenting drumbeat of carnal-minded sermons preached by carnal-minded preachers who extract from the Bible a carnal-minded “theology.” They have bombarded our minds with pictures of

saints driving a golden Rolls-Royce down the golden street of heaven to their mansion right next door to Jesus. Somehow I can't find that scene in the scriptures! I know it sounds really nice, and a polished orator can move congregations to tears or shouts of glory with sentimental stories about their mansion over the hilltop where they stroll hand in hand with Jesus. But these shallow-minded, spiritually stunted, self-anointed preachers are incapable of asking the simplest, most basic questions, much less uncovering the sacred realm where one discovers the deep things of God.

Have you considered, my brother, my sister, should you inherit a mansion next door to Jesus, what kind of mansion it would be? What all would you want included in that mansion? Now, first of all, how could each of us have a mansion *next door* to Jesus? If New Jerusalem were a literal city, it would be 1500 miles high, and 1500 miles wide. Your mansion might just happen to be 1500 hundred *miles* from Jesus! At best, we might be able to get four — one on each side, one in front, and one behind — next door to Him. None of the other millions of redeemed ones could ever hope to secure that coveted location right next to Him! And if there is no night in the city, you would not need a bedroom in your mansion, so you might want to include in your prayers the reverent request for the Lord, when He builds your mansion, to omit the bedroom. Since your food will be the fruit from the trees by the river in the midst of the city, doubtless you will not need a kitchen or dining room in your mansion. Seeing that you will have your "house from heaven," a body like unto His body of glory, I don't think you will have any use for a shower, bathtub, or toilet. That eliminates all plumbing and you can also forget the bathroom!

The Lamb who dwells within us is the light of the city, the omnipresent glory of God lightens it, and there is no night there, nor any need of the sun, nor of the moon; therefore you would not need any electric current for heating, cooling, lighting, or appliances of any kind. Obviously there would be no electric company in the city nor any need for wiring in your mansion! That eliminates the electric contractors. You would be clothed in the white, spotless, glistening garment of Christ's very own righteousness, which can never be soiled, and will never wear out, and from which there is no need to change into any other garment, so you would not need more than one such garment, making closets unnecessary. And just as Jesus in His resurrection could pass through walls and locked doors, appear and disappear, and travel at the speed of light with no vehicle of any kind, is it not reasonable to assume that you can eliminate the garage. Furthermore doors would be meaningless and the very walls themselves of no consequence whatsoever! In your glorified state it is doubtful you would need sofas or chairs to rest upon, and I'm certain there will be no television, stereo, or video games, so you can ask the Lord to delete from the plans both the family room and the living room!

What does that leave now — let us think! The carnal mansion of man's unspiritual imagination has entirely vanished like a feather in the wind! Multitudes of Christians entertain such childish and silly notions of heavenly mansions next door to Jesus — not so much because they love Him or long to be near Him, but only to enjoy the creature comforts such an estate would afford. Their interest is on the level of the luxuries indulged in by the rich and the famous of this world, and this sad and pitiful picture has been with us throughout the ages as God's little children with unsanctified hearts and unenlightened minds have injected their infantile imaginations into the holy words and deep mysteries of the Spirit of God. The traditions of the past have so dimmed their understanding that every truth is derailed and made to conform to the carnal desires of the man of flesh.

Let us now take note of the wonderful promises Christ has given those who love Him and are His called and chosen elect. In John 14:2-3 Jesus says to His disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions (Greek: *abodes, dwellings*). I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you *unto myself*; that were I am, there ye may be also." Here we must ask the blessed Spirit of Truth to uncover the hidden things from before our understanding and reveal the things that from the foundation of the world have been kept secret. The word "mansions" is found in only one place in the King James Bible. "In my Father's house are many mansions." The word "mansions" is obviously a mistranslation. The Amplified Bible says, "In my Father's house are many dwelling places." Both the New English Bible and Wuest's translation say the same. The Revised Standard Version, Phillip's translation, Goodspeed and the Jerusalem Bible all say, "There are many rooms in my Father's house." The Greek word *mone* should be correctly translated as "abodes" or, as the Amplified Bible renders it, "abiding places." In the Father's house are many "abiding places," with no allusion to size or grandeur. Furthermore, the reference is not to the space available inside the house, but rather to the very **framework of the house itself**. For it is NOT WE who dwell in the Father's house — it is the FATHER HIMSELF who dwells in and fills the house. We ARE the house! According to

all the teaching of the apostles from the book of Acts all the way through the Revelation WE ARE the house of God, WE ARE the temple of God, WE ARE the habitation of God, WE ARE the body of Christ, and WE ARE the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem! "He that overcometh will I make a *pillar in the temple of my God*, and he shall go no more out" (Rev. 3:12).

Read it again. The "mansion" is not for YOU to live in! A few verses later in the very same chapter of John's Gospel the Lord makes it crystal clear what He is talking about. "If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode (Greek: mone) with him*" (Jn. 14:23). Very beautiful is it to notice that our Lord here employs the same sweet and significant word, with which He began this wonderful series of encouragements, when He said, "In my Father's house are many *mansions (abodes, dwelling places)*." "Mansions" in this verse is the same Greek word as "abode" in verse 23 (*mone*). If the translators had been consistent in their rendering of this word *mone* verse 23 would read, "We will come unto him, and make our *mansion* with him." The message is clear — God is preparing YOU and ME, beloved, as His place to live, dwell, and have His abode. Our *mansion* is IN GOD, and God's *mansion* is IN US. Glory! But it's not a "mansion," as we think of it, it's simply a *place of dwelling*.

The church system has taught us that we have a mansion in the sky. Great singers, before vast crowds of thousands intone with melodious voice, "I've got a mansion just over the hilltop," and the carnal mind gets blessed with the thought that since we don't have much wealth and riches, or many yachts or mansions down here, God has prepared a grand mansion for us on that beautiful "Isle of Somewhere." This sounds sweet to the emotional, carnal mind, but how far from the truth it is! This deception is so imprinted in the minds of the people that naught but the overflowing grace of God can ever erase it. They understand not that God's separated and elect saints *are* that beautiful home, full of life and light and love, where no power of darkness, sin, or death can ever invade or operate.

Consider with me again these faithful words of inspiration: "In my Father's house." ***My Father's house!*** We have preached long and loud about ***our house*** when in reality it has never been about ***our house*** — it's always been about MY FATHER'S HOUSE! "I go to prepare a place for you." Does this not explain why when Jesus came in the flesh He was born into the home of a carpenter and was raised the apprentice of a carpenter? The life of Christ is the greatest parable of the ages! The Father's house has been under construction for two thousand years and what a house it is! We are not the beginning of the Father's house, it is almost completed and Christ is now doing the trim and putting on the finishing touches. It is not "our house" next door to Jesus, it is the Father's house and the place He is preparing for each of us is a place within the framework of His house, as a room in His house, as a living part of the edifice, WHERE HE CAN DWELL IN US! Oh, yes! "Now therefore ye are...of the household of God; and are *built upon the foundation* of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; *in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye are builded together FOR AN HABITATON OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT*" (Eph. 2:19-22).

A habitation is a dwelling place. The Greek word for habitation in this passage means "a permanent residence." Every enlightened believer knows that God does not dwell in man-made temples or buildings. Instead, our Lord has chosen to live in a temple of living stones — that is, in the hearts, lives, and bodies of His people. All who are "in Christ," that is, joined together in union with Him to be the dwelling place of God (God was *in Christ...*), are His house, His temple, His holy city — His abode, His *permanent residence!* Surely that means that He will never depart, never vacate this temple to live in any other! God has no other physical residence, no nation, no capital, no temple, no mountain-top, no planet, no solar system, no far away galaxy. Of all the marvelous galaxies still undiscovered or unexplored by man, and all the trillions of planets that fill them, God chose to dwell on this tiny sphere called earth; and He chose man as the place He would inhabit here, making the redeemed men to be the "habitable part of His earth." Of course, the Lord is everywhere, His presence filling all things. But God makes His "home" in His people! And they are His *permanent dwelling place*. What a wonder that is!

God has always cherished having a place to live. To Him there is "no place like home." The dwelling place of God, from its simplest beginnings in Genesis to the grand finale in the book of Revelation begins and concludes the whole scheme of God's purpose to indwell a people through whom to reveal Himself to creation. The first mention of a house for God appears suddenly in the early days of the patriarchs when Jacob, fleeing for his life, came to a certain place and camped there for the night. He

took of the stones of the place and arranged them under his head for a pillow and after the setting of the sun he lay down to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Then he saw the Lord standing at the top of the ladder, and the Lord spoke to him, renewing with him the covenant He had made with Abraham and Isaac. And Jacob awoke out of his sleep and in his wonder and excitement he cried, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than *the House of God*; this is the gate of heaven!" And so, Jacob took the stone he had used as a pillow and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. Jacob then made this profound statement to the Lord: "And this stone which I have set up as a pillar will be *God's House!*" Bethel was a simple house — made up of one stone! It was, however, an anointed house, for Jacob had poured oil on its top. Not a very pretentious house for the great God of the universe, but it was at least a beginning and the revelation was birthed in the earth that blessed night that God will have a house in the midst of men, it will be an anointed house, and it will be built of *anointed, living stones!* What began in Genesis with *one stone*, is finally perfected and completed in the Revelation as a dazzling city of precious stones and gold!

The concept of residence implies limitation. It excludes all aspects of creation that do not conform to its specifications. The term tells us nothing about God's essence or His nature, but something about how He chooses to express, reveal, and manifest Himself. Consider what a residence means in human terms. An individual wakes up in the morning and goes off to work. At the office or on the job he reveals himself as a professional or accomplished person in his field. His behavior, activity, speech, and social interactions are all in relation to this professional role. Now, should he be a teacher or professor, to his students he is one thing, to his colleagues, something else, and to his superiors another thing altogether. At noon he steps out to a local café for lunch and thus assumes an entirely new and different identity — that of a customer. Or perhaps he stops by the doctor's office — now suddenly he has become a patient! Let us say he has a room or apartment which he rents out to a tenant — to this tenant he becomes transformed yet again. He becomes a landlord. Suppose someone wants to know who and what this person really is. Of all the identities that he assumes during the course of the day which, if any, is *really him*? Is there no situation in which this individual divests himself of the various "roles" that people and circumstances demand of him, and is just simply "himself"?

Catch him at home! In his residence he is free of projecting any particular image. Home is the exclusive domain where he can *be himself* and *reveal himself as he is*. It requires no effort and no pretense. The idiom "feel at home" or "make yourself at home" suggests such a meaning. Just *be yourself* — *total freedom for self-expression!* And that is what it means to be the *house*, the *residence*, the *abode* or *dwelling place* of God! It is the locale where God can express, reveal, and manifest His infinite essence and nature in this limited and finite setting. It is the special and restricted place where God can *be all that He is*, He can *be God*, and He can truly *be at home* while doing so. Such was the case in the tabernacle in the wilderness and in the temple in Jerusalem. Only there was His glory visible, His Godhead explicit. In the rest of creation His divinity was and is obscured, just as the essential identity of a person is obscured by the masks he assumes in playing the various roles required of him. God's "masks" are the natural laws and processes in which He conceals Himself, so that He can animate and guide creation without overpowering it with His majesty. But God's spiritual house, His spiritual temple, His chosen abode is where He is seen as He really is! God can be present in many ways everywhere in His creation, but He can only *be God*, in all that that means, and He can only fully *be Himself*, and *be at home* in the chosen place of HIS RESIDENCE!

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God with men! And He will dwell with them, and they shall *be* His people, and God Himself shall *be* with them, and *be* their God." I love the Weymouth translation of this passage, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, *Lo, God's dwelling place is among men and He will dwell among them and they shall be His peoples.*" Ah — GOD IS MOVING IN WITH MAN! Actually, INTO MAN, for He dwells *among them*. So it's really not about a mansion you can live in, but you becoming a mansion that *He can live in!* It's about you becoming an habitation of God through the Spirit! Through the ages men have been visited by God, but in this hour its not about another *visitation*, He's building a *habitation!* Don't seek God for another visitation (revival), ask Him to make you His habitation. It's about God filling your whole being with His glory! It is God revealed in His people! BEHOLD THE TABERNACLE OF GOD WITH MEN! The result of God living in the same tent that we do is that it puts the curse in reverse — no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain (Rev. 21:4). Not because we flew away to some far-off

heaven somewhere, but because all that God is is living in the midst of us and His life has swallowed up every aspect of the curse, and there is a new heaven and a new earth and there is no more sea! No more wicked, no more wickedness, no more rebellion, no more war, no more crime, no more drugs, no more tragedies, no more heartache to tear apart our emotions, disturb our minds, and devastate our lives. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." The "place" is a condition, a state of being, the experiencing of Himself within ourselves by the triumph of His life! Oh, the wonder of it! The city is a people. The hour has come to favor Zion and to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. So many people are just watching and waiting for "over there" to deliver them from "down here." Won't it be a shock to find out that our mailing address "over there" is the same one we have "down here"! It will be a mighty interesting day when that awareness dawns on the horizon and God begins to manifest Himself through His manifest sons and daughters right here on this earth, delivering creation from the bondage of corruption. Isn't it wonderful!

Though ultimately this experiencing of God among men pertains to all men universally, there is also a very personal application in each of our lives. The Greek text says that John heard a great voice from *the throne*. We have discovered this throne within ourselves, in the authority and power of God residing in our spirit. We are aware that there is a throne or a secret place of divine life and power within where a special voice speaks to us. We know this voice, and it has a wonderful message for us: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men." To each of us personally the voice proclaims, "I will dwell with you and be your God. I will wipe away all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." He didn't say, "I will show you how or teach you the ways." God didn't give Moses, or Abraham, or Joshua, or David, or even Jesus a book by which they could learn to do great and mighty things for God. Oh, no! He always said, "I will be with you, I will bless you, **I WILL DO IT!**"

Such is our problem today. We want a book on twelve easy steps to overcoming. How to live victorious in three days. Seven keys to being a manifest son of God. If we can just find the method, the secret to success, then we can move into the place God has for us. The words need to be quickened within us, "**I WILL DWELL IN YOU AND BE YOUR GOD!**" God is not giving us formulas for success, patterns for overcoming, methods for conquering death — He is giving us Himself. When we have the Lord as the reality of our lives we no longer need the formulas, the patterns, the outward program, for it is now His work in us subduing every enemy, and conforming us into the image of God. How awesome and wonderful it is to know that God is living in us, and the Revelation unfolds for us the beauty, the grandeur, the glory, and the majesty of the reality! This is not something that we can conjure up within ourselves but it is the unfoldment of the Lord Himself. He brings us to this realization: "He will dwell with us, and we shall be His people." On the personal and individual level our "people" — that is, our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires, emotions, hopes, yearnings, all the elements of our being — will be living in oneness with God. God will live in and through us in all our hoping and planning, in all our coming and going, in all our speaking and doing. God will move in and become our conscious awareness at all times and in all things. It is indeed wonderful!

"For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, *ye are God's building*" (I Cor. 3:9). "For every house is *builded* by some man; but He that built all things is God. And...Christ as a son over His own house; whose *house are we...*" (Heb. 3:4,6). Would God that all the saints might see that since WE ARE THE HOUSE OF GOD, our dwelling place is not inside the house as an occupant, but within the very framework of the house — part of the superstructure. Every part of a building has its specific place to "abide." What would happen to a building were the roof to say, "I'm tired of being up here, exposed to the fierceness of the summer sun, the beating of the rain, and the chilling snows of winter. I have decided to come inside and abide on the floor!" Or, should the doors announce, "We're tired of hanging here on the wall, pushed and pulled all the time. Let's go up and rest on the roof." Or, suppose the walls were to declare, "We don't like this position; we're going out and lie on the lawn!" Or if the carpet curled up in the bathtub, or the electric range floated up to the ceiling. "Ridiculous!" you say. Yes — but the point is just this. In every house — each stone, board, nail, window, and furnishing has its special and unique abiding place. And all together, in perfect order, each fulfilling its place and function for which the architect designed it, they form the complete, harmonious, perfect building, a place of habitation for those who desire it.

Ah, we are given the transcendent and glorious privilege of entering into Father's house! Not as a guest, or occupant, but as part of the very substance of the building itself to be DWELT IN, FULLY POSSESSED AND INHABITED BY THE FATHER HIMSELF! Jesus said that if this were not true, He would have told us. But because it *is* wondrously true, He has prepared a place for us in this glorious habitation of God! When Jesus came He was the only tabernacle of God on earth! "The Father dwelleth in me." And now He has gone away, and come again, and prepared a place for *us* in this tabernacle of God, bringing us into relationship with the Father, that as sons we might be filled with ALL the fullness of God! Our Lord is setting forth the great revelation of His sonship to the Father, opening up to the minds of these wondering disciples a relationship with God that no man had ever understood before. This revelation of sonship was the truth that was so difficult for the Jews to receive. Their carnal hearts comprehended not that GOD WAS IN CHRIST, that Jesus was in very fact the *embodiment* and *personalization* of the invisible Father on earth, and that it pleased the Father that *in Him* should *all fullness* dwell.

It is a blessed and wonderful truth that all that the Father is was deposited in Jesus. The body of Jesus housed the Father-Spirit. When Jesus moved, it was the Father moving in Him. When He spoke, it was the Father speaking. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that *dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works*" (Jn. 14:10). Did you notice that those words are found in the very same chapter and in the very same context of His teaching about the "many mansions" in Father's house? When Jesus looked, it was the Father looking through Him. When He stretched forth His hand, it was the Father stretching His hand. This, precious friend of mine, is the glorious "place" where Jesus dwelt as the habitation of God, this was His plane of existence, His sphere of life, His state of being. When Jesus walked on earth He was the only body-building of God, but one beautiful day He thrust wide open the door into that exalted realm and proclaimed that in His Father's house are MANY ABODES, MANY DWELLING PLACES, and that He would go to the Father and prepare A PLACE FOR US.

Since Jesus dwelt in a spiritual realm of relationship with the Father, we know that the place prepared for us is a spiritual rather than a natural sphere. It is a heavenly realm. It is the realm of the Father's indwelling, the realm of sonship. It is a place in Father's house where He can live and move and have His being in us. It is not only a place prepared *for* us, but a place prepared *in* us. What has Christ prepared in you? A place where there is perfect peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation...IN ME ye have PEACE" (Jn. 16:33). What has Christ cultivated in your spirit? A place where there is fullness of joy and righteousness. What has He enjoined you to have? Longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance. What is Christ preparing in you? Goodness, faith, and divine love. What has Christ brought you into? He has ushered us into dimensions of His wisdom, knowledge, power, and glory. All of this is just the Father coming to make His abode with us, to dwell, live, and manifest Himself IN HIS HOUSE! What a PLACE he has prepared for us!

Having ascertained that the Father's house is a spiritual temple, we can easily understand the meaning of there being in this house or temple many mansions, or rooms, or chambers, as we look at the beautiful type of Solomon's magnificent temple. Not only was there the outer court, the holy place, and the most holy place, but we also read, "And against the wall of the house (temple) he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and the oracle: and he made chambers round about: and the nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad. The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up the winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. And then he built chambers against all the house five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar" (I Kings 6:5-10). In chapter thirty-five of Jeremiah we find that the different chambers were for persons of different rank, signifying that whatever place or chamber we become in the house of God will serve as a *unique expression* of the Father in us and through us, according to how we have yielded unto Him!

The following vision was received many years ago by a young sister in Argentina. If you can interpret it with a spiritual mind you will see that under the metaphor of "houses" the Holy Spirit has portrayed for us those bright celestial realms *in the spirit*, composed not of cold hard stones, but of living realities possessed by living members of a living temple of living stones who are built up a spiritual house, the habitation of the Almighty Father. The vision is as follows: "The Lord set me free from the heavy oppressions of the enemy and I was enabled to enter into His presence most easily and quickly. Then He carried me away to the sphere where He resides in His great Cloud. When I looked He showed me a great many most wonderful houses but they were not at all like (natural) houses down here. They

were like great, beautiful arches of light, each by itself distinctly separated one from the other. They were so beautiful they truly appeared like most wonderful riches for they were like glowing gems of purest celestial light of some material I could never explain.

“There was a marked difference between the houses on the different spheres. Those on the same sphere were more or less of the same appearance and were of a great number, but those on a higher sphere were vastly different and far more wonderful. The highest sphere of all was so gloriously brilliant that I could only behold in amazing wonder without being able to describe it. Each separate sphere was most markedly different, superior, harmonious, and far more brilliant than the sphere below it. So great was their light and so glorious their shining that they outshone the sun by far. Nevertheless, I could not ascertain the number of spheres.

“These arches — or domes of light — were not things separate from Him but they were a PART OF HIMSELF. This was the most surprising of all! They were parts of His very person. Each separate sphere was made up of a part of Himself but was such a different *manifestation of Himself*. Each higher sphere was so much superior and wonderful than the one before. I thought afterwards of an illustration from my own mind to try to describe it: As a young lady prepares herself in one way to work in the kitchen, in another way to go out to tea, but in still another way she beautifies herself to go out for an evening gala celebration. ‘These are the riches of Myself,’ He said, ‘and are most distinct one from the other. I have offered every one of these dwellings in every sphere to every one of my children. Although I have given to every one the same opportunities, many will be satisfied and will resign themselves to lower spheres because they do not want any more of Me. Each one will reach the place that his heart truly desires which will be given to him. Because some will not make the effort to reach out for any more (of My indwelling) they will have no more for they do not want any more’ — end quote.

Ah — there are many mansions or chambers or dwelling places in God’s house, many spiritual levels with various elevations and degrees of prestige and honor, and each of us must find his own. “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead” (I Cor. 15:41-42). The Father’s house contains many positions, many levels of expression, many planes of glory. Some saints have tried to seize some coveted position as did the mother of James and John on behalf of her two sons, who came to Jesus, “...worshipping, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom” (Mat. 20:20-21). Jesus did not deny that these positions existed, but He did say, “To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, BUT IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO THEM FOR WHOM IT IS PREPARED OF MY FATHER” (Mat. 20:23).

We do not vie and compete for positions in Father’s house, but we rejoice that there are “many mansions,” there is ample room, there is room for each one and Christ Himself is preparing a place for us! This spiritual house is the reality of which the earthly temple was intended to be the dim prophecy and shadow. In the architectural drawings in the heavens of God’s Spirit there is a place designed for each of us to become a “chamber.” Or perhaps we will be a “pillar” in the temple of our God! Oh, what a great house it is! The question is, Shall we become it, or shall we not? The old rabbis had a tradition which, like a great many of their apparently foolish sayings, covers in picturesque guise a very deep truth. They said that, how ever many the throngs of worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the time of the Feasts, the streets of the city and the courts of the sanctuary were never crowded. And so it is with that great heavenly temple. There is room for all! There are throngs, a great multitude that no man can number, but no crowds. Each finds a place in the ample sweep of the Father’s house, like some of the great palaces that barbaric Eastern kings used to build, in whose courts armies might encamp, and the chambers of which were counted by the thousand. And surely in that ample accommodation, you, and I, and ALL MANKIND shall find a place where we may become an expression of the Infinite Father, for He shall at the consummation be ALL and IN ALL! Aren’t you glad!

As mentioned earlier, the tabernacle in the Old Testament is the type of God’s dwelling and fellowship with His people. Typically, in the tabernacle God met His people, manifested His glory, spoke to them, made them one with Him through the sacrifices and ministry of the priesthood, and fellowshiped with them. The idea, therefore, of the tabernacle is fellowship, communion, and union with God. And the idea of the tabernacle of God with men in the New Jerusalem is the perfection of this fellowship, communion, and union. In this union God’s people become fully like Him and see Him as

He is. They know even as they are known. They see face to face. This is the essence of the blessedness of the city of God! The tabernacle of God with men and the city, the holy city, are now identical and co-extensive. This was not so in the old dispensation of shadows. God dwelt in the temple particularly; but His presence did not fill the city. But in the vision of John we are shown wondrous things! The city has become the tabernacle, and God's abode shall be with men perfectly and completely. We shall be like Him. And God shall dwell in all of us perfectly. He shall fill us, enlighten us, quicken our love, raise up His wisdom, glory, nature, and power within us beyond measure, and bind us to Himself with unbreakable bonds of eternal fellowship, communion, and union. But that is not all! The glory of God shall so radiate through us and out from us that it shall lighten the whole earth and the nations shall walk in the light of this city and be so filled with glory and so exalted in honor that they shall come and bring into the city all the glory and honor of the nations! In other words, they shall come in worship, offering up unto the Lord as a sacrifice of thanksgiving all the honor and glory He has so lavishly bestowed upon them!

This is also the ultimate realization of all prophecy. Thus, for instance, we read, "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Eze. 37:27). And again, "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain *the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations*. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off *all faces*; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 25:6-8). And almost the entire sixtieth chapter of Isaiah refers to the same thing, including the salvation and blessing of all nations and all people. What a word!

In one of his later writings Paul Mueller wrote the following exhortation. "Father is giving His elect and chosen ones a new and greater vision of the fullness of His glory, of the highest spiritual realms of Tabernacles and of the kingdom of God. He is moving us beyond Pentecost and is guiding us into all truth and showing us glorious things to come (Jo. 16:13). As we grow in the Spirit, we will see that our old personal identities of this fleshly realm are being swallowed up into Christ and we are being given a new name along with a new nature. We now see the greater glory of the 100-fold realm in God, and we are earnestly and sincerely walking toward that final spiritual goal in Him. Thank God, the Day has come when all the carnality of man, which was prevalent at Pentecost, is being removed from us. We are also being birthed into the greater glory and fullness of Tabernacles, to inherit the blessed fullness of the kingdom of our Father.

"With wonder, anticipation and hope, John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, saw the spiritual, heavenly, new Jerusalem *'coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.'* As we all may know, the bride is not an individual; she is a company of prepared saints of the Lord. They are ready to be joined unto Christ, their Head, in a grand and glorious union, which may be *'the marriage of the Lamb.'* And then, John heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ***'BEHOLD, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.'*** This is the grand fulfillment of the last great feast, the Feast of Tabernacles!

"The promise and glory of Tabernacles is the coming of the Lord to the earth to dwell with and in all mankind. He comes in His fullness to dwell with all men and to establish His dwelling place, His tabernacle, here on earth. God Himself shall dwell in and among all mankind. His 'people' will include *all men everywhere!* God Himself shall be with all men, and He shall be their God in the full sense of the word. This is what Tabernacles really is! And it is nothing less than this! Tabernacles is a high and holy realm in God that is more glorious than anything we have yet experienced! God has something far more glorious in store for His people and for the world than what we can see through this veil of flesh. And He is revealing it to His elect, by the Spirit. Launch out into the depths of His Spirit and experience Him! Be blessed by all the Spirit is revealing in this new and more glorious kingdom Day!" — end quote.

So, my dear friends, if you are still looking for a mansion over the hilltop or a cabin in the corner of Gloryland you are going to be disappointed. Christ has prepared a place for us alright — a place IN HIM — which is far more glorious and exciting than some tangible, carnal possession. He has raised us up to sit with Him, and in Him, to share His sonship and the indwelling of the Father in the higher than all heavens. The place He has been preparing for each one of us is not only a world to come, or a heaven

somewhere, but a position, a place of eminence, a place of glory IN HIM — there to reveal all the magnificence of the INDWELLING FATHER to all the endlessness of the unbounded heavens!

Chapter 236

All Things New

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: *for the former things are passed away*. And he that sat upon the throne said, “Behold, **I make all things new**. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:4-5).

Never forget, dear reader of these lines, that the book of Revelation reveals the processes that God takes His people through so that the bride can make herself ready, arrayed in linen pure and white; so that the manchild can be birthed and caught up to God’s throne of authority, power, and dominion; and so that all creation can be redeemed, purged, and transformed by the fiat of the almighty Creator and Redeemer. “Behold, **I make all things new!**” Ah, that is the mystery! In former times we supposed the book of Revelation was about God’s vindictive, implacable vengeance poured out upon the inhabitants of the world, and we felt sad for them, or perhaps some felt glad, feeling that mankind *deserved* what they would get! Only now, in the light that the Spirit brings, can we say with the beloved Seer of Patmos, “Blessed, happy, to be envied is the man who reads the word of this prophecy!” (Rev. 1:3). No, it’s not about devastating the earth, tormenting and killing millions of people, or sending billions of souls to eternal doom — it’s about **MAKING ALL THINGS N-E-W!**

God is up to something new! It is natural for people to want to restore things or have them restored. That is why people are interested in refurbishing old homes, shrines, automobiles, antiques — they enjoy *restoration*. Such people are going to have the thrill of their lives in the days just ahead, when they witness the greatest restoration of all time spoken of by virtually every Bible writer, and promised specifically by the apostle Peter in the book of Acts as follows: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must retain **until the times of restitution (restoration) OF ALL THINGS**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

In order to understand somewhat the significance of this wonderful declaration and the necessity of it, let us remind ourselves of the tremendous import of the words, “Behold, I make all things new.” God shall make all things in the heavens and on the earth **new**. They shall be new not merely in the sense that we can speak of something being brand new, that is, unused. But they shall be new in character, entirely different from the old things. There shall be a different earth and different heavens. There shall be different creatures and different men and different activities and different relationships and different purposes and goals than there were in the old heavens and earth. The life of God’s people and all mankind in the new heavens and the new earth shall be altogether different and in that sense **new**. So different and unspeakably glorious shall all things be that we cannot even conceive of them now in this world of sin, strife, evil, sickness, sorrow, pain, and death. There are no adequate human terms to describe the glorious future God has planned for this world of mankind! There is no proper earthly language which can depict the real character, the unspeakable beauty, glory, and majesty of that world to come!

“New” implies first or all a change in man’s *state of being*. Most Christians have the idea that “salvation” is about escaping hell and going to heaven when we die. Oh, no! That’s not it at all. God is not concerned about having a people He can **take** some place — to some far-off heaven somewhere. He is concerned with **making something out of us!** That is what redemption and restoration are all about! It’s not a question of where we are going, it is a matter of **what we are becoming**. Two men may go to Miami Beach and sit on a bench by the bay. One is a beggar, the other a business tycoon. They are both in the same place, but they are not both *the same thing!* There will be a lot of spiritual beggars in heaven! God is working not to *take us*, but to *make us!* “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to **become** the sons of God” (Jn. 1:12). “Thou has **made us** unto our God kings and priests” (Rev. 5:10). “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will **be** his God, and he shall **be** my son” (Rev. 21:7). “Therefore if any man **be** in Christ, he **is a new creation**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are **become new!**” (II Cor. 5:17).

It should be clear to every enlightened mind that God is in the process of making an entirely new creation, or making *all things new* — not this time a mere natural creation, nor yet a purely spiritual one, but a *spiritual-physical* one. The present natural creation is really only a first step in the divine process of making the creation God had in mind from the beginning. The time has certainly come for some true revelation and spiritual understanding concerning God's creative program. God's creation is still a work in progress! Beyond any shadow of doubt that is the truth revealed in the words of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders when in their joyful praises to God they proclaim, "...for Thou has created *all things*, and for Thy pleasure they ARE and WERE created" (Rev. 4:11). "First that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual," is the divinely revealed order. Does that mean the natural is completely done away with, supplanted by the spiritual? Not at all! It means that the natural is *swallowed up* by the spiritual. The natural is a necessary step in the process of making the kind of creation God purposed from the beginning. If the first or old creation would have been what God was after He would not be making a more glorious new creation. Jesus Christ is the *proto-type* of that new creation — the PHYSICAL SPIRITUALIZED, RAISED UP INTO THE DIVINE AND HEAVENLY! The *physical body* of Jesus was raised from the dead, brought out of the tomb, spiritualized, and made a *spiritual body* — not a *spirit*, mind you, but a spiritual *body*. Jesus is still referred to as a *man* all through the New Testament, both before and after His ascension into the heavens. Even now "...there is one mediator between God and men, the **man** Christ Jesus." Yet, how different and more glorious He is from His days in the flesh!

The firstborn of this new creation order is a GOD-MAN upon the throne of universal power! Think of it! When you see Jesus as a divine-human, a God-man, one of the natural creation *metamorphosed, spiritualized, raised up into the celestial and incorruptible*, then you see exactly what God is after in every man and the whole creation. "This mortal must *put on* immortality." Oh, the wonder of it! We see the natural creation all around us, but this natural creation is not the finished product any more than the ore dug out of the earth is the fine piece of jewelry the artisan has in mind when he begins his work. The whole creation is still in the process of being made into the kind of creation God started out to make. God is *still* Creator! "Behold, I **make all things new!**"

Behold the truth contained in this profound statement of our Lord to His footstep followers as He sojourned in the borders of Judea. "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the *regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mat.19:28). The word "regeneration" is from the Greek *paliggenesia*. It occurs only one other time in the New Testament, and there it refers to the transformation wrought in the lives of redeemed saints. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of *regeneration*, and *renewing* of the Holy Ghost..." (Titus 3:5). *Paliggenesia* is a compound word meaning "a *genesis* again." Jesus came to reveal within Himself a new genesis — a new beginning, a rebirth as it were, a new creation! There is going to be a new genesis for every man — the reason I say "there's going to be" is because it has **already begun in us, God's called and chosen elect!** "Ye which have *followed me*, in the *regeneration*..." To arrive in that new genesis it is necessary to **follow Him**. We must follow Him into the new genesis because HE IS THE BEGINNING, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD!

In one of the most magnificent passages of all scripture, which contains one of the most meaningful promises in all the Word of God, the apostle Paul describes this paliggenesia: "For the earnest expectation of the creation *waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*. For the creation was made subject to vanity (futility), not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same *in hope*. Because the *creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption* into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the *firstfruits of the Spirit*, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (placement as mature sons), to wit, **the redemption of our body**" (Rom. 8:19-23).

Odd it is that we limit God's transformation, His new genesis, to planet earth, when the ultimate objective of God, as portrayed in the Bible, heralded by prophets, taught by mighty men of old, and championed by the apostles of our Lord, is the complete redemption and recreation of the entire creation encompassed by the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The purpose of God reaches out to infinitude and to eternity. The formation and glorification of the body of Christ is but the first step on the way to "heading up *all things* in Christ," the ultimate raising up of the entire universe

into its union with God in the Spirit where God becomes *all* and *in all*. Grace has ordained that twice-born men should be the first to experience the powers of the age and the ages to come, but how much more there is beyond that for the glory of God and the admiration of His people!

“Behold, *new* I am making all things.” This newness of life is of ever increasing importance and should be cherished now above all else. Only God can make new! People may vainly imagine that by means of better education, a better environment, better legislation, and more equitable distribution of wealth they are going to usher in a new era, a golden age, a Utopia of man’s ardent desire. Their dream remains a dream! Here in our country, every time we get a new President and a new Congress, with new initiatives, new members of the Cabinet, new heads of important government agencies, with new decisions and policies, we feel that we are poised for a better, more prosperous, and more glorious future. But can these new administrations really solve the gigantic problems facing the nation? Can they balance the budget, eliminate the horrifying national deficits and debt, win the war on drugs, stop the unrelenting flow of illegal aliens, do something about our mammoth crime problems, eliminate poverty, help the homeless, give minorities complete equality, restore a character of morality in the lives of our citizens, broker a lasting peace in the Middle East, and at the same time keep America strong, able to deter aggression and defeat terrorism? Each new administration will *try*! And, because they are only human after all, and because each new President soon finds himself briefed about facts at home and abroad of which he had no knowledge *until* he became chief executive; and thus finds himself propelled, unwillingly, along avenues of which he does not prefer; forced to make decisions he hates — **he will fail!**

Neither economic nor disarmament conferences, neither better schools, more moral legislation, nor share-the-wealth programs are going to bring about a really golden age, a new heaven and a new earth, a new order, *all things new*. The simple fact is that the gigantic problems facing our nation and the whole world today are UNSOLVABLE! Personal experience has taught us the incontrovertible truth that it is ever God who through His Spirit makes all things new! In my lifetime I have personally witnessed criminals, drug addicts, sexual deviants, thieves, prostitutes, alcoholics, murderers, mentally ill, and many other such individuals saved, delivered, changed, regenerated, and gloriously transformed by the power of Christ! Oh, yes! God alone can restore and renew man and the universe. He does it now, though in a very restricted sense. He is going to do it on a massive scale at the manifestation of the sons of God! We can hardly imagine that the effects of sin and the curse can ever be removed. Yet they are going to be taken away so that all things shall actually be made “*new*.” And to strengthen us in our faith that He who promised us will really do it, we read, “Behold!” The voice tells John that he must take it to heart. He must be sure to write it down for the understanding and comfort of others, for “*these words are true and faithful*” (Rev. 21:5). So certain is the fulfillment of this promise that the voice speaks as if the promise were already fulfilled: “*...it is done, it has happened!*” Only a “*new genesis*” can turn things around and redeem the world!

Many simply cannot imagine a world without crime, drugs, poverty, hunger, pain, wars, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornados, drought, political upheavals, rebellions, coups, strife, hatred, bigotry, deceit, immorality, murders, sorrow and death. Can you imagine a world where nations live at peace? Where not one dollar is budgeted for defense? Where no family has to worry about sons and daughters being sacrificed on a battlefield? Where words like *tank, battleship, bomb, grenade, warhead, and holocaust* are only in the vocabulary of historians? Can you further imagine a world where hurricanes never blow ashore? Where tornados never devastate towns and farms and businesses? Where all volcanoes are extinct? Where earthquakes never occur? And can you believe a world where drought never affects a crop? Where hunger is unheard of? Where floods never destroy homes? Where spouse abuse and child abuse never happen? Where disease never destroys a life? Such a utopian world of which we speak is not going to be brought about by the efforts of men. It will not come from peace conferences, science, technology, education, social programs, or any other initiative of men and governments. For 6,000 years mankind has proved incapable of living at peace or perpetuating either righteousness or prosperity. No form of human government has brought universal peace and happiness. And scientists have certainly proved they are incapable of controlling the powerful forces of nature — though they can unleash the dangerous, destructive, and deadly secrets of the atom!

What a glorious and beautiful picture the prophets have painted of this great day of the release of creation from the nature of the curse and the bondage of corruption! No genius or artist, or wisdom of poet can ever convey the glory and beauty of this bright day! No matter where you live, you will awaken every morning to be greeted by a smiling sun that will shine through an atmosphere as pure as the very

breath of heaven. The army of germs and viruses will be neutralized by the very breath of God. The curse and the sorrow that the curse brings will be removed. Farmers will plow the soil with the knowledge that no tares will grow, and every troublesome weed will turn to a beautiful flower at the word of the sons of God. With all curse lifted, the glories of Eden will be restored. Glorious indeed will be the sight as you stand on the summit of the mountains and gaze across the fertile plains, vibrant with beauty, fertility and color. Mankind shall no more eat bread by the sweat of his face. Nor shall men any longer return to the dust of the earth, for all men shall freely eat of the tree of life which is the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. All enmity and strife shall be done away. All sorrows, troubles, sickness, pain, sin and death shall cease to exist. The eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, literally and spiritually.

The Spirit of the Lord will draw all mankind to Himself, giving them eyes to see and ears to hear. The stranger you meet in the city will be no stranger, for all men will know one another by the spirit and all will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. Waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert, both literally and spiritually — for the literal is but the sign and parable of the spiritual. No nettle will sting the legs of the playing child, who in that glad day can play anywhere without danger from ferocious beast or reptile. No mountain lion will ever again stalk the beautiful deer, for “the lion shall eat straw like the ox.” No hunter will ever sight the muzzle of his gun. The wild goose on his swift unerring flight will not have to fly at a dizzy height because of its fear of man. No woman will be afraid on the street, no one will fear anyone or anything anywhere, for “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain (kingdom),” saith the Lord. No hungry man will walk the icy streets, no sobbing mother or father, wife or husband, son or daughter, will gaze into the casket at the ashen face of their beloved. No aged saint will hover over her small stove to measure out her meager food — just enough to keep body and soul together until her body wears out and her heart gives up. The heavens will no longer be as brass, and God will no longer be hidden as though He were a trillion miles away. The presence of the Lord will be closer to us than the air we breathe, yea, closer even than the blood coursing through our veins. Before anyone shall call Him, the Lord will answer them; and while they are yet speaking, He will respond to their plea. The earth, without and within, shall be full of the glory of the Lord! My beloved, if all of this, and much more beside, does not become a reality on this planet then the promise fails — “Behold, I make **ALL THINGS N-E-W!**” “Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

The whole of created life, according to the passage we quoted earlier from Romans 8:19-21, will be delivered from the *bondage of corruption*. This is the fruitage of the ministry of the manifest sons of God! This presents a very striking truth about God’s grace to even the lower creations, including the animal and all other animate creatures, and to the whole system of things, who are also under the bondage of the curse, violent natures, fear, decay, and death. Against their own wish they were put into this bondage! The thing that appeals to our sympathies at once is that the creation is spoken of as though *conscious of this*. It, too, is suffering as well as we! And the man, woman, or child who has felt oftentimes to the point of pain, the mute appealing look in the eye of some horse or dog as though asking for sympathy or help, or the melancholy braying of the burro, will feel at once an answering within, to this marvelous promise of God! The whole creation is joining with us in unutterable groans and birth pangs, earnestly looking forward to its release with ours, out into full, free Life. It is this exalted thought of the glory that will come at the manifestation of the sons of God, that makes us so eager for the blessed Day of release!

Our world today needs the new men that Christ makes! New men are the key to everything else that must be renewed. Therefore the making of new men is the first priority of the kingdom of God. Do you, precious reader of these lines, feel alone, insignificant, unlettered, unlearned, and helpless in the face of the needs of mankind and the world? Have you not wondered how in the world you could ever rule nations and change great and important things in the world when you are just an ordinary person of little influence, unknown by anyone? Ah, the preparation for sonship and rulership in the kingdom of God is not rooted in your natural talents or abilities, or in your knowledge of theology, or economics, or government, or public speaking, or a thousand other things that the world esteems. Oh, no! Qualification for the kingdom lies in our *becoming new men*. Only by the making of new men can the sons of God be equipped to reign and bring the kingdom of God to pass in the earth! Our world desires better schools, a better press, better politicians, better government, a better business world, a better economy, better

living conditions, better social institutions, better communities. These desires are laudable, but they cannot be achieved with *unchanged men!* And therein lies the dilemma.

At every point we are driven to the need for new men — a NEW CREATION. Through two world wars the “elite” of the world dreamed and talked of the coming of a better world when the nations would lay down their arms and begin to build that better world. Seventy-six years have gone by since the last World War and it is not only the same old world, it is a much worse world! We cannot build a new world out of men with old dispositions, old attitudes, old methods, old hearts, and old natures. The new world for which all creation groans and travails can only be fulfilled by new men with renewed minds, new hearts, new understanding, and a new spirit. Do you truly want to do something that will contribute toward the raising up of God’s kingdom in the earth and the transformation of the world? Do you want to know precisely just what you can do right now, today, right there in that undistinguished little place where you are, to actually qualify to reign with Christ in His kingdom? **GIVE YOURSELF TO BECOMING A NEW MAN, A NEW WOMAN, A NEW CREATION, CONFORMED INTO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD!** That is the one single greatest and most effective thing you can do today in preparation for the manifestation of the sons of God!

The kingdom of God brings a mighty change within humanity — the destruction of the Adamic creation and the establishment of the Christ within. The new order of the kingdom of God will be free of the carnal nature, which is the man of sin, the real anti-Christ. **And God is now beginning this new creation order with you and me.** He will no longer tolerate the evil that has been promoted in the world by the Adamic man. The Lord is not only revealing the manifestations of this evil “man,” He is also going right to the heart of the matter. The Lord will take him out of us root and branches, and eventually out of all others, so that he will never again trouble the world. Rejoice, saints of God, you have been chosen to begin the new world order of the kingdom of God! **And that kingdom order must begin with us.** God is delivering us of the carnal nature, for we are the firstfruits of His kingdom, and that is what He is doing now. You don’t think you would know how to go out and turn the world upside down for God? Peter, James, and John didn’t have the foggiest notion how to do it in their day, either — right up until the day of Pentecost! Our calling is to become divested of every vestige of the carnal, Adamic mind and nature, learn to hear our Father’s voice, flow with the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and live in the Spirit! Just do that, my beloved, and one beautiful day the Lord will speak to you to go forth and do thus and thus and in that selfsame hour you will have the confidence and faith to step forth in obedience, and you will be the new person He can trust to handle His power and do exactly as He commands without turning either to the right hand or to the left. It’s not that far-fetched or difficult — it just requires a person in whom **ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN MADE NEW!**

For years an old quarry lay scarred, forlorn, and forgotten. It was nothing but an old hole in the ground. No one could see any use for it until one day a gardener came and looked it over. However he didn’t notice the gashed walls and deep pits of that quarry. Instead he envisioned a beautiful garden and went to work to bring about a transformation. Now ivy drapes the walls of the quarry. Neatly trimmed pathways lead through smooth lawns and sculptured flower beds. Splashing waterfalls add sound and ponds mirror the brilliant colors of flowers. Everywhere there is a restful and delightful beauty. We may sometimes feel that we are like this old quarry was before the gardener began the transformation! We are scarred and useless and discarded. Weaknesses, problems, troubles, illness, failures, broken relationships, disappointment, have left us feeling less than worthy of even God’s grace. But there is a Master Gardener, the Architect of Eden, who sees great potential in all of us! As we allow the Lord to work in our lives He is renovating us, changing us, transforming us, will make us to be “a watered garden, a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isa. 58:11). Oh yes, my beloved brother, my precious sister, this means **YOU!**

There is coming a time of unspeakable glory, plainly revealed in holy scripture, as the time when the Lord God shall **MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.** The proof of His ability to accomplish this is His present work of making new men and a new creation of His called and chosen elect. I tell you, my friend, if God can subdue and eradicate the old Adamic nature and life in *me*, He can do it in anybody! This renewal of all things is as certain as the rising of the sun and the going down thereof. There is coming a blessed day when the River of Life shall overflow so abundantly unto the whole creation that the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. There is coming a day when there will be no more sin and no more curse and no more death anywhere, for the former things have passed away, washed, quickened, renewed, and transformed in the life-giving powers of the effervescent River of Life.

The glorious New Jerusalem, the city foursquare, the perfect and powerful government of God, shall fill the earth with the light of the Lord. The people will walk in the light of it and the nations shall bring their glory and honor into it. These are the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man. These are the things God has revealed to them that love Him! These are the *unspeakable* things, unlawful for man to utter in the hearing of unsanctified ears, the things that pertain to the Paradise of God which is the realm of the Spirit. These are the things that shall be brought to pass in the age and the ages to come as the River of Life flows out through the ministry of the manifest sons of God. Aren't you glad!

NO MORE SORROW, TEARS, OR CRYING

“And God shall *wipe away all tears from their eyes*; and there shall be no more death, neither *sorrow, nor crying*, neither shall there be any more *pain: for the former things are passed away*” (Rev. 21:4).

Is history's final page written in large letters, spelling doom and death and darkness and torment accompanied by mourning and crying and pain for the vast majority of humanity? The churches tell us that is the case. Surely in the omniscient wisdom and infinite love of God — that is not the end of it all! Turn over one page. With eyes of spiritual perception and with a divine faith look at what is beyond the present, for there is no end to the Book of Life. And do you suppose that all these wonderful blessings and glories are reserved only for a little flock of saints who make it into heaven at last? If that is what you think, you simply *haven't read the Book!* “And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I MAKE A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S N-E-W!” Now read what the almighty Father has decreed and recall the list of things which by His omnipotent power *shall be no more*:

The **sea** (of restless, turbulent, sinning humanity) *was no more...*

All **tears** will be *wiped away* out of men's eyes...

Death shall be *no more...*

Neither **mourning...**

Nor **crying...**

Nor **pain anymore...**

Ah, how *many-splendored* and *all-inclusive* are these things! Throughout His vast creation God will eliminate all sorrow and wipe all tears from off all faces. For the Lord's people it means no more travailing and weeping for more of God, for they shall now at last be *satisfied!* They no longer have any inner turmoil, for all the tears are gone. As Ricky Evans has pointed out in one of his excellent writings, “The word ‘tear’ comes from *dakru* which means ‘an inward cry that cannot be heard audibly, inner turmoil.’ It speaks of those dissatisfactions, those longings, that warfare which goes on within us, while we keep a smile on our face and don't let anyone know our deep dark secrets. God's life, His presence, the reality of His person, wipes away those cries, removes the inner turmoil.”

The following words by Ray Prinzing are pertinent here. “Yes, there have been tears covering the altar with our offerings, pious forms of religion without any personal commitment behind them, such God has rejected. And there have been tears over our presumptuous acts, when we went out and were failures in our self-willed programs, and we cried to God to ‘help us save face, and salvage our efforts.’ But again He let it all be washed away with our flood of tears. And there have been tears for all the realms we birthed and lost — all the blessings that came and went. There have been copious tears to water the seed (and we almost drowned in some of them!), while we waited for God to give the increase. There were tears shed for our own cleansing and mellowing that we might yield the more readily to His will and purpose. And there are tears that are shed simply as we with compassion ‘weep with those that weep,’ as God deals with them, and they are prepared and processed unto salvation. But there shall come a time when, having entered into the fullness of HIS KINGDOM, He shall wipe away tears from off all faces.

“Wiping away tears is a ministry of *love* and *forgiveness*. As long as there is one particle of carnality in us which causes us to want to see them cry a little longer, to make sure they are really repentant, it is obvious that we are not qualified for this ministry of wiping away tears. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, ABSOLUTE MERCY, TOTAL FORGIVENESS, DIVINE

COMPASSION is necessary for this ministry in Christ. 'Not imputing their trespasses unto them...' (II Cor. 5:19).

"The weeping is to be done in the valley, for there shall be no weeping in Zion, that is where He wipes away all tears. IF you are still weeping, it is also self-evident that you have not fully arrived in Zion. Weeping was with us during the dark night of the soul, but joy comes in the morning when we partake of His kingdom in righteousness, peace, and joy. There are many who can make us weep, but there are few who are able to wipe away tears from off all faces. O, beloved friend, 'It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation' (Lk. 25:9). 'And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and *the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying*' (Isa. 65:19)" — end quote.

As real and wonderful as all that is, it is only the tip of the iceberg! Among all the things that are taken away in our text, the very first one is tears, followed by sorrow and crying. And these are taken away from the "all things" that are made new. Tears, sorrow, and crying are to be banished as far as "all things" reaches, even though the church systems would have us believe that there will be a great deal of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth going on throughout the ages to come, or as the churches describe it, throughout all eternity. I have often pondered why it is that the churches and their people have such a hard-nosed desire and demand for those things to continue somewhere in God's great universe, in a place called hell, when God's wonderful Word declares that *they will be no more!*

The Psalmist tells us that weeping may endure for a season, or for a night, but that joy comes in the morning (Ps. 30:5). Oh, yes, there has been a long night of weeping in this world, while darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. But the prophet Isaiah tells us that the glory of the Lord shall arise upon His people in such a display of illumination, grace, and power that the nations shall come to our light and kings to the brightness of our rising. He then goes on to say that ALL will gather themselves together and come and be converted! Yes, my beloved, God has a *morning* for all mankind when weeping shall cease and joy shall come to all! But the churches still insist that joy will come to all parts of the universe except the place they have designated as hell, and there it will forever be nothing but darkness, pain, weeping, wailing, and unending sorrow.

There is another wonderful promise of God penned by the prophet Isaiah, and I quote from the New English Bible. "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will prepare a banquet of rich fare for ALL THE PEOPLES, a banquet of wines well nurtured and richest fare, well-nurtured wines strained clear. On this mountain the Lord will swallow up that veil that SHROUDS ALL PEOPLES, the pall thrown over THE NATIONS; He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord will *wipe away the tears* FROM EVERY FACE and remove the reproach of His people from the whole earth. The Lord has spoken!" (Isa. 25:6-7). In the preceding chapters the prophet tells us that God will destroy all that has ever oppressed the people of the earth. His power will be used to take away every degrading thing and everything that binds and this power is spoken of as THIS MOUNTAIN which is the figure for THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Having destroyed the oppression, this mountain (kingdom) will then become the place where God will prepare a very wonderful feast for ALL THE PEOPLES. Everyone is included in this for when the morning comes, none will be left out. The work of reconciliation will be completed and now will come the time of rejoicing!

After the preparation of this feast, this mountain, or this power and kingdom of God, will do another marvelous thing. The veil that shrouds ALL THE PEOPLES OF EARTH will be swallowed up by God to be seen no more. The pall (grave clothes) that hangs over ALL THE NATIONS will be taken away and swallowed up by God. Nations and their officials, scientists, and doctors are seeking how to do away with all that plagues humanity with sickness, disease, drugs, crime, and a thousand other fruits of the nature of sin and death, but they cannot find the way. Just when the nations feel that they are making some progress, some other deadly disease, radical philosophy, or warring group rises up and the trouble starts all over again. Of course they know nothing of this veil that is upon all nations and peoples. They know nothing concerning the covering that God has placed over all nations which obscures their vision and shuts them up to a realm of limitation and ignorance which they perceive to be wisdom. Therefore they cannot know how in any way to even look in the right place for the solution. There is no solution outside of God Himself and the understanding He brings by His Spirit, and He will reveal that when the time is ripe for it. But even now the feast the Lord will prepare for ALL PEOPLES is in the

process of preparation — it is the word of God and the move of His Spirit through His manifest sons. What a table will be spread when these sons are revealed! When the feast is ready, God will lift the veil and the covering from all people and nations and reveal the wonders that He has formed for every one who has ever lived or ever will live!

Instead of preparing a terrifying hell to bring to a close this age of grace as we have been told by the churches, we find that God is preparing a wonderful feast for the whole world for the opening of the coming age. But the carnal mind, even the carnal religious mind, always looks upon the negative side of things and actually forgets there is a positive side. From their view the devil wins in the end, carrying the vast majority of souls with him into eternal doom, and God has to shut everything down to keep His losses from being even greater. But instead of preparing for destruction, God is preparing His bright morning upon the mountains, the opening of that new age of His dealing in which there will be no more tears, weeping, or crying — *anywhere!* Isn't it wonderful!

In this passage in Isaiah we also read that the reproach of His people will be removed from off all the earth. The Lord will swallow up death in victory. And please notice that *the Lord will do the swallowing up of death*. We all know that when we eat certain foods or substances our body has the power to change and convert them into something altogether different. For instance, our body will convert the carbohydrates in potatoes into sugar and then proceed to convert the sugar into fat! In like manner, spiritually, God will swallow up death and convert it into victory! Oh, the mystery of it! Death will be taken into the Lord and even death itself will turn to life *in God*. How wonderful to know that God makes these things to be absolutely true, leaving no possible chance of failure in any place. He is working by precise spiritual laws and nothing is left for anyone else of inferior knowledge as God is doing all these things Himself!

Following this the Lord will wipe away the tears FROM OFF ALL FACES. This wiping away of all tears isn't something that is done as an after thought. It involves the complete wiping out of the memory of man everything that ever caused those tears. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and *the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind*" (Isa. 65:17). Every thought of them will be forever gone from the mind of man. It signifies that the Lord will take away from them all grief of mind, fear of damnation, consciousness of evils, and of temptations from them. The word "wipe" means to stroke or rub and to sooth as with oil. This is very significant of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit! It reminds us of the words of Joel when he said that the time would come when God would pour out of His Spirit upon *all flesh*. All this is about as conclusive and inclusive as anything possibly can be. Nothing or no one is left out, but all enjoy the goodness of the Lord! And the Lord seals this promise and this work by telling us that He is the one that has spoken it and therefore it must come to pass. What a promise this is when we connect with it all that would in any way produce tears or either sorrow or pain or crying. For there will be absolutely nothing in all of God's creation that could possibly cause pain or weeping or gnashing of teeth! The need for tears will have been taken completely away and there will be room for nothing but feasting and joy!

Yet we are constantly being told by the preachers that there will always be a hell, *eternal hell*, they call it, and that in that hell there will always be weeping. But let us know that the tears are being shed in this life, in this present world, for it is this life and this age only that has any knowledge of weeping and all that causes it. When this cycle is completed and we enter into the glorious ages to come there will be no cause for weeping. "There is a time," said the wise man, "for weeping, and a time to laugh" (Eccl. 3:4). You will notice that the spirit of inspiration named the weeping first, followed by laughter. Oh, yes! The season for weeping is swiftly drawing to a close for all men, and the season of joy is soon to follow! Aren't you glad!

Chapter 237

All Things New (continued)

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be *no more death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for *the former things are passed away*. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, *I make all things new*. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:4-5).

Even though we sometimes speak casually about mortality, we are never ready to meet death face to face. Death is a cold thief. A preacher may say that a young boy now sings in heaven’s choir, but his parents are grief stricken, angry, and perplexed, and they feel cheated. All their joy has been stripped from them. An elderly woman may be tired of her husband’s nagging and quirks, but she’d rather have that than the lonely life of a widow. Death takes us to the moment of greatest struggle. Like Job, we are torn up inside and tempted to point an accusing finger at God: “Why have you made me your target” (Job. 7:20)? No matter how we try to dress it up and stress the positive side of it, we sense somehow that death is not normal. We know that we were created to enjoy life! Just as Job did, we turn our hearts and thoughts to heaven, demanding an adequate answer.

Death and tears and crying are all inextricably related. Human hands are poor at drying tears. Neighbors may help, friends may sympathize, and ministers may seek to console with words of comfort and wisdom, but in the end only God can heal the heart and stop the fount of tears. And God will not trust this task to either men or angels, for God Himself “shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” And then, “...*no more death*.” What words are these! What blessed anticipation! Death has had a fearful reign. Almost every home has its vacant chair; every village has its cemetery; every small newspaper carries its obituary list; while countless tons of earth’s bronze and marble are fashioned into gravestones. Death has blasted hopes and broken hearts; turned loving wives into weeping widows, and helpless children into homeless orphans. Death is harsh and cold and heartless. But death has met defeat; a tomb has been opened from the inside, and death itself in that first victorious life has ceased to exist. The last enemy to be destroyed is death! And the Christ Himself is the guarantee!

Imagine this headline in today’s newspaper: *Cure Found for Death!* Newspapers would soon be sold out. Every television and computer would be tuned to the news channels. Everyone would be scrambling to find out what this fantastic announcement had to say. But suppose the article or news report under the headline reported that a traveling teacher has announced that he personally is the cure for death — he has not made a scientific discovery, nor a new medical breakthrough, nor found some secret fountain of youth — but by revelation he has proclaimed *himself* as the source of life and immortality! We might begin to suspect that he’s just another religious teacher who has gotten carried away with delusions of self-importance, even if he has raised a few dead people back to life. And when we read about his claim that the only way to escape death is to believe in him, we’d say, “How preposterous!” Perhaps it’s not surprising that relatively few people take Jesus’ bold statement seriously — “He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (Jn. 11:25-26). After all, it’s probably the most startling claim that anyone has ever made! Why should anyone believe it? We should believe it, not because Jesus raised Lazarus after he had been dead for four days, but because Jesus Himself arose after He died for us — and because He still lives today! The Lamb that was slain is in the midst of the throne, and He has sent forth from the throne the very *spirit of His life* into us by the power of the Holy Ghost! It is a glorious fact, for we have received it! Christ alone has the credentials to claim that He can give life and immortality to men!

Death takes in this whole dreadful realm of sin, weakness, fear, sorrow, pain, heartache, rebellion, strife, war, sickness, sadness, torment, and trouble in which men walk without the peace and joy and transforming power of God in their lives. Men need to know that they *are dead* even while they walk about in a body that appears to be alive; a Christless death in which they are dead to God, dead to Christ, dead to virtue, dead to truth, dead to purity, dead to righteousness, dead to peace, dead to joy, dead to reality, dead to promise, dead to hope, dead to the bright world of the spirit. A man abides in this death throughout all the decades, centuries, or millenniums of his existence until he is awakened by the voice

of the Son of God. It was this very truth that Jesus was making clear to us when He said, "He that *hath the Son hath life*, but he that *hath not the Son of God hath not life...*" Though such a one should live in the extreme fullness of earth's pleasures, yet HE IS DEAD while he lives, a stranger to Christ, a stranger to the realm of eternal realities, a stranger to that higher world of spiritual things, and an *enemy* of God.

I know many people who are quite intelligent, some highly educated, accomplished in their fields, civil, polite, personable, courteous, and caring in an earthly kind of way; and yet, when the subject of *spiritual life, spiritual realities, and heavenly things* is introduced into the conversation, suddenly the true nature emerges and the true antipathy the person has toward the living God and His Christ will come forth. They are *dead* to God, and in truth an *enemy* of God! The condition of a man outside of God is a condition of complete and utter helplessness, and, insofar as his ability to help himself or lift himself out of the world of darkness he dwells in is concerned, his condition is also one of utter *hopelessness*. That which is *dead* is both helpless and hopeless! Such a one stupidly stumbles through this mortal existence working, playing, sleeping, without ever knowing or caring what life is *really* about, why he is here, or where he is going.

The portrait of spiritual death is physical death. God gave us physical death merely as a type to convey something of the awfulness of the true death of which all men have been made partakers. Speaking of physical death, Charles Spurgeon once said, "The time will come, ere long, when these shining orbs by which I look out upon you and through which you look into my very soul, will become a carnival for worms; that this body of mine will be inhabited by loathsome things, the brother of corruption, the sister of decay. These cheeks now flushed with life will soon be sunken in death. Beneath the skin there will be going on such activity that, could we look upon it, we too would recoil in horror. The same death of the body is the *condition of our soul and our spiritual life* as we come into this world."

Jesus raised three people from the dead during His years of ministry, and each of these stands as a picture of the condition of those who are raised out of the death of the carnal mind into the life of the Son of God. First, there was Jarius' daughter. Do you remember the story? Jesus came into the house and she was still upon her bed. She had just died. She still wore the garments of sleep. Her mother was still holding her hand and moistening her brow with kisses. Her father looked upon her lovingly but she was dead. And Jesus raised her with these simple words, "*Talitha cumi.*" Her eyes opened! She sat up and was alive again!

Then there was the funeral procession that took place in the town of Nain where a widow of Nain had lost her only son. He was no longer in the home; he no longer wore the clothes of sleep but was wrapped in the cerements of the cemetery. He was already laid out upon his bier and was being conveyed to his tomb. Jesus did what He always did. He stopped the funeral — because that is why He came — and He said, "*Young man, I say unto thee, arise!*" He sat up and Christ returned him to his mother.

Then there was that notable instance of Lazarus of Bethany. When Jesus arrived, Lazarus was no longer in his home; he was no longer in procession; he was already in his tomb. Neither the bed nor the bier but the tomb now contained him and Jesus said, "Roll away the stone." Martha said, "Lord, he has been dead four days and now he *stinketh*." Jesus said to her, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" And so they rolled away the stone. No doubt there issued forth from that open cavern those noxious smells of the grave. Jesus having lifted up His eyes to God in prayer, cried, "*Lazarus, come forth!*" and life pulsated through his body again. Still wrapped in the grave clothes he shuffled out of the darkness into the light. Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

Each of us, as we come into this world and continue along our path, unless OUR SPIRIT has been quickened and renewed by HIS SPIRIT, are in some such condition as one of these three. There are some who are young and tender; they are still in their mother's home; their faces are fair and their cheeks are flushed; they are the adorable objects of their parent's love; the world is before them and yet *they are dead*. They are dead in trespasses and in sins; dead to God, dead to truth; dead to reality; for this is how they have been born into this world. Though physically, intellectually, and emotionally alive, they are dead spiritually. They are unconscious of, and unresponsive to, the spiritual life and the spiritual world of reality. They have not had time for sin to run its course and to effect its devastating changes. Like

Jarius' daughter, they still look alive — why she looks as though she sleepeth! Her eyes are simply closed in sleep. And yet she is dead!

And there are those like the son of the widow of Nain who have left their father's home and are now out in public. Some years have passed and already the flush has left the cheek and the results of sin are beginning to make themselves seen. Our land is filled with these today! Unlike Jarius' daughter, their sins are no more secret, a matter kept at home, but now they are out in public and known to many. Without shame they expose their sins willfully, flaunting them before all the world to see; they call it "coming out of their closets;" they have no sense of guilt or shame because their sin and death has proceeded thus far. And yet they are still accepted by society. They are glorified by the media. Some are even active in the churches. They are not like Lazarus, who has been put away, where death has come to such a state that the corruption has progressed to such a degree that now he stinketh and none can bear to be in his presence. And so there comes a time in some men's lives when even their loved ones can say, "Put away my beloved from out of my sight. Bury him in some jail or in some hospital or in some gutter of depravity."

The corruption of sin and death can reach to such a marked degree that it is seen in the person, in his acts, in his words, his dress, his face, and he becomes an outcast, the dregs of society. There are more, I am sure, like the widow's son. The revelation of the death in them is only beginning to show. There are still many like Jarius' daughter where it is not seen at all, except by those with spiritual eyes and discernment. They are so lovely. "Isn't she sweet?" "Isn't he handsome?" "Oh, he is such a nice person." "They are such good neighbors, they would do anything for you." And yet, each and every one of them — the girl on the bed, the young man on the bier, and Lazarus in his tomb — were equally *dead!* Dead one, dead all!

This is the description of the land of the dead in which the whole world lives by nature. The land of trespasses and sins in which there walk the dead. "*Wherein,*" Paul says to the quickened ones, "*in time past ye walked*" (Eph. 2:2). Is that not amazing? We were dead and yet we walked; we were the walking dead, a land filled with spiritual zombies, walking, as though they live, yet dead! Did you ever stop to think that when Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, came into this world HE WAS THE ONLY LIVING MAN IN A WORLD OF DEAD PEOPLE? The whole world lies in the hands of the wicked one and death reigns over all the earth realm, the world of carnal-minded men! "To be carnally minded *is death*" (Rom. 8:6). No wonder the scripture says that men are a stench in the nostrils of God because spiritual death sends forth its reek and stench. How the pure soul of Jesus must have recoiled at the state of death that was rampant over the earth. We, the walking dead, walked according to the course of THIS WORLD, we are told (Eph. 2:2).

When Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, came into this world to reveal the LIFE OF GOD, which is true *spiritual life*, He came outside the existing religious system. He spoke the words of God and did the works of God and manifested the nature of God. What an appalling shock to the established religious order to have this strange man speaking as one with authority suddenly appear in their midst not as a Pharisee, Sadducee, or a priest of the order of Aaron, but in the power of the Spirit of God. What a bolt out of heaven it must have been to the hypocritical priests of Levi, so accustomed to strutting about in long robes and broad phylacteries, wearing their miters, loving to be called Rabbi and teacher as they received the homage of the people about them, binding burdens that they would not touch with the tips of their fingers on others, robbing widow's houses and for a pretense making long prayers as they increased condemnation upon their own unforgiven sins. What a stunning dismay it must have been for these lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God to hear this mighty Son of God proclaiming to publicans and sinners, soldiers and priests alike, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

These lawyers and priests, who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, must have been green with envy as they saw towns and cities emptying themselves of their inhabitants when with one accord the vast assemblage swarmed to the fields and the mountain sides to hear this mighty prophet and to behold His wonderful signs and wonders and miracles. Well did Jesus know by the Spirit of the Father within Him that these religious leaders were spots in the feasts of charity, feeding themselves with their own deceivings. Clouds they were without water, carried about by the wind; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. That was the picture then and that is the picture of the religious systems today, of whatever brand or label they may be. Sunday after Sunday thousands of ministers stand in their pulpits to preach dead sermons while untold millions of church

members sing the same songs, repeat the same prayers, go through the same motions, observing lifeless forms, meaningless rituals, and empty ceremonies. I tell you frankly that that is the way to spiritual stagnation and immaturity, which leads to spiritual death; but it is not the path to sonship and the fullness of HIS LIFE AND GLORY. Oh! there is no death anywhere more horrible or offensive than that to be found in *dead religion*. It is the land of the living dead, a land filled with spiritual zombies, having the outward appearance of being alive — and yet *dead*.

There are but two kinds of people: the dead and the alive. If you have not been *made alive* by His *quickening power*, awakened to the world of reality in Christ Jesus, you are still dead no matter how rosy your religious cheeks may appear. If you have been made alive may I tell you that, as assuredly as Lazarus knew that he had been raised from the tomb, so also you know that you have been quickened by God to a higher realm of life and reality, made alive, recreated, born anew by the Spirit of God, and you walk in newness of life as a son of God in the land of the living God! Great is the mystery!

Duane Kennedy wrote: "I saw a grim specter walking up and down, to and fro throughout the earth; and he would reach out his bony finger and touch a man or a woman. When he touched them, in an instant, millionaires became paupers, the well became ill, the young became old, the Marathon runner, palsied; and they all died. And I said, 'What is the name of this specter that walks up and down amidst the earth?' The answer came back, 'His name is Death.' For more than 40 centuries this grim tyrant had conducted his ghastly business, killing men and women and dragging their corpses into his cold palace. Kings and conquerors had all fallen to his fatal touch. There was none strong enough to withstand his approach.

"Then one Passover evening there appeared a stranger outside the doors of that icy palace, a palace filled with bones, for even the chalices on the table were shining skulls. The columns were made of bones, and the beams of the ceiling were of human bones. Back and forth within that ghastly castle walked this tyrant who knew no fear of man. Then this stranger rolled back the doors and stepped within that cold palace and, unafraid, approached that mighty tyrant, grasped him with one hand, lifted him up, threw him to the pavement, and placed upon his neck the heel of triumph.

"Then this mighty stranger, for three days and three nights, walked amidst the caverns of that castle of death. Through the labyrinthine corridors of horror he went until he found the two main pillars which held up the whole domain. He rocked them back and forth until the whole thing began to crumble down; and then he took up the ponderous gates, lifting them off their hinges, and marched forth with a shout of victory, '**I am the resurrection and the life!**' (Jn. 11:25). Our Jesus had conquered death! And then I saw a beautiful being walking to and fro, and up and down throughout the earth. And this being reached out his hand and touched, first one person and then another. At his touch the poor became rich, the sick became well, the palsied became whole, the blind saw, the deaf heard, the lame leaped for joy; and I said, 'Who is that beautiful being who walks through the earth?' The answer came back, 'His name is Life.' '**He that hath the Son of God hath LIFE.**'"

It is sad to find, from a devoted pen like Cowper's:

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing Thy power to save.
When this poor lisping stam'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave!"
How much better to sing:
"When this poor lisping stam'ring tongue
Hath triumphed o'er the grave!"

Let us pause here to consider a point which needs to be emphasized in this significant hour. Death is an enemy: that much is plain; for the last *enemy* to be destroyed is death (I. Cor. 15:26). But let us inquire as to just which death is referred to here. We have men who today profess to be able to attain to translation, or to put on physical immortality, or to step into a body like unto the Christ's body of glory, or to some such state, by conquering the enemy which they delight to call the "last enemy," through their refusing to go by way of the grave. But we find in listening to this process of reasoning, that these folks, along with many others, do not appear to recognize more than one death, the one which their human vision causes them to detest, which death emaciates the body and results in men going to the grave. But is this death really *the enemy*, or is it but the final result of a *previous death*?

There are many deaths! Eve in the garden disobeyed God and, as a result of that disobedience, came into the first and fundamental death, which is a separation from the life that is in God, that is, in the spirit. "The spirit *is* life" (Rom. 8:10). As a result of this first and fundamental death, it became necessary for God to bring into operation another death to limit the increase or restrain the workings of the first. Therefore, if and when the first death, the real culprit and the true enemy, is removed, then there will be no cause for the next. The first death, the one which separated our original parents from the life of God flowing out of their spirit, and the state into which every son of Adam is born as a result of this fall, is the great enemy. You see, my beloved, we often get the cart before the horse! Physical death is not the *cause* of death! Physical death was not the death that *separated* our original parents from the life of God, thrusting them into the realm of death! Oh, no! Physical death is not the *cause* of anything — it is just the *end result* of another, greater, more fundamental, and powerful death. The death which results in physical death is the one Paul referred to when he wrote, "And you hath He quickened, who *were dead* in trespasses and sins...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:1,6).

We *were dead* in trespasses and sins...and that, my friend, is the death which caused all the woe and suffering and sorrow and sickness and pain and shame. Natural death is merely a corrective measure, a separation from the body and from the sins of the flesh and of the fleshly mind, so that the abounding of sin in the world is controlled. Can you imagine what this world would be like today if all the wicked pagans and all the brutal tyrants and all the vile, murderous, abominable psychopaths that have ever lived were still here plying their trade among us! The question follows — Which of these two deaths then should we fear? The death into which all men are born, the one which they inherit through the first man Adam, is the last enemy to be destroyed. It is the fundamental cause for all men going to the grave. If it were not for this death, both natural death and the grave would not follow. If it were not for this fundamental death, then there could be no natural death, and hence no grave.

That is what it means when the scripture says that our Lord Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power and was raised from the dead "by the *spirit of holiness*" (Rom. 1:4). Oh, yes! It wasn't His resurrection into a glorified body that made Him the Son of God with power. And it wasn't His resurrection from the dead in a glorified body that made Him holy and free from sin. Oh, no! Rather, it was the SPIRIT OF HOLINESS that qualified Him as the Son of God with power. It was likewise the SPIRIT OF HOLINESS that raised Him from the dead, *giving Him* a body of glory! Can we not see by this that it was His victory over the first fundamental death, dead in trespasses and sins, and victory over the separation that death brought, that made Him the Son of God with power. He was not separated from the life that was in God, for He sinned not, and therefore He could say that He *lived by the Father that dwelt in Him*. No sin! No separation! The result? "**Raised from the dead BY THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS!**" Jesus was the first man in whom the first fundamental death was overcome. The natural, unavoidable result of that was the acquisition of a body of glory in which no death dwells! If you try to somehow obtain an incorruptible, immortal body without first being clothed upon in the totality of your being with the *spirit of holiness*, which is the spirit of *Christ's sonship*, you will be very disappointed when you finally breathe your last natural breath.

Here in our study of the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation we have come to the time for *all death* to be done away. "And there shall be *no more death*." And here is the surprising thing that most believers have never even given a thought. We can never arrive at that blessed state where there exists *no more death* as long as there remains even one sinner anywhere upon earth, or in hell, or any place else! Just as long as the enemy death — the death of the carnal mind, the death of sin, the death of any degree of separation from the life of the spirit — retains dominion over even one soul; just as long as there remains one human being in God's vast creation who has not experienced a full and complete salvation, being conformed into the image of the Son of God, and grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, just that long the enemy death still holds sway over a part of God's creation. And just that long there still remains an enemy to be put under Christ's feet before He can reign as undisputed Sovereign over all that which He died to redeem. Therefore the time which we are here considering is the time when each and every son of Adam from the bright precincts of Eden all the way down to the consummation of the ages has looked to the Saviour and *lives!* Only when this becomes a glorious and eternal reality can there truly be NO MORE DEATH!

Paul very evidently refers to this same universal conquest of Calvary when he wrote to the Ephesians, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will...that in the ministry of the fullness of

the appointed times He might reduce under one head all things, even in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, even *in Him*" (Eph. 1:10). Ah, there is a *ministry* that will reduce all things in heaven and on earth under one Head, and that must be a very remarkable universal moving and manifestation of God! Come now, with boldness, and behold the *manifestation of the sons of God* for which all creation is in travail! "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the *manifestation of the sons of God*. For the creation was made subject to vanity (futility, frustration), not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same *in hope*. Because (the hope is that) *the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and *travailleth in pain together until now*. And not only they, but ourselves also...even we ourselves *groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption* (placement as mature sons of God), to wit, the *redemption of our body*" (Rom. 8:19-23) Nothing short of this can possibly be the means of gathering together all things in the heavens and on the earth under one head, even in Christ!

NO MORE PAIN

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be *any more pain: for the former things are passed away*" (Rev. 21:4).

The natural conception of this is, "Oh, how wonderful! My back won't hurt anymore!" While that is wonderfully true, there is another, higher, more glorious meaning to these beautiful words. The key to this truth is found in Revelation 12 wherein we read, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun...and she being with child, *cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered*...and she brought forth a *manchild, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne*" (Rev. 12:2,5). Those who in this hour yearn for the manifestation of the sons of God feel spiritually much like the expectant woman whose due date for "delivery" of her first baby has come and gone. All the evidence is that there *is* a baby — the tummy is swollen so tight it looks like it will burst; the baby is kicking; contractions are experienced; the water may even have broken — yet, it is not time for the birth. At such a time, the expectant mother may wonder if things could go on like that indefinitely. It seems almost unreal; the waiting grows unbearable, the nights long and restless, and the emotions become heightened or depressed. Still, all signs give assurance that the hoped for event will take place. And those in attendance to her can but *wait and watch* for the final sign that the baby is about to be delivered.

The baby in the passage above is a very special and unusual child. There is something coming out of the woman that is going to do what the woman could not do. The woman is beautiful, she is glorious, she is faithful and clothed with the sun of the glory of Christ, crowned with victory, and God is pleased with her, and she has been the yielded handmaid of Christ. She has done all she has been called and equipped to do. She dwells in a heavenly place, but she has not greatly impacted the world for she has never sat upon the throne with Christ nor has she ruled all nations with a rod of iron. The woman has been able to do what women do best — she has been able to nurture, to heal wounds, to encourage, wash, feed, and care for the children of God. But her ministry has not gone far beyond the nurturing of her own little family and protecting the seed growing in her womb. She has not done more than that because her authority has not extended further than that and she has not had great strength or power. The woman is the *true church* in the earth, the bride of the Lamb! She has had gifts and ministries and a message of salvation and deliverance by which multitudes of men have been redeemed and gathered unto Christ. But that holy thing that shall be born of her shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest (the manifest sons of God) and he shall ascend the throne of his Father and shall conquer and rule all nations with a rod of iron. He shall bring a new order, a greater authority, an all-conquering power, and surpassing glory into the midst of humanity and a new day shall dawn for the whole earth from pole to pole and from sea to sea. The coming to birth of the sons of God is the one, great spiritual event the whole creation is waiting for!

The woman is in great *travail* and *excruciating pain* to deliver this manchild into the earth. It is the picture of old-fashioned childbirth, not the modern means and methods. There is no C-section, no ether, no spinal injection, no pain relief, and no numbing from this birth process. There is weeping, tears, sweat, groans, agony, and screaming as the new order of the sons of God is birthed out of the birthing canal of the virgin church. It is not a soothing, pleasant experience, but it *will be effective!* The Greek

word for travail here is *odino* which indicates a special kind of **pain**, the pain of a woman giving birth. John says that because of this pain she *cried*, signifying to cry out, to cry aloud. We have all been going through pressures, experiences, and deep dealings which make us **cry out**, and at times we **cry aloud** — groaning, weeping, writhing, as it were, in distress as well as those times of deep inner travail with *groanings which cannot be uttered*. Truly, these are birthpangs!

There is a vast company of saints today that is caught up in the travail of this birthing experience! These have been doing everything they know to do to bring this manchild to birth and his head hasn't crowned yet, but the struggle tells them clearly that he is on his way! It is always painful to birth a new order in God! Ask Moses, ask Joshua, ask David, ask Jesus, ask the apostles, ask Martin Luther, ask John Knox and George Fox, ask the early Pentecostals — yet none of them ever knew the pain of birthing a full grown male child — a man in the full stature of Jesus Christ! And that's exactly what the Greek word for "manchild" signifies! Oh, how painful it is! We're going to give birth to this son, my beloved, and that secret knowledge, that which God has in recent decades revealed mightily in the midst of His saints through glorious movings and manifestations of His Spirit, that which we have pondered in our hearts, that which we embraced in faith, that which we have cherished as a hope, that which we have dreamed of, fantasized about, preached about, prophesied of, and anxiously awaited is about to be birthed in reality into our midst! Everything will change in heaven and in earth when this takes place! And one result for God's called and separated elect will be just this — **NO MORE CRYING, AND NO MORE PAIN!** Aren't you glad!

When a woman is pregnant and ready to deliver — just ask any woman who has given birth — when she is ready to be delivered she wants that child out of there! When the time has come for the seed of Christ in us to be birthed out of the woman we have all been a part of, birthed into the full glory of sonship, we want that inner son to come forth! And it's not just because of the pain and travail that lead to the birth, but because of the surpassing glory of losing our identity in the woman and rising up into our identity as the manchild — the *manifest son* of God! "*A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world*" (Jn. 16:21). Every one of us has been the woman, the betrothed bride of Christ. The hour is fastly approaching for the son to come, and when it is time for the birth, there is nothing we can do but yield ourselves to the birthing process. All creation is groaning, travailing together **in pain** until now! We ourselves, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, do groan within ourselves and we are **pained** together in the intense travail to bring forth the Christ in the fullness of Himself. That is the pain! It costs something to bring forth this manchild, the maturity of God's Christ. But one glad morning there will be great joy and **NO MORE PAIN!** No more pain! No more travail! No more labor! The manchild has been brought forth! Isn't it wonderful!

Pain is mentioned only three times in the book of Revelation and there are two contrasting kinds of pain presented. We have already considered the *pain of travail* of the heavenly woman as she births the manchild — a pain that, thank God, will finally end in victory. The other dimension of pain is revealed in chapter sixteen wherein we read, "And the fifth angel poured out his bowl *upon the seat of the beast*; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and **they gnawed their tongues for pain**, and blasphemed the God of heaven **because of their pains** and their sores..." (Rev. 16:10-11). Under the fourth and fifth bowls (plagues) we find two very contrasting realms, and God uses them both in His processings. Under the fourth bowl, men are "scorched with great heat," as the desperate leaders of Mystery Babylon "turn up the heat," and then under the fifth bowl the meteoric blaze is passed. Poured on the throne of the beast, darkness spreads over his kingdom, and men suffer the **pain** of "absolute darkness." It is the "outer darkness" of which Jesus spoke, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." It is not a place on some far-away planet somewhere, nor a pit in the center of the earth, but the inner condition of awakening to discover that the realm you dwell in, which you thought was the very tabernacle of God and the light of truth, is in fact Satan's vast domain and his very throne, far away *outside* the true illumination, glory, and power of the kingdom of God!

Darkness is the absence of light, and this fifth plague reveals to all the inhabitants of spiritual Babylon — the *beast's kingdom*, the *false church* — that there is no true "light" in any of their carnal doctrines and man-made observances. It is my deep conviction that through the ministry of God's called and qualified elect there will shed forth such a mighty revelation of truth and reality until the power the doctrines of men and the traditions of the elders hold over the people will be drawn off, plunging the whole system into thick darkness. The beast's kingdom is worldwide, and the darkness brought in by

this bowl of God's passion is co-extensive with his empire. From the throne to the uttermost limits of religious Babylon everything is shrouded in the mantle of deep, dark, starless night. Isaiah prophesied of this when he said, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2). Joel prophesied of it when he said, "The day of the Lord cometh, a day of darkness, of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Joel 2:31). In this great day of the Lord a dreadful pall of doom is destined to settle over the entire kingdom of the beast, which has been built up by his throne in the heights of man's carnal mind. This kingdom includes all the "earth-dwellers," the carnal-minded, flesh-oriented, soulical-centered Christians — followers and worshippers of the beastly religious orders that walk not in the purity of truth nor in the power of the Spirit of the Lord. The effect of the outpouring of this bowl of God's dealing is the producing of such *torment* and *anguish* as can only be adequately described as the "*gnawing of their tongues from pain.*"

Ah, God knows exactly what DARK CAVERN to place men in, with no outside energy which they can draw from to help maintain their state and standing. It is the *outer darkness* — that region of spiritual darkness that leads away from the true spiritual light *which Christ is*. Ray Prinzing pointed out, "It is significant that wherever you find reference to 'outer darkness' you also read of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth,' as if to indicate the shivering in the cold until the teeth chatter. All this brings more meaning to the word, 'If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, **how great is that darkness!**' We weep for them, yet we thank God for this understanding of how He uses the COLD, THE DARKNESS to draw out this thermo energy of self-resistance, and the hour of final victory will come, with a full restoration into God. While the wrath of God is love's severity, yet it remains purest love, seeking the ultimate good for creation, and so it continues to apply the strokes of chastisement. The **pain** caused by this is the *pain of discipline*. Repentance will come in due time, but how great is the need for the inworking of His judgments, until that submission comes" — end quote. Thank God — **this pain** (gnawing their tongues **for pain**) of Babylon's darkness and delusion also shall end in victory and then the pain of discipline will no longer be needed. There, too, "*...the former things*" shall have '*passed away!*' All God's judgments will end in a mighty correction and deliverance of all God's precious people — and in that realm also the blessed day will come when there shall be **NO MORE PAIN!** What a glorious plan! What an unspeakably wonderful arrangement! It is indeed wonderful!

There is a further truth in this connection, no less glorious and awe-inspiring. Please let us notice one thing. The entire scene in Revelation 21:3-5 — the tabernacle of God with men, He will dwell with men, they will be His people, and He will be their God; He shall wipe away all tears, there shall be no more death, no more sorrow, neither crying nor pain, for the former things are passed away — all these things follow immediately after the passage (Rev. 20:15) telling us of some individuals who are cast into the lake of fire. Because of the man-made chapter division the church systems seem to have missed entirely the fact of the *connection* between these passages of John's vision! What the church has done in this instance is to separate Revelation 20:15 from Revelation 21:1-5 in order to infer and believe and teach that the conditions of suffering, torment, and pain men experience in the lake of fire will continue on forever and ever, without respite, unceasing, and unending. So of course they must conclude and teach that *death* (the second death), *sorrow*, *crying*, and *pain* must all continue in God's universe and in the lives of men for whom Christ died — ETERNALLY!

So in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation they suddenly change subjects, disconnect from the whole scene John has been describing, and begin something new by telling us of the new heavens and the new earth which have completely different circumstances and conditions in them than does their hell. So what they have are two separate situations, or two separate conditions, which cannot in any way affect one another, both being unchangeable, and existing as it were side by side *throughout all the ages of time and the infinitude of eternity*. Therefore, what the church systems must conclude, and do conclude, is that in one place in the universe there is *eternal death*, *eternal tears*, *eternal sorrow*, *eternal crying*, and *eternal pain*. And there, these conditions, these things **never pass away**. "For the former things are passed away," in their view, can never apply to this realm. It is excluded. Forever. But at the same time they tell us of another place where all is joy and peace and happiness, where the saved ones continually and for all eternity praise and worship God with nothing else to do, and without any concern whatsoever for those less fortunate souls for whom "the former things have **not** passed away and **will not** pass away!"

If this is true, then something must have happened to both God and the saints in heaven. Before the death of these people, God loved them all and in many instances they loved each other, saved and

unsaved alike. In this natural realm many of those who called themselves Christians were very concerned about their “unsaved loved ones.” And many of these loved ones died in their sins, and according to the church doctrines, went away to this hell of *eternal death, eternal tears, eternal sorrow, eternal crying, and ETERNAL PAIN!* Now that the two groups are in “eternity,” God and all the people in heaven have either lost their love and compassion for their lost loved ones, or else God has brain-washed them all so that they have been conditioned into a psychopathic personality in which they have the inability to maintain deep attachments to others and consequently *feel nothing*, and are completely *unmoved* anymore for their most beloved ones who are *suffering, crying*, and enduring the inexplicable anguish and most *excruciating pains* of unending hell-fire and damnation. Or, perhaps the heavenly mind is somehow impaired so that it cannot even *remember* the existence of the former loved ones! So we see this: there was MORE LOVE and DIVINE COMPASSION in the natural world in God and the redeemed saints, than there will be in the heavenly realm. Something catastrophic must have happened to cause God and His saints in heaven to turn from love and pity for the lost, to the obvious feeling that the lost are now only getting what they deserve and it is somehow *just* for them to suffer, cry, and scream in pain for all eternity.

What sort of a god do the church systems worship? What kind of a god is it presenting to the world? The church systems teach us and try to make us believe that pain will exist forever in hell and vast multitudes of people will be tortured in that pain. But, after several times speaking of the torment and pain of the lake of fire the Holy Spirit testifies that all these “former things” will pass away and THERE SHALL BE N-O M-O-R-E P-A-I-N! Who shall we believe, God or the church? Who will you listen to, or what will you listen to! Will you listen to what *God says*, or will you listen to what some *man* or some *church says* that God says? It makes no difference to me how much education any man has, or how many degrees are behind his name, or how much authority and power *his denomination* has given him — as for me and my house, we prefer to hear what GOD SAYS!

The church world has missed entirely the reason why God can say there is to be no more pain. The reason they have missed this one point is the same reason they have missed practically all the teaching of God. They have missed, in the very same passage we have been considering, the words of Him who sits upon the throne and says, “Behold (Look! Pay attention!), I MAKE A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S NEW!” The lake of divine, Holy Ghost fire has purified those who were cast there to be purged and processed, and now the time has come for GOD TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW. And, contrary to what the preachers would have us believe about this statement, God is *not* making “all new things.” Oh, no! The new heavens and the new earth are not new things that never existed before — they are exactly what God says they are — they are “all things” MADE NEW! Certainly both the lake of fire and the multitudes of men in it are part of the “all things” that ARE MADE NEW! That is the mystery.

If God does not *make all things new*, these encouraging and enlightening words should never have been written. But not only are they written, but the specific instruction was given to the scribe, John the beloved, saying, “Write: *for these words are true and faithful*” (Rev. 21:5). If the lake of fire is to burn and do its tormenting work forever and ever, then God lies when He tells us that He is going to make *all things new*. If suffering in hell-fire is to go on through eternity, then God *does not* make all things new, nor can He ever say, “*and there shall be no more pain...*” NO MORE PAIN. We must again refer to the words of God from the first chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy, “Come now, and let us *reason together*, saith the Lord” (Isa. 1:18). “Come now, let us *be reasonable!*” Let us think and see correctly and rightly. Let us get these things straight in our understanding. How wonderful it is in these days to know that God is uncovering the false and untrue teachings of the church systems of man and is showing not only we ourselves, but multitudes of the Lord’s seeking, hungry people the glorious outcome of HIS FULL AND COMPLETE REDEMPTION!

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).